<u>**Title Page:**</u>

Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Africa: An Assessment of the Contributions by Local Women's Civil Society Organisations to Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

MBAYO, ALEX SIVALIE

**A Dissertation Submitted to
the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation
of Hiroshima University in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

March 2012

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We hereby recommend that the dissertation by Mr. MBAYO Alex Sivalie entitled "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Africa: An Assessment of the Contributions by Local Women's Civil Society Organisations to Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone" be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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CERTIFICATION PAGE

Except as otherwise indicated, I hereby certify that the ideas expressed and the research findings recorded in this doctoral thesis, written by me Alex Sivalie MBAYO is in its original form. The information contained therein were gathered from primary and secondary sources, which includes groups and individual interviews, Focused Group Discussions, personal interviews, round table discussions, use of archival and scholarly materials, magazines, articles and reports by both local and international agencies, coupled with views of experts in the field of gender and peacebuilding; which were used in producing this piece of work are adequately cited and referenced. The research was conducted according to the ethical standards and guidelines of the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC) of Hiroshima University, Japan. The consent of all respondents was obtained using the consent form as shown in Appendix 4 for the field research component of the study and for use of the respondent's direct words as quoted therein.

DEDICATION

This piece of work is dedicated to all peace loving women the world all over but specifically to the memories of my dear parents Mr. &Mrs. Isatta Sivalie Mbayo and my beloved siblings Victoria and Cecilia, all of whom did not only live to see this project come to fruition but departed this world at the time I needed them most; and also to all women in the world who have and are being raped even as I write, battered, lost their lives, suffered and still continue to suffer as a result of the gender inequalities and discrimination around them. I am saying 'I SALUTE YOU' all, and may the souls of the faithful departed perfectly rest in peace and in the bosom of Our Lord Jesus Christ till we meet again in glory. Amen.

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and comments during my three consecutive examinations all made both my three years of study and academic pursuit at Hiroshima University, Japan an enjoyable and successful enterprise.

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GLOSSARY OF ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
ABN	Association for Better Nigeria
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Amnesty International
APC	All People's Congress
APPWA	All Political Parties Women's Association
AU	African Union
AWCP	African Women Committee for Peace and Development
BBC	Beyond Beijing Committee
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
CDHR	Center for Development and Human Rights
CEDAW	Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CIVICUS	Chief Executive of the International Civic Society Organisation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CS	Civil Society
CSM	Country-Specific Meeting
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPEC	Civil Society Peacebuilding Engagement Committee
DA-DA	Democracy and Development Associate
DACO	Development Assistance Coordination Office of Sierra Leone
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWARN	Economic Community of West African Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
ERSG	Executive Representative of the Secretary General
50/50	Fifty-Fifty Group
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FSU	Family Support Unit
GCs	Geneva Conventions
GFW	Global Fund for Women
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GJLs	Gender Justice Laws
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone

GRs	General Recommendations
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
HHRJ	Harvard Human Rights Journal
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International Non-governmental Organisations
IPBS	Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy
IRCSL	Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone
Isis-WICCE	Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
ISU	Internal Security Unit
LMCS	Local Men Civil Society
LWCSO	Local Women's Civil Society Organisation
LWSC	Local Women's Civil Society
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MARWOPNET-SL	Mano River Women's Peace Network – Sierra Leone
MCS	Men's Civil Society
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MRU	Mano River Union
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
NA	Native Administration
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NCDHR	National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights
NCP-SL	Network of Collaboration Peacebuilding – Sierra Leone
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NHAP	National Health Action Plan
NMOs	Network Member Organisations
NPFL	National Patriotic Front
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NSAs	Non-State Actors
NSAWG	Non-State Actors Working Group
NUSS	National Union of Sierra Leone Students
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONS	Office of National Security
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBL	Philip Brothers Limited
PBFSC	Peacebuilding Fund Steering Committee

PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PHR	Physicians for Human Rights
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PZ	Patterson Zachonis
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SILNAP	Sierra Leone National Action Plan (on UN Resolutions 1325 and 1820)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLAUW	Sierra Leone Association of University Women
SLBA	Sierra Leone Bar Association
SLeGEN	Sierra Leone Girl's Education Network
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labour Congress
SLMDA	Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLPMB	Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
SLTU	Sierra Leone Teachers Union
SLWPM	Sierra Leone Women's Peace Movement
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TDS	Talking Drum's Studio
TNA	Transitional National Assembly
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/Aids
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational & Scientific Organisation
UNFPA	United Nation's Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNJV	United Nations Joint Vision
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCRI	United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace
WANEP-SL	West African Network for Peace – Sierra Leone
WCRP	World Conference on Religion and Peace
WCSOs	Women's Civil Society Organisations
WIPSA	Women's Initiative for Peace in South East Asia
WIPNET	Women in Peace Network
WIPNET-SL	West African Peace Network – Sierra Leone
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace
WPP-IFOR	Women Peacebuilding Programme of the International Fellowship Reconciliation
WRAs	Western Rural Areas
WW I &II	World War I &II

ABSTRACT

Since recorded history, the world has experienced unprecedented acts of violence (wars) by humans against others, and the intensity of these wars have often been very dramatic. Even with the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 with the intension to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to maintain international peace and security, the last fifty years of the 20th Century saw an estimated 86 million of people killed. In all of these conflict depleted nations, especially those in Africa, the necessary resources and finances required for the post-conflict recovery and development processes are mostly absent. The processes of reconstruction and peacebuilding tasks of the national or care taker governments and their international backers, diplomats, multilateral agencies and the international community are huge and complex, which therefore demands greater cooperation among various stake holders in order that the intended outcome – peace and development, becomes sustainable.

In most African countries, the processes of conflict management, peacemaking and peacebuilding at the end of most of the conflicts, if not all, the international community, as well as the affected state and society, have been engaged in what is now generally called peacebuilding. Until recently, these peacebuilding processes have been mainly state driven and apparently conducted between the state, the rebel groups and the international mediators and backers with little consideration for non-state or local civil society's involvement. But unfortunately however, these state driven approaches have often produced state oriented problems ranging from corruption on the part of government, nepotism, tribalism/regionalism, marginalisation, exclusion to favouritism. The failure of these state driven peacebuilding processes have therefore led to the wide international acknowledgement of the role of non-state/ civil society (CS) actors, especially local women civil society (LWCS) as an appropriate alternative; because of their renowned activities such as monitoring, lobbying and their pressure on state authorities to fulfill their responsibilities and implement the rule of law, which is the focus in the current crisis management approach by the United Nations and some international non-governmental organisations (INGOs)

Available literature on violent conflicts in Africa show that CS, especially LWSCOs have been and

continue to be deeply and effectively involved in peace work and peacebuilding initiatives – i.e. the reconceptualisation of peace and security from a 'state-centered' process to one that is 'people centered.' Examples of the Giriama uprising (1911 – 1914) of Kenyan women who refused to pay taxes to the British and to do forced labour in a their bid to drive them away from their lands; the Japanese women's protest against racism and nuclearism; Palestinian and Israeli women trying to overcome barriers of distrust and enmity; Northern Ireland women protesting against the violence that prevailed there; and the South African women whose long history of nonviolence resistance was central to the country's struggle against apartheid, to mention but this few, are proof of civil society's important role since. However, and unfortunately though, these meaningful contributions by LWCSOs have often been overlooked or not accorded the value it deserves in Africa in general and Sierra Leone in particular. Despite the huge efforts by LWCSOs in Sierra Leone in the past and even during the rebel war in support of non-violence, their conduct of the Bintumani I & II conferences that protected and upheld democracy; and their efforts in making the Lome peace talks a reality in 1999, they had no formal representation at the peace talks. Nonetheless, they have continued to contribute meaningfully to building of a peaceful and sustainable environment that every Sierra Leonean and even the international community have been yearning for.

In the light of LWCSO's sustained involvement in the peacebuilding process and its ramifications, this study was designed to explore, using an exploratory descriptive feminist research methodological approach (interviews, participant observation, informal conversations, focus group discussions, questionnaire administration, photographs and storytelling, review of related literature, and the use of books, articles, journals, dissertations and internet materials); to assess and put together a comprehensive and premier report on the contributions and challenges of LWCSOs engaged in the decade yearlong (2002 – 2011) post-war peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. Special attention was adequately paid to important ethical considerations as required by a credible academic research of this nature. The study is not only meant to bring out the contributions and challenges faced by the three case study LWCSOs (50/50, WIPNET and MARWOPNET), but to also establish the long standing link between local women in Sierra Leone and peace from a socio-cultural standpoint from pre-historic Sierra Leone, for a better understanding of the context, gauge

the existing political will and space; and to analyse the contributions and influence of international community on the entire peacebuilding process.

In a bid to accomplish this task successfully, the study examined questions such as: why Sierra Leone, why civil society and why LWCSOs for the study? And in an attempt to address these issues adequately, this study undertook an in-depth analysis of concepts such as: the concept of civil society, civil society and peacebuilding, women war and peace, women and civil society in Sierra Leone; and raised one main and three sub research questions. But most importantly however, all of the above questions were not intended to provide definitive or precise answers to the research topic but rather; they were used as guide to the study for further exploration of the issues involved. The study raised one main research question – i.e. what contributions are LWCSOs making to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone? and three sub questions - a) how are the activities of local women's civil society organisations impacting on the target beneficiaries and promoting women's rights and issues in Sierra Leone? b) how are the activities by LWCSOs contributing to the growth, and enhancement of civil society's role in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process? and c) what are the challenges faced by the LWCSOs in their efforts to establish a more peaceful post-war Sierra Leone and how to overcome these challenges?

With the adoption of a feminist methodology that is clearly outlined in chapter one, this study found out that the extensive and effective awareness raising by LWCSOs on women's gender and human rights, the need for equality; restoration, mending and building of broken relationships, building capacities and empowering women and civil society in general with conflict management and resolution, peacemaking and early warning trainings and skills; contributing to girl child education; undertaken reconstruction and development programmes etc. as some of their remarkable and irrefutable contributions to building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. Through advocacy and lobbying, LWCSOs have been able to influence the enactment into law of three gender justice laws (GJLs) and other gender policies, the development of a National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 and 1820; secure a 30 percent representation at political and decision making levels and the Gender National Action Plan; which, if effectively implemented, will enhance the equality that

women are yearning for. Their efforts have not only given voice to women and civil society, demonstrated their ability as equal partners in the pursuit of peace; engaged in massive voter campaigns, and increased election and political participation but also their election into prominent policy and decision making positions, especially at the local governance level. The study also reveals that lots of women organisations are constrained because of lack of confidence and the high level of illiteracy among them. Similarly, it was discovered that the national advocacy programmes, which are mainly done through the media/ radio are constrained because of lack of logistical support and the finances needed to pay for air time. However, there is some support by UNDP through the UN Women programme to women's training for involvement in governance and livelihood programmes.

Domestically, it was found out that women have been able to reduce direct gender-based violence through their peace education programmes, protest marches and through their work with the family Support Unit (FSU) of the Sierra Leone police. However, there is a very low capacity among LWCSOs and even the few trained and skilled ones are so busy with domestic and livelihood issues that they have little time to contribute to national and or women's issues.

The study also found that regardless of the high illiteracy rate and different educational statuses among women, the differences in age and political affiliations, LWCSOs are indeed peace lovers and builders as they have been able to endure and to break through the gender, cultural and political barriers in order to consolidate peace. The driving force behind these success stories of LWCSOs contributions to the peace building process has been their willingness, determination 'never again to remain silent,' and the commitment and cooperation among them. For instance, they rose up to the challenge and seized the opportunity presented by the post-war period to rally their efforts together and to ensure the survival of their families and prevent the country from slipping back into war and to ensure lasting peace.

The study more importantly found out that LWCSOs are playing very important cultural and traditional roles as mediators and advocators in their families, communities and helpers of those in need and have sufficiently raised the awareness of both their women folk and the general civil society on the rights of women and their role in peace. These traditional roles are very critical to

women's participation and voluntary activities aimed at promoting peace building at community and household levels. Similarly, the study also found that LWCSOs are not only collaborating exclusively with women organisations but with others headed by men to build positive peace, influence the country's democratic processes by contesting for elected positions and massively voting in elections, engaging in constitutional reviews and decision making; law and legal reforms, participating at district and provincial committee security meetings and working with the gender department of the Office of National Security (ONS).

The role of local women's peacebuilding organisations, it was discovered, provides a very good platform for addressing gender inequalities and women's empowerment in post-conflict societies, especially Sierra Leone. Additionally, LWCSO's peacebuilding activities and contributions support the process of addressing violence, human rights, and human security in enhancing national and international development targets – MDGs.

But despite these substantial contributions to peacebuilding, women still face a host of challenges that continue to hinder their full and effective participation and contributions to promoting sustainable peace. Some of these challenges range from inadequate financial and political support and will, persistent discriminatory customary and traditional practices; poverty; slow or lack of implementation of policies/ enacted laws and recommendations by women's groups; their continued subjection to subordination and GBV; and to political intimidation. The study revealed that the prevalent high illiteracy rate, discriminatory cultural and religious practices, and the financial and logistical constraints, all undermine women's confidence and capacity to participate effectively in community and national peacebuilding and development programmes.

In conclusion, the study recorded some suggestions by interviewees such as: focusing on specific gender projects, increased financial support and collaboration with LWCSOs and other women's groups, support to capacity building, provision of an unhindered political space, the implementation of gender laws; and a proper reparative justice mechanism as possible solutions for overcoming some of the challenges.

"Peacebuilding involves all processes that build positive relationships, heal wounds, reconcile antagonistic differences, restore esteem, respect rights, meet basic needs, enhance equality, instill feelings of security, and power moral agency and are democratic, inclusive and just."(**Professor Elisabeth Porter: 2007**)
(Available at: www.unisa.edu.au/hawke institute/cpcm/.../porter-longterm.doc)

CHAPTER ONE
THESIS OVERVIEW, DESIGN, AND CONSEPTUAL ISSUES:

Introduction

For centuries past, the world has experienced unprecedented acts of violence by humans against others, and the intensity of these wars have often been very dramatic.[1] Even with the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 with its intension to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to "maintain international peace and security", the last fifty years of the 20th Century saw an estimated 86 million of people killed in non-international conflicts."[2] Scholars and political scientists have advanced many reasons for these conflicts but the overarching foundation is to always gain power and control the other. Comparatively, however, historical records show that wars of the last fifty years have had more severe impacts considering the number of casualties and the extensive damages they have caused.

Review of literature shows that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, nearly sixty (60) countries were either in conflict or have recently come out of conflict; and for the most part, these countries were the poorest on the planet.[3] Comparatively though, the 1999 report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) clearly indicates that "Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the world and is the only region in which armed conflict is on the increase."[4] In these unstable and disruptive conflicts, women are at a greater risk of becoming targets for multiple forms of violence. Women whether as soldiers, abductees, displaced persons, refugees, or survivors of landmines or sexual violence, experience conflict differently from men. The Beijing Conference of 1995 was purposefully organised to examine the effects of these

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1 Kayamibwa, Samuel. Impact of war on conservation: Rwandan environment and wildlife agony. World Conservation Monitoring Centre. 5th May 1998. 219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK. p.1 (Available at: http://www.springerlink.com/content/tl2377937jm6m33l/). Sourced: November 5 2009
2 Bassiouni, M.C. (1994) "Enforcing Human Rights Through International Criminal Law and Through an International Criminal Tribunal" in Henkin, L. & Hargrove, J.L. (eds), Human Rights: An Agenda for the Next Century, Washington, DC: American Society of International Law, pp.347-82
3 Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005. War and Peace in the 21st Century*, 2005.
4 De Waal, A. (1996). "*Contemporary warfare in Africa; Changing Context, Changing Strategies*". IDS Bulletin Vol. 27 no. 3. pp.6-16

conflicts and issues which affect women before, during and after conflicts such as discrimination against them, gender equality, gender violence against women, women's political participation and many others, by women of different origins, backgrounds, statuses, creed and colour but united by their similar experiences with conflict. This historic conference publicised the highlighted issues affecting women globally for an appropriate intervention of the international community, which indeed have resulted in the United Nations ground breaking resolutions such as 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and others. In summary, the Beijing Conference described the negative effects of violent conflicts on women thus:

> *Civilian victims, mostly women and children often outnumber casualties among combatants….women often care for the injured combatants and find themselves unexpectedly cast as the sole parent, managers of the household and caretakers of the elderly, raped as a tactic of terrorism. The impact of violence against women and violations of their rights in such situations are experienced by women of all ages, who suffer displacement, loss of home and property.* (Beijing Platform for Action – 1995)

But even more significant about conflicts in the African context is the fact that the processes of conflict management, peacemaking and peacebuilding are mainly state driven, an affair that is apparently conducted between the state, the non-state actors including rebel groups and the international mediators of state diplomats and those of multilateral agencies with little consideration for non-state actors like local civil society.[5] But a glance at the literature on conflicts in the world today, especially Africa, reveals that conflicts often involve non-state or armed opposition groups formed and supported mainly by portions of the civil populace, who act autonomously from the recognised government. These include rebel groups, irregular armed groups, insurgents, dissident armed forces, guerillas, liberation movements, freedom fighters and de facto territorial governing bodies. The Non-State Actors Working Group (NSAWG) defines non-state actors (NSAs) as "organisations with less than full international recognition as a government who employ a military strategy"[6] to achieve their goal. In other words, these are organisations that commit violent acts that seemingly have no purpose other than to inflict terror among the civilian population and to disrupt the socio - economic fabric and political operations; and where possible come to power.

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[5] Adejumobi, Said. The Civil Society in Conflict Management and Peace building in Africa. (Available at: http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/idep/unpan002409.pdf) Sourced: 5/17/ 2010

[6] Busé, Margaret. Non- State and Their Significance. MAIC. 1 Court Square, Harrisonburg, VA 22807. (Available at: http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/5.3/features/maggie_buse_nsa/maggie_buse.htm) Sourced: 15/5/2011

In most, if not all of these conflicts, the economic, social, and political consequences have rendered or increased the fragility of these conflict affected African nations, where the necessary resources and finances required for the post-conflict recovery, are absent. The processes of reconstruction and peacebuilding tasks of the national or care taker governments and their international backers, diplomats, multilateral agencies and the international community are huge and complex[7], which therefore demands greater cooperation among various stake holders in order that the intended outcome (peace and development) becomes sustainable. In other words, at the end of most of these conflicts, if not all, the international community, as well as the affected state and society, have engaged in what is now generally called peacebuilding. As Chandra Sriram et al put it "many recent scholars have even begun to identify a liberal peacebuilding consensus, for good and ill, which specifies a key set of activities as central to post-conflict pacification."[8]

In today's world, engagement with NSAs through negotiation in a bid to bring them into the political arena in a legitimate way, open dialogue with them to make sure that the isolation in which they operate in is removed, share political power and become state actors has become a common practice in conflict resolution circles. Unfortunately though, civil society (CS), which constitutes an important part of non-state actors, has often received very little consideration in these processes and these state driven approaches have often produced state oriented problems ranging from corruption on the part of government, nepotism, tribalism/regionalism, marginalisation, and exclusion to favouritism, often leading to a relapse into conflict and slow recovery process in most of these post-conflict countries. In most conflicts, CS is usually a key actor in the dynamic processes of conflict resolution, management and the building of sustainable peace, as conflicts do not occur in a vacuum but "are products of social structure and character of society of which the civil society is an integral part."[9]

Participation of citizens in political decision making is a core concept of functioning democracies. By this thesis, CS therefore has tremendously and important roles to play within

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7 Peinado, Manuela M. The Role of NGOs and the Civil Society in Peace and Reconciliation Processes. Centro d'investigacion para la Paz. Madrid, Spain. p.1

8 See: Chandra, Sriram. L., Olga, Martin-Ortega and Johanna Herman. (2011). Promoting the rule of law: From Liberal to Institutional Peacebuilding

9 Ibid.

democracies, which is a concept that is equally reflected in the international cooperation discourse. [10] It therefore became very clear at least in the early 1990s that a functioning participatory democracy is a prerequisite for sustainable development and a vibrant civil society is considered as precondition to go beyond 'formal' democracies, to achieve long lasting attitudinal changes and to overcome resistance by former, undemocratic leaders and elites. Hence, the active civil and civic society engagement is widely seen as critical to boosting the accountability of governments toward their citizens, to strengthen public policy decisions and to increase the effectiveness of development interventions.[11] Collaboratively peace studies, which is the art of resolving conflict and the processes of peacebuilding, and which is by nature interdisciplinary, drawing aspirations, theories and methods from disciplines as diverse as theology, psychology, physics, sociology, anthropology, political science and law[12]; requires the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially civil society.

Armed conflicts are a fundamental obstacle to development. Hence during and in the aftermath of conflict, high hopes are placed on the de-escalating or conflict-transforming power of civil society and its contribution to sustainable peace. From this perspective, citizens, communities and civil society organizations are perceived as key actors in overcoming existing conflict lines, factionalism and organised violence. In the recent past, following the failure of these state driven peacebuilding processes mentioned above, the role of civil society in the conflict-affected countries has gained immense and wider acknowledgement internationally; especially for example their renowned activities such as monitoring and lobbying and the pushing of the local state authorities to fulfill their responsibilities for the implementation of the rule of law–which is the focus in the current crisis management approach by the United Nations and some international non-governmental organisations (INGOs).For instance, the process of annulling the June 12,1993 presidential elections in Nigeria by the vicious military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida could not have been possible without the connivance of some civil society groups under the umbrella role of the "Association for Better Nigeria (ABN)."[13] In a more pragmatic way, this corresponds to an attempt by outsiders to identify "civil society" in a "failed" state, to

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[10] Paffenholz, Thania, and Christopher Spurk. Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding. Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction. Paper No. 36 / October 2006. p.1

[11] Ibid.

[12] Note that John Burton (1986, p.40) preferred to describe the field of conflict resolution as "a disciplinary"

[13] Op.Cit. Adejumobi Said. The Civil Society in Conflict Management and Peace building in Africa…p.2

play NGOs, individuals, women, religious groups or "elders" against "warlords", and "low politics" against "high politics."[14]Some of the latest of these indications of recognition and acceptance of CS's role came at the wake of a recent UN Civil Society conference on the role of civil actors in peacebuilding, and the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2006 served to further entrench the issue on the international policy agenda.[15]Both of the resolutions that established the PBC called for the Commission to "consult with civil society, non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations and the private sector engaged in peacebuilding activities, as appropriate." [16] In other words, it has now become clear that promoting civil society organisations in general and local women's civil society organisations (LWCSOs) in particular leads to peacebuilding. Unfortunately, however, despite this recognition of the importance of civil society's role in peacebuilding, contributions by LWCSOs to peace and development are still to be fully recognised, accorded the same value and political space and support like those of their male counterparts. Secondly, although many attempts have been made to assess the role of state and non-state actors by NGOs, UN and international peacebuilding organisations, yet very few indebt academic studies have been done on the role of LWCSOs in peacebuilding; which also points to an existing knowledge gap in the academic literature on the contributions by these LWCSOs.

The study therefore is an attempt to investigate and piece together the results of this renewed efforts by LWCSOs in post-war Sierra Leone and the existing records of their contributions in the pre-colonial, colonial, and the post-independence/ dictatorship of Siaka Stevens regimes, and show how some of these regimes rendered LWCSOs moribund and ineffective peacebuilders by eroding some of their traditional roles, in order to contribute in a modest way to filling the existing gap in the literature. In doing this this study highlights not only the major contributions by LWCS to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone but also assesses the impacts of these interventions on the target beneficiaries and highlights the problems they face in the process. But more importantly also, this study is an attempt to highlight and examine the uninvestigated gender

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[14] Pouligny, Beatrice. Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peace Building: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building 'New Societies'. A paper presented at the Conference on *"Post-conflict peace building: How to gain sustainable peace? Lessons learnt and future challenges"*, Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. October 11-14 2004 (co-organized by the PSIS and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) (Available at: http://www.ceri-sciences-po.org/cherlist/pouligny.htm).p.1 Sourced: 5/17/2010

[15] Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, New York, 19-21 July 2005

[16] Institute for Global Policy. S/RES/1645 and A/RES/60/180, para 21. (Available at: http://betterpeace.org/node/26) Sourced: 5/17/ 2010

relationships and their impacts on women' civil society and the nation-building process in Sierra Leone even before the advent of colonialism. I wish to clearly state here that this study, on the whole, is firstly a departure from the traditional international relations and its approaches by focusing mainly on the sociological dimensions as an integral part of the analysis. The political, economic and cultural dimensions are not ignored but are included in a more holistic view of shaping the gender relations that all culminated into the renewed LWCSOs peacebuilding process that this study is set to examine. Secondly, the study is different from other works on CS in many ways, but most significantly the major difference is that this is a premier and comprehensive research report that exclusively examines in totality the gender relations that has existed since the state formation period, the containment and control of local civil society's activities, especially LWCS, by the subsequent administrations up to the eve of the outbreak of the rebel war; and the contributions by LWCSOs to Sierra Leone's post-war peacebuilding in a codified and concise volume; utilising the most recent available and accessible materials on the subject matter.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most violent conflicts in the world have and or end either with the signing of a peace agreement, a power sharing deal or in a military victory. However, ending overt conflicts in either way does not mean the achievement of peace.[17] Rather, the 'post-war' rebuilding processes that follow, which is aimed at returning the conflict ridden 'country' to normalcy, often referred to as peacebuilding, provides "a new set of opportunities that can be grasped or thrown away."[18] The United Nations, individual states, international community, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and civil society have been increasingly involved in trying to rebuild and transform these shattered communities into peaceful ones in the aftermath of violent conflicts.

From the literature on violent conflicts, civil society organisations (CSOs), especially women's groups in Africa have been and continue to be deeply involved in peace work and peacebuilding

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[17] Licklider concluded that only one-third of the negotiated settlements of 'identity civil wars' (or ethnic conflicts) between 1945 and 1993 that lasted for at least five years resulted in lasting peace. Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993", *American Political Science Review*, 89:3(September 1995), pp. 685-687.

[18] Rothstein, Robert L., "Fragile Peace and its Aftermath" in *After the Peace: Resistance and Reconciliation* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1999), p. 224.

initiatives by picking up the pieces from wars mainly started by men.[19] In other words, civil society has been instrumental in the reconceptualisation of peace and security from a "state-centered" process to one that is "people centered."[20] As Thelma Ekiyor argues "[T]his focus on people's security emanates from the belief that fundamentally the sustainable security of states can only be attained through the security of its people."[21] This belief is commonly shared by regions and countries around the world that have had experiences with open conflicts and civil wars, which have ravaged and devastated their communities and rendered the lives of ordinary people meaningless. However, and unfortunately, these meaningful contributions especially by LWCSOs have often been overlooked or not accorded the value it deserves in Africa in general and Sierra Leone in particular. In the aftermath of the civil war in Sierra Leone, Joe Pemagbi, the former Chair of the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights (NCDHR) acknowledged this fact in one of the reports of his commission by pointing out the prevalent discriminatory gender practices against women and their exclusion from participation in the politics of the country. He said:

> *We have seen that the authoritative nature of traditional African administration structure excludes women and young people from the mainstream of decision making. The chiefs and the "grey hairs" have the "authority" to take decisions on behalf of women and the community at large. We have also seen the franchise at the chiefdom level favours men, limiting the participation of women in decision – making, including the right to choose their leaders. To understand rights, exercise rights and promote rights, rights should be exercised by those entitled to them, not by others on their behalf.[22]*

The United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) Ban Ki-moon also clearly acknowledged this mishap in his 2008 report to Security Council on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1625 on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. He said "women in Africa have time and again demonstrated a strong commitment to working to achieve sustainable peace, but regrettably are still underrepresented at the formal stages of conflict prevention."[23]

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[19] Elizabeth Ferris. *Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute.* P.O.Box 1520, S-751 45 Uppsala Sweden. (2004).p. 25

[20] Ekiyor, Thelma. (2008). The Role of Civil Society in conflict prevention: West African Experience. p. 27 . (Available at: http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2835.pdf) Sourced: 17/03/2011

[21] Ibid.

[22] Pemagbi, Joe. "The challenges to democracy in Sierra Leone". In Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart (eds). *Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone National Commission, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat. 2002). p.33

[23] United Nations Organization. (14 January 2008). Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. S/2008/18.

At the end of every war, there is always the process of mending broken relationships and the rebuilding of shattered communities. Women have not only always been at the centre of these activities but they were also very active against wars and colonial politics – e.g. participating or organising resistance to foreign domination and or invasions during the colonial era, campaigning against wars and for their human rights. Among the numerous examples, I present these few to illustrate the point - the Giriama uprising of Kenyan women against the British (1911 – 1914), when they refused to pay taxes and to do forced labour in their bid to drive the colonial settlers away from their lands; the Japanese women protesting against racism and nuclearism; Palestinian and Israeli women trying to overcome barriers of distrust and enmity; Northern Ireland women protesting against the violence that prevailed there; the Nigerian women taking over the marketplace; the South African women whose long history of nonviolence resistance was central to the country's struggle against apartheid; [24]and the Austrian physician Helen Caldicott's expression of an antiwar maternal sentiment position well known to the United States in which she said:

> *[W]omen all over the world are mobilizing for disarmament .....As mothers we must make sure the world is safe for our babies....Look at one child, one baby .....I have three children, and I understand the value of every human life....I appeal especially to the women to do this [peace] work because we understand the genesis of life. Our bodies are built to nurture life.*[25]

It most African societies also, it was and still is a common practice, although may now be done differently, for a family from one village to give their daughter in marriage to a son of another village[26] as a way of enhancing a stronger and cordial relationship that would prevent or diminish the incidences of conflict between the two communities. Might was right and wars of conquests by warriors were the order of the day during the ancient times. Therefore, having a powerful warrior in the region (e.g. like Samurai of Japan, Bai Bureh of Sierra Leone, King Logbengula of Southern Africa etc.) during the period before colonialism as an in-law, meant that the village from which the daughter came was automatically free from attacks by this warrior and his war machine and if attacked by another warrior, they were guaranteed of defense by their in-law.

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[24] Op.Cit. Elizabeth Ferris. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute…p.27

[25] Caldicott, Helen. (1981). *War Resister's League Calendar* in Sara Ruddick. (1989). Maternal Thinking Toward A Politics of Peace. Beacon Press: Boston, USA.p.148

[26] Elise Boulding. "Warriors and Saints: Dilemmas in the History of Men, Women, and War" in Elizabeth Ferris. *Women, war & Peace: Research Report: Life & Peace Institute.* P.O.Box 1520, S-751 45 Uppsala Sweden. (2004).p.25

Hence the people's survival and peaceful existence was assured. During the Zanzibar Conference of 1999, Salma Salim Amour, the wife of the President of Zanzibar Salim Amour called on all "first ladies of Africa" including all other women to "sensitise their husbands to the culture of peace and convince them not to wage war anymore."[27]

The Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor in recognition and commendation of women's determined stance against war and their positive contributions to peace said "women and life are synonymous terms. A woman gives life, she is the most apt at preserving it", but adding that "only four percent of decisions are taken by women in the world" while "women are the messengers for peace."[28]By and large, there are problems of serious gender imbalances as women have and still often been largely excluded from important decision making processes that affect societies in Africa, as was the case in Sierra Leone during the 1999 Lome Peace negotiations – where the women who worked tirelessly for the process to materialise, were only granted an observer status.[29]

During the rebel war in Sierra Leone women raised their voices in protest and demand for cessation of hostilities and the restoration of sanity of the shattered population, which warranted their uprising against the then intransigent rebel leader Foday Sankoh in 2001 that led to his arrest, detention and death afterwards and many more, are all testimonies of this undisputed fact. But these besides, any genuine post conflict peacebuilding process should aim at "offering an important opportunity to strengthen women's political participation, enshrining this in the constitution and law, developing governance institutions and processes that are inclusive of women and supporting women to engage in political processes;"[30] as well as engaging in other important peacebuilding activities inorder to achieve sustainability. Lyytikainen reiterates the importance of women to any peace process by submitting that "the roles of men and women can change considerably during armed conflict as women take up new roles to maintain livelihoods, protect their families, and take part in the conflict or campaign for peace. It is crucial that the opportunities that changing gender roles present are not lost in post-conflict peace processes and

27 Op.Cit. Peace Women (WILPF)…. p.2
28 UNESCO Press 1999a. In Peace Women (WILPF)…p.2
29 Op.Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. (2008). The Role of Civil Society in conflict prevention…p.28
30 Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone. 83 Working Paper. (June 2009). FRIDE, Madrid, Spain. p.1

reforms."[31] Interestingly and most unfortunately however, the situation in African settings, including Sierra Leone presents quite the opposite, as Maley clearly points out that the political stakes in the post-conflict settings are usually so high and that the insecurity and patronage that characterises politics most often act as obstacles to women's effective participation.[32] In other words, the hard and physical exercises in the peacebuilding processes are often largely shifted to women; but these meaningful contributions, though with positive impacts on the communities, are not only unrecognised, discarded as a political good but these are not given the required support. Women's activities in African communities are often labeled 'volunteer', 'charitable' or 'social' even though they may have political impacts. Commenting on this anomaly that often plague countries on the African continent, Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange – Isis-WICCE, in an attempt to throw more light on this problem had this to say:

> *Often, women's work in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in such complex wars that are in highly patriarchal settings goes unnoticed. Therefore, it is not surprising that, inspite of the fact that the women of Sierra Leone have continued to make a significant contribution towards the peacebuilding process and the resolution of the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone…….that had degenerated into a dire humanitarian crisis of unprecedented proportions, this contribution has not been given its due recognition. The women played a leading role in the cessation of the hostilities as well as the peace negotiation for a return to sanity.*[33]

The neglect of these sufferings and the notable actions of these women, though not political but have no doubt greatly contributed to peace, could not be unconnected with the fact that what is recognised as 'political' is largely defined by men. Undertaking a thorough cross examination of the existing literature on these issues raised in this study, one finds out that the practice of sexism, patriarchy and male chauvinism (though getting better) constitute the strong foundation, neatly dressed in traditional beliefs and practices that have and continue to create barriers to women's full participation in the development continuum, especially in Sierra Leone.

However, proactive steps by the UN to address this issue has led to covenants, resolutions such as 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 etc. and conventions such as CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Maley, Michael. "Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries."19 to 22 January 2004. Glen Cove, New York in Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone. 83 Working Paper. (June 2009). FRIDE, Madrid, Spain. p.1

[33] Isis – WICCE. 2005. Nurturers Of Peace, Sustainers Of Africa: African Women's Unique Peace Initiatives. Kampala, Uganda. p.69

Platform of Action, Convention on Women's Political Rights; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and others, the Africa Charter on Political and Human Rights of Women; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) (1998) among others, coupled with recent international actions, especially the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission by UN within its existing structure, with a mandate to integrate gender perspectives into all its work,[34] are all encouraging. Although there are biases and shortcomings in international law and within the UN itself relating to issues of gender equality that still needs to be addressed, coupled with the feminist critique which undermines the use of international law as a tool for the furtherance of women's needs and priorities in peacebuilding, yet these instruments are tools that can be used to incorporate the needs of women into decision and policy-making with respect to peacebuilding that may be instrumental in shaping institutional and state practice in this way.[35]For example, Sierra Leone has over the years granted free primary education to the girl child, and passed into law three gender bills and developed other gender policy documents etc. However, the experiences of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in the Mano River Union (MRU) countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone illustrates that women still face barriers in making their voices heard.[36] Key issues relating to beliefs, harmful traditional and cultural practices, unequal participation in politics, policy formulation and implementation, and the absence of a proper reparation process, which should be in brief, interactive, useful, fitting, and effective,[37] and some other important issues still needs to be examined and addressed if sustainability of the peace in Sierra Leone is to be attained.

In summary, despite the sufferings women face during violent conflicts in Africa, the Sierra Leone case presents an interesting episode of both opportunities and the challenges in enhancing women's participation in the context of post-war peacebuilding, as the country is still experiencing significantly high level of gender inequality and occupied the bottom position in the 2007/2008 UNDP's Gender Development Relaxed Index and third from below in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD's) Social Institutions and

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34 A/RES/60/180 and S/RES/1645 (2005), paragraph 20.

35 Ibid. pp.30-31

36 Karame, Kari H. *"Gender Mainstreaming the Peacebuilding Process"* in Training for Peace (TfP) -The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). Gender and Peacebuilding in Africa. Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institute. (August 2004). P.O. Box 8159 Dep. N-0033.Oslo Norway. p.16

37 Walker, Margaret, U. 2010. "The Aquinas Lecture, 2010: What is Reparative Justice?". Marquette University Press: Milwaukie, Wisconsin, USA. p. 21

Gender Index, which measures gender equality.[38] Documentation of these stories of positive contributions of women, which could be a starting point for transformation, has become something of a growing industry in Africa, especially in Sub-Sahara.[39] But ridiculously though, this extensive documentation process is yet to gain prominence among gender scholars and researchers in Sierra Leone.

In light of all the above issues raised in this study and their ramifications, interventions and the challenges at hand, I therefore started off to explore, through careful examination in order to put together this premier and comprehensive report, the contributions and challenges of LWCSOs engaged in building the peace in war torn Sierra Leone. This attempt is not only meant to bring out the contributions by LWCS but to also establish the link between women and peace from a socio-cultural standpoint since pre-historic Sierra Leone. This study covers the decade long peacebuilding process (2002 to 2012) in Sierra Leone but with insights well before this period, using three LWCSOs -Mano River Women's Peace Network-MARWOPNET, The 50/50 Group and Women in Peace network-WIPNET/ Sierra Leone as case study groups. In an effort to shed sufficient light for a fuller understanding of some crucial but pertinent issues/ questions such as, why Sierra Leone, why civil society and why local women for this study were raised, and this study provides adequate responses to these issues in the subsequent chapters that follow, especially the second chapter.

To undertake this odious task successfully, my study raises one main question and three sub questions. However, all of these questions do not provide definitive or precise answers to the research topic/ question. Rather, I have identified these research questions as guide to this exploratory venture. These research questions are:

What contributions are LWCSOs making to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone?
   a) How are the activities of local women's civil society organisations impacting the target beneficiaries and contributing to promoting women's rights and issues in Sierra Leone?

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[38] Op.Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone…..p.1
[39] Peace Women (WILPF): Women's International League for Peace and Freedom "Engendering Peace in Africa: A Critical Inquiry into Some Current Thinking on Role of African Women. 5/2/2009. p.1 (http:www.peacewomen.org/resources/Organizing/ACCORD2001.html)

b) How are these activities of LWCSOs contributing to the growth, and enhancement of civil society's role in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process?

c) What are some of the major challenges faced by LWCSOs in their efforts to contribute to the establishment of a more peaceful post-war Sierra Leone and how can these challenges be overcomed?

1.1.1 Basic Assumptions and Hypothesis

Recognition of the potential role and contributions by civil society/ local women's civil society and therefore the call for their inclusion in all peacebuilding processes is huge amidst some reservations. Based on this imminent support from UN and the international community, coupled with the existing literature on successful document cases of LWCSOs peacebuilding ventures around the world, this study also tentatively assumed that LWCSOs have the potential to contribute to peace and that promoting them will lead to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. This assumption led the formulation of the following working hypotheses below for thorough investigation by this study. These are:

1. That the conducive political environment, financial and material resources or support that LWCSOs require for their participation are not available to them.

2. That LWCSOs lack the adequate experience, training and the skilled human resource to be effective in their peacebuilding venture in post-war Sierra Leone.

3. That competition for donor support and funding and lack of coordination amongst LWCSOs is a hindrance to their effectiveness in the peacebuilding process.

4. That the post-war peacebuilding activities of LWCSOs are not likely to make significant impacts on target beneficiaries and hence greatly contribute to the overall peacebuilding in Sierra Leone as widely believed.

1.1.2 Research Variables

As the discriminatory practices mentioned above, which are discussed in detail in the following chapters, were believed to be certainly driven by some factors, I came up with some variables, both dependent and independent that might be fueling the discriminatory thoughts/ acts against women, which were identified based on the assumptions made. Similarly so, based on a wide range of knowledge and understanding of the politics, customs, beliefs, and the traditions of

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practice in Sierra Leone, this study made these assumptions in order to undertake a thorough investigation of the subject matter - that:

i) The low recognition of women's contribution to peace in Sierra Leone is influenced by their perceived traditional roles in society.

ii) Peace, peacebuilding and development issues and projects lack the awareness of gender and gender differences in Sierra Leone.

iii) Cultural practices and traditional beliefs help reinforce the unvalued nature of women's peace work.

iv) The Sierra Leone constitution is patriarchal, gender insensitive and therefore highly supports inequitable status quo, leading to inequality in participation by citizens, especially women.

1.2 Why Sierra Leone for the Research? Establishing the Uniqueness and Suitability for Research

The writings of scholars and the available literature on global conflict have revealed that Africa has been the most conflict-prone region in the world during the 21st century. Although causes of these civil wars have not been agreed upon but vary from different scholarly view points, yet there is an agreeable phenomena among scholars about the characteristic features and effects of these wars, which range from battle/ related deaths, forced displacement of millions of persons internally or as refugees; poverty and economic collapse, infrastructural destruction, looting, rape to sexual slavery. But comparatively though, the eleven yearlong Sierra Leone civil conflict (1991-2002) produced features that are exclusively peculiar to it, thus making it very distinct from all other civil wars since WW II. Three peculiar characteristic features, coupled with the need to investigate the loudly trumpeted role of civil society, especially women's society that greatly informed the choice of Sierra Leone for this study. These three unique features are discussed below:

Firstly, the civil war in Sierra Leone was one of the most violent conflicts anywhere in the late 20th century. Apart from the estimated death toll of between 50 – 200, 000 and another 2million forced displacement, the war became internationally renowned for its horrific atrocities -

especially the wide spread amputations of villager's limbs.[40] The massive and widespread mutilation and, in particular, amputation of hands, arms, legs and other parts of the body was instituted during January 1999 RUF invasion of the capital Freetown. Utilising the services of axes, machetes, and knives the rebels killed and maim hundreds of people, mostly men but also women and children.

Lansana, a 24 year old youth, and one of the three brothers whose hands were first hacked off as they were attempting to flee towards an ECOMOG position during the January invasion, described how one of his brothers died near the site of the amputation. According to him:

> *The closer ECOMOG moved to our area, the more they [the rebels] started committing atrocities. At 9:00 a.m. me and my brothers Amara, seventeen, and Brima, twenty, decided to flee. We packed up a few things and then took off. About a quarter mile from our house, we rounded a bend and ran straight into a group of about fifty rebels. They argued about whether or not to kill us and then one of them said "let's send them to ECOMOG," which is their way of saying our arms should be cut. They told us to lie down in the road, face down they had their guns to our heads. The first to be cut was Brima; they cut his left hand with an axe. Then my left hand was hacked off and then Amara's right hand. They didn't ask us any questions or accuse us of anything. There was a lot of gunfire all around. The battle for the place was really on. We were all bleeding so much. Brima tried to get up a few times, but he stumbled and fell. The last time he only made it a few yards and then collapsed. He couldn't move, he fell down right there. I think he lost too much blood or just couldn't take the shock. It was so tense; the bullets were flying and me and Amara had no other choice. We had to leave our brother right there on the street. After we got out of the hospital we went back to the place where it happened. The people there told us Brima had been buried later that day in a common grave, right near where he fell.[41]*

More horrifying was that the "[R]ebel armies hacked off limbs, carving their initials into the victims' flesh as a warning to others. Children, some as young as eight, were forced to batter their parents to death, then eat their brains before being sent to the front or used as sex slaves…Women's vaginas were sewn up with fishing lines, villagers' mouths clamped shut with padlocks. Drug-crazed soldiers would rip open pregnant women's stomachs after taking bets on

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[40] Ben-Ari, Nirit and Earnest Harsch. Sexual Violence, an 'invisible war crime.' Sierra Leone Truth Commission condemns abuse, discrimination. *Africa* Renewal, Vol. 18 #4 (January 2005). p.1 (Available at: http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol18no4/184sierraleone.htm) Sourced: 10/10/2009

[41] Human Rights Watch interview, Freetown, May 12, l999 in Human Rights watch. Sierra Leone Getting Away with Murder, Mutilation, Rape New Testimony from Sierra Leone July 1999, Vol.11 No 3(A) (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/sierra/) Sourced: 10/10/2009

the sex of the foetus, and then parade the little heads on pikes. At least one man was skinned alive before his flesh was picked off and eaten…"[42] are some of the testimonies of atrocities committed by the rebels.

There are also accounts of frequent and particularly sadistic practice of burning people alive. Children and the elderly seemed to be particularly vulnerable. There are a few documented cases of children being thrown into burning fires and many accounts of elderly people being left behind in a burning house as their children and grandchildren were forced to flee in haste. The pleas by other family members to retrieve their children or elderly parents from burning houses most often received threats of death.

Ibrahim, 25 years of age, described how two of his nieces were burned alive as their father begged to remove them before the rebels set their house on fire. He narrated that:

> *At around midnight, I was woken up by the sound of screaming and shouting near my cousin's house. I saw four rebels standing outside his house. They screamed for him to open the door and then fired one shot after which everyone scattered, running out the back door into the bush. The rebels then started pouring kerosene on the house but in the meantime my cousin ran back and started screaming frantically, Amy two children are still inside; my four-and six-year-olds are sleeping. I want to take my children! to which the rebel replied If you dare enter I will kill you. By this time the house had taken fire. My cousin insisted again but the rebel became more aggressive, like he was going to shoot him so he had to run away. When he ran into the bush the first time his arms were full with his* other children. He didn't mean to leave them. None of us ever thought the rebels would do *something like that.*[43]

During the January 1999 invasion of Freetown, the three main hospitals - Connaught, Brookfields, and Netland treated ninety-seven victims of amputations resulting from attacks with axes and machetes. The majority of these amputations were those who had one of their hands and arms cut off, including twenty-six double amputations.[44] One hospital treated over forty cases of attempted amputations, serious lacerations to the arms and legs, where the medical staff were only able to save the extremity or extremities.

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[42] The Economist: Sierra Leone, Justice at Last? The trial of Charles Taylor, Liberia's former president starts in The Hague May 31st 2007. (Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/9262468?story_id=9262468) Sourced: 10/10/2009

[43] Human Rights Watch interview, Freetown, April 15, l999 in Sierra Leone Getting Away with Murder, Mutilation, Rape. New Testimony from Sierra Leone July 1999, Vol.11 No 3(A) (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/sierra/)

[44] Human Right Watch. Sierra Leone Getting Away with Murder, Mutilation, Rape. New Testimony from Sierra Leone July 1999, Vol.11 No 3(A) (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/sierra/)Sourced: 10/10/2009

Crimes against humanity, especially women, were shockingly brutal that Peter Takirambudde, the African Director of Human Rights Watch (HRW) had this to say "[T]his is a war in which civilians are the targets. The crimes against humanity described in this report are unspeakably brutal, and the world must not simply avert its attention from the crisis. The United Nations and its member states must show that the rights of all human beings are of equal value."[45]

Secondly, the unique nature of the rebel war in Sierra Leone was seen in its efficacy to attract the largest UN peacekeeping troops in the world numbering 17, 500 military personnel, including 260 military observers at that time. Referred to as the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the forced was created by resolution1346 of the Security Council.[46] The intervention of UN and the international community in the Sierra Leone conflict, leading to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement in 1999 that ushered in the UN peacekeeping forces, did not only save the beleaguered Nigerian led ECOMOG forces from financial and logistical shortfalls, but also the defenseless Sierra Leoneans, especially women from these inhuman rebel atrocities.

Thirdly and most interesting, is the choice of Sierra Leone among the first two selected countries for UN's dramatic, revolutionary and experimental venture at peacebuilding through the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) that created the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This decision was not surprising as for decades past the international community has been dogged by its failures to protect civilians from war – for example in the 1990s peacekeeping forces floundered in Somalia, abandoned 8,000 unarmed Muslim men and boys for the slaughter in Srebrenica, and stood by in Kigali as 800,000 Tutsi civilians were killed in the Rwandan genocide, whilst old conflicts renewed themselves despite celebrated peace agreements around the world.[47]

Roland Paris espoused that of the eleven peacebuilding operations launched between 1989 and 1998 by the UN, only two were successes (Croatia and Namibia), two were obvious failures (Angola and Rwanda) and the seven remaining operations fell somewhere between these two

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[45] *Human Rights Watch. Shocking War Crimes in Sierra Leone:* New Testimonies on Mutilation, Rape of Civilians. *JUNE 24, 1999*

[46] Ibid.

[47] Moore, Jina. Beyond Peace Deals: The United Nations Experiment in "Peacebuilding. "Pulitzer Center on Crisis reporting. (Available at:http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/africa/beyond-peace-deals-united-nations-experiment-peacebuilding)Sourced: 13/10/2011.

extremes.[48] "It was in this context that in September 2003 the UN Secretary-General tasked a high-level panel to propose major reforms to the UN institutions inorder to promote peace and security. Evidently, the Secretary-General and influential UN member states were unsatisfied with the Security Council and the General Assembly's ability to mobilise a sustained support for countries in conflict, especially over the medium to long term."[49] Consequent upon this directive, the United Nations (UN) September 2005 World Summit in New York brought together representatives from more than 170 states to discuss global challenges in issues including security, poverty and an overall reform in the UN as an institution. Among the more significant reforms introduced at this unprecedented gathering of world leaders was the commitment to establish at the United Nations, no later than 31st December 2005, a Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in 2006 as an inter-governmental advisory body to support peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict, and as a key addition to building the capacity of the international community for peacebuilding.[50] All of the above discussed issues suggest that the outcome of a thorough investigation into the contributions by LWCSO's to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone is important and timely in helping to chat the future course of LWCSO's role in post-war peacebuilding and development programmes.

The selection of Sierra Leone as one of the first PBC experimental focus countries, as the Commission's Chairman Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins of Angola described, was a "turning point in the development of UN peacebuilding efforts because it brought together all the relevant actors in Sierra Leone's recovery, but he highlighted that despite the government's efforts there was a great need for international assistance."[51]

1.3. The Scope of the Inquiry/ Objective of Research

As a gender activist with a feminist orientation, I adopted a feminist research methodological approach for this study in order to contribute meaningfully and to meet the aspirations of the feminist scholarship as Shulamit and Davidman also added that the main concern of the international feminist community is that social research should contribute to the welfare of

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[48] Roland Paris, 2004, At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 151

[49] PONZI, Richard. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission: origins and initial practice. 2007 p.7 (Available at: http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2627.pdf). Sourced: 13/10/2011

[50] Home Page: UN Peacebuilding Commission (Available at: http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/). Sourced: 13/10/2011

[51] UN News Centre. UN's Peacebuilding Commission recommends Sierra Leone for Fund support (Available at: http://www.un.org/apps/news/storyAr.asp?NewsID=20242&Cr=Sierra&Cr1=Leone)

women and knowledge.[52] The broad objective of this research therefore is to assess and document the contributions by LWCSOs to the ongoing post-war peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, analyse government's policies in line with UN and international norms and covenants and its peacebuilding activities, and to examine the engagements and work of the Human Right Commission from a gender perspective inorder to ascertain the sustainability of peace that is being built.

In the nutshell, this project examines the interventions and contributions of the target group (LWCSOs) to peace in Sierra Leone; an investigation of whether these groups are getting the needed resources –financial, material/moral support they require - from the government of Sierra Leone or international community for their effective participation; and also investigated whether the required political space and will for their effective participation in the peacebuilding processes is present or conducive as called for by UN Resolution 1325, the African Charter and the three Gender Bills of 2007; and it also highlights the challenges LWCSOs face and the possible solutions to them as suggested by the interviewed respondents.

The study provides and enhances a better understanding of the gender participation and contribution by LWCSOs and women in general to the ongoing peace process in Sierra Leone, not only from the cultural perspective but also from that of human rights and gender equality perspectives as both men and women are stakeholders in the development of their societies. The findings of this study is therefore an addition to the existing body of knowledge or literature on gender participation and thus reinforces the widely acclaimed and undeniable important role LWCSOs have and continue to play in peace and peacebuilding processes in Africa in general and Sierra Leone in particular.

As a pro-feminist venture, this research employed the exploratory descriptive research methods in a move to generate as much information as possible in order to arrive at an informed judgment and inference.

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[52] See: Shulamit, Reinharz & Lynn Davidman. (1992). Feminist Methods in Social Research. New York, Oxford University Press

1.4 Justification and Significance of the Research

The eleven year rebel war in Sierra Leone had untold consequences on the civilian population, especially women who experienced gender-based violence, physical injuries, rape and forced pregnancies, the aftermath of which was trauma and above all social mistrust that had taken hold of the entire population. There is still a high rate of abject poverty affecting mainly women in the rural areas, which is a confirmation that "more than 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion 'absolutely poor' – living on less than $1 per day – are women."[53] The increasing rate and spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases coupled with limited facilities further deteriorate their situations. This situation has had a devastating toll on not only the mental health of women but also on their physical well-being and the nation at large. Although women's traditional roles in a patriarchal society like Sierra Leone are considered secondary, yet women are not only life and care givers, and rearers of children but their daily involvement in conflict resolution and peacemaking among and between these children and their fathers, other members in their local communities and in the nation as a whole, are roles that deserve commendation and applauding. Put simply, they have a stake in ensuring that there is sustainable peace at the family level, which is extends to the community and the nation at large irrespective of their subordinate and inferior positions in the home and the community because of the entrenched patriarchal divide.

It is therefore imperative that we examine the roles of women as agents of peace and to find ways of enhancing them for a lasting peace in violent prone societies like Sierra Leone. In this regard therefore, much significance was given to the reasons mentioned below, which motivated my resolve to focus entirely on investigating the contributions by LWCSOs to the ongoing post-war peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. In a way this study was instituted partly as earlier mentioned to confirm or refute the claim and call by peacebuilding practioners for women's inclusion in peace and decision making processes because of their 'important and indispensable role' that is required for the sustainability of any peacebuilding process. These motivating reasons include:

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[53] Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) - Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit. 2004. "Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations". United Nations, Room S-3035, New York, NY 10017

Firstly, because of the disproportionate strong and negative impact the war had on women; turning many of them into rape survivors, widows, heads of households and caretakers or orphans. Their position as major victims of violence therefore requires their inclusion in order to contribute to whatever is meant to restore peace and sanity to war weary Sierra Leone.

Secondly, because majority of women are traditionally peaceful resolvers of disputes in their families, adopting the best practices which ensures that at least some of the concerns of all conflicting parties are met (a win/win outcome), a family model that seeks fairness and reconciliation rather than victory and retribution.
One of the goals of this study is to explore and help expose and popularise the role of women in the peace building process and to clearly demonstrate how their peacebuilding skills acquired in the 'private' where they traditionally belong can also be more than useful to the 'public' where men belong.

A thorough review of the literature on women, civil society and peace is very vital as by so doing would draw attention by offering the relevant insights into the important role of women in the building of a sustainable peace through their practical conflict resolution practices that are worthy of urgent attention in the current search for solutions to permanent peace in Sierra Leone.

This findings recorded in this study therefore are not only bringing out the indispensable nature of women in the arduous task of nation building and harmonious living but are also helping to fill the existing knowledge gap in the information trend on women due mainly to the lack of a coherent and comprehensive academic agenda to investigate and document these contributions.If women are going to be recognised as viable peace builders and partners in development, their initiatives and contributions need to be fully documented, a source that can also be very useful to gender and peace activists advocating for women's inclusion in all peace, decision making and development processes. Since the study of gender is quite a new and alien phenomenon in Sierra Leone, there are very few known and committed researchers in academe that values this noble task. This therefore makes this research timely and inevitable. Compounding the problem of disregard for the important role of women in peace and development processes are the obstacles posed by the cultural and traditional values that are embedded in secrecy and the mistrust that

also impedes foreign gender academicians or researchers from penetrating local communities for proper investigation of the issues at stake, especially in the remote provincial areas where the issues are very prevalent and chronic. This problem on the other hand, gives me an advantage as a native researcher on gender issues over the 'intruder', from the perspective of the natives - having grown up and studied in the different localities, worked both in academia and with locals at various levels of society, fully aware of the traditional protocols, practices and values, and a speaker of the major important native languages.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are not only contributing to exposing/reducing the gender gap between women and men but also helping to reveal the indispensability of the other (women) in the arduous task of nation building and harmonious living.

The findings of this study are contributing to the enhancement and improvement of strategies in the implementation of women's empowerment schemes/trainings that will help put them in a better stead and to bring them to the lime light as they constitute 52 percent of Sierra Leone's population. McKeon, Prendergast and Plum have all argued that wide spectra of society should be included in peace agreements, as it is believed that this can increase the local ownership and the legitimacy of the peace process, thereby making peace more likely to prevail. There is therefore an urgent need for action to be taken at the highest level of governance on crucial issues of the prevailing gender imbalances in Sierra Leone or else the realisation of poverty reduction and the government's 'agenda for change' becomes questionable as more than half of the population could be further marginalised in the ongoing pot-war peacebuilding process.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are relevant to the government of Sierra Leone, international community, especially the UN and policy makers in enacting and implementing policies that will ensure a strong and focused intervention aimed at strengthening women's participation and contribution to the peacebuilding process that will in turn protect women and their rights at all levels and at all times.
This assessment of women's contribution to peacebuilding is timely as even the UN and international community has now moved into taking proactive decisions and the enactment and

implementation of gender equality policies and resolutions including 1325 rather than the usual nominal call for women's inclusion and support to their peacebuilding ventures.

This study has not only succeeded in digging and presenting the positive contributions LWCSOs are making but is also helping to bring about their recognition as role models, an example that is worth emulating by not only other women's organisations but by all civil society organisations and well-meaning Sierra Leoneans for sustainability of the peace and commitment to the development process.

This documented revelations and findings from this study are not only contributing to increasing the visibility and importance of LWCSOs participation and role in peacebuilding but also highlighting the key issues affecting their peacebuilding skills and capabilities that may require an urgent and stronger advocacy/ intervention by the relevant stakeholders in the peace process.

Finally, the findings of this study can be well utilised both as strong background information and guide to future researchers on the activities of LWCSOs in Sierra Leone.

1.5 Limitations/ Challenges of Research

The study was purposefully restricted to independent umbrella LWCSOs, with both local and regional dimensions that are directly targeting and mitigating conflict and building peace in Sierra Leone from 2002-2011. Peace in Sierra Leone has a direct bearing on peace in the Mano River basin. In other words, the choice of the three LWCSOs for thorough investigation was motivated by the fact that their peacebuilding activities do not only have the ability to enhance peace in the sub-region, their activities cutting across ethnic, social, religious and cultural lines; international boundaries to other countries in the Mano River basin and across the West African sub region; but also serve as 'mothers' or umbrella for numerous indigenous grass root women's peacebuilding organisations. Similarly also it is as a result of their unique intervention at the political (policy) level and contributions that cuts across the socio-cultural life of Sierra Leoneans in their peacebuilding ventures regardless of the patriarchal and discriminatory environment in which they live. The analysis aims at a better overall understanding of the issues, investigates and clarifies the research question that led to the development of a framework for an effective and genuine analysis of LWCSO's contributions to the Sierra Leone peacebuilding

process. It also presents an analysis of the overall strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the threats faced by the LWCSOs in their peacebuilding venture.

Another main challenge I faced in this research was my inability to travel to all the big cities in provincial Sierra Leone because of the huge cost involved and the limited time to interview a huge number of beneficiaries and members of the local women's civil society groups, whose views may differ because of the strict adherence to culture, influence of other factors such the leadership and administrative hierarchy, education and social status.

1.6 The Structure and Organisation of Thesis

This study is divided into eight chapters, neatly linked together as the contents of each chapter flows into the other so as to present a clearer and more coherent picture of the context, issues, concerns and challenges in order to enhance a fuller understanding of them and to arrive at a logical and unbiased conclusion.

Chapter one examined in general, the introductory background to conflicts mainly in Africa and their impacts, especially on women; discussed the statement of problem – the age old disregard for women's civil society organisation's contribution to peace globally, in Africa and Sierra Leone in particular; and raised the research question. The chapter also discussed the standpoint of the study and the reasons that influenced the choice of the topic investigated country and the case study groups – LWCSOs for the study. In other words, it discussed the question why Sierra Leone in a bid to establish the uniqueness and suitability of Sierra Leone for the research, The chapter also discussed in brief the significance and justification for the study, the scope of inquiry, some basic assumptions and hypothesis, some of the challenges and limitations that were encountered, especially in the field during the study period; and the entire structure of the study.

Chapter two offers specific definitions for some key terms among many others as they apply to this thesis and a comprehensive cross examination and or review of the related literature for each of these core terms/ phrases as they relate to the study – such as: civil society and peacebuilding, women and civil society; and women, war and peace. It also offers a vivid explanation of crucial

but pertinent questions to provide strong background information for a fuller understanding of the entire study. It does not only outline the uniqueness of LWCS's contribution to peace in around the world and offer explanations to questions such as: why civil society and why local women in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone as discussed below– delving into the unique historical, socio-cultural and traditional roles of women in Sierra Leone, and discusses the sustained international call and backing for their inclusion at all levels of peace, development, and political decision making processes., and also makes clear the connection between local women's neglect and exclusion, the rebel war (1991-2001); its ills and the avowed LWCSOs activism that followed, which caught my attention, inspired my resolve and ignited my anxiety to undertake this study.

It also provides and discusses the relevant theoretical views of this study, analysis three sample cases of LWCSOs peacebuilding achievements around the world and also offers and discusses the peacebuilding map, which is used as the mode of assessment of the contributions by local women's CSOs involved in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone.

Chapter three discusses the methods and approaches that are utilised in the investigation of the research questions. It spells out the specific perspective, which is feminist that guides every aspect of this study. The choice of a qualitative feminist perspective stems from the design and aim of the study – i.e. to assess and document the contributions by LWCSOs to the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process by employing a peculiar and suitable methodology as recommended by feminist and gender scholars, among which are: feelings, emotions, stories, songs and many others as explicitly explained below. Additionally, it discusses the selected and suitable theoretical views for the study and presents the peacebuilding frame that is be used as basis for analysing the activities in order to determining the level of contributions by LWCS to the post-war peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone.

Chapter four examines and provides a historical analysis of the geographical, social configuration, process of state formation and the gender relationships and women's traditional civil society roles in conflict prevention, peacemaking, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Sierra Leone from pre-colonial to post-independence periods. Firstly, it examines the nature of what is today known as Sierra Leone before colonization by the British colonial; and how the

British colonial policy of indirect rule and its accompanying discriminatory regulations against women and attempted controls – political, economic and social helped to reinforce and support the already existing male supremacy. Secondly, it further discusses the nature of the post-colonial/ independence era and how governance mechanisms both during the colonial and post-independence periods impacted either positively or otherwise on the lives of both men and women in their civic responsibilities (e.g. how positions, statuses and gender relations were altered, maintained, enhanced or improved). It also briefly discusses Women's gender and human rights as enshrined in international, African and sub-regional instruments and examines these rights under the 1991 Constitution and the legal system of Sierra Leone.

Chapter five sheds light on the statuses of LWCS, their rights and contemporary issues as addressed by the constitution and the legal system (laws) of Sierra Leone, with the view of pointing out some of the discriminatory issues that are inherent in this sacred document that hamper the human rights and public participation of local women's CS; and which needs to be addressed by authorities for a more peaceful Sierra Leone. This examination also covers some violations of the human rights of local as evident in various institutions in the country even when the peace is being built. It also provides a background to civil society's renewed activism, especially of LWCS in the new Sierra Leone, establishing its genesis and an avowed evolvement not only from the sustained marginalisation and suppression of women through centuries but the adverse impacts of the war that ignited the change from dormancy to activism as now evident. The chapter also highlights the various categories and or types of civil society based on their composition, functions and the interests they pursue.

Chapter six presents a brief historical profile of the LWCS researched groups - 50/50 Group, WIPNET and MARWOPNET, and a closer examination of government policies, especially those on that geared towards enhancing LWCS's political, civic and human rights; and the peacebuilding ventures, policies and programme implementation to see whether gender awareness and consciousness are a part in accordance with UN Resolutions and International Covenants on gender. In the same vain, the remaining section of the chapter is devoted to examining the activities of different stakeholders including the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) as the recommended arbiter and controller of the gendered human right violations as was seen during the war, UN Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF), Gender Ministry

(MSWGCA), both local and international non-governmental (NGOs/ INGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and others.

The main purpose of this chapter is to ascertain how the activities of the above mentioned organisations/ institutions are contributing to the enhancement of the goal of this study - to determine whether the activities of LWCS are contributing meaningfully to building a sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone, which is also regarded as part of the millennium development goals.

Chapter seven presents an overall analysis of the data collected from the field using the detailed methods in chapter three of the study design, discusses the findings and collaborates these findings with the views expressed in the literature reviewed and the recorded responses by different interviewees belonging to both the local and international stakeholder community engaged in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process
The findings are discussed and analysed in relation to the following question:

a) Are the activities of LWCS promoting women's issues in Sierra Leone?
b) Are they promoting civil society in Sierra Leone?
c) Are they promoting peacebuilding in Sierra Leone and how?
d) What impact if any, has the political will on their peacebuilding activities and its sustainability?
e) What are some of the challenges they face in the rebuilding process?

Answers to these questions are mainly descriptive through analyses of the data contained in the statistical tables and figures; which were also be translated into simple percentages and pie charts for easy understanding. Visual aids in the form of pictures taken during various LWCS activities are also included as they can add meaning and value to the findings.

Chapter eight entails the summary of findings, conclusion, some possible solutions as proffered by the interviewees for overcoming the peacebuilding challenges LWCSOs are facing as highlighted in chapter seven; and offers some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE, SAMPLE CASES AND THEORETICAL VIEWS: ESTABLISHING LWCSO's UNIQUENESS AND SUITABILITY FOR RESEARCH FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

The importance of involving civil society organizations, especially women's groups in resolving conflicts between parties or groups and the building of peace has gained immense momentum and support over the last decade,[54] precisely with the proliferation of armed conflicts in the 1990s and the rising complexity of peacebuilding efforts that the international community faces. Seven distinct functions have been identified as civil society's key functions in the peacebuilding process:[55] such as protection of citizens against violence from all parties; monitoring of human rights violations, the implementation of peace agreements, etc.; advocacy for peace and human rights; socialisation – to promote values of peace and democracy as well as to develop the in-group identity of marginalised groups; fostering inter-group social cohesion by bringing people together from adversarial groups; facilitation of dialogue on the local and national level between all sorts of actors; and service delivery to create an entry point for peacebuilding, i.e. for the six above functions.[56] Based on these functions, there is high anticipation that civil society provides popular support for peace and promotes dialogue and reconciliation between polarised parties or groups.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

2.1.1 Defining Civil Society in a World of Diversity

Civil society is one of the "hottest" concepts in all the social sciences that touch on political life.[57] Civil society, like many other concepts has neither had a universally accepted definition, nor its related concepts of civic culture and social capital. However, the British Library[58] came out with the following characteristics of civil society listed below.

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[54] Lederach, John Paul, 1997. Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, in Camilla Orjuela. Building Peace in Sri Lanka: a Role for Civil Society? Journal of Peace Research 2003; 40; 195 DO1: 10.1177/0022343303040002004. (Available at: http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/40/2/195). Sourced: 14/8/09

[55] Paffenholz, Thania (2009)(ed.). Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical assessment. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. p.5

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hauss, Charles. Civil Society. Beyond Intractability Project. University of Colorado. August 2003.p.1 (http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/civil_society) Sourced: 13/8/09

[58] "Civil Society" – An Agreed Definition. (2003). (http://pages.britishlibrary.net/blwww3/3way/civilsoc.htm). Sourced: 13/8/09

All observers agree that civil society refers to *voluntary* participation by average citizens and thus does not include behaviour imposed or even coerced by the state.

1. For some observers, it only includes political activity engaged in through non-profit organisations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). At the other end of the spectrum, some observers include all forms of voluntary participation, whether in the public or private sector, political or apolitical.

2. Civil society includes not just the individuals who participate, but the institutions they participate in-sometimes called "civil society organisations" or "CSOs". Thus, civil society is strong to the degree that those CSOs are large and powerful.

3. A civic culture therefore is one in which most people think their government is legitimate and that their institutions (if not the leaders at any particular moment) can be trusted.

4. Social capital is the human equivalent of economic capital. It is an intangible resource accumulated by civic society that can be expected when a society finds itself in crisis, as some argue occurred in the United States of America (USA) after September 11.

Douma and Klem have argued that there are many different ways of looking at civil society[59]as it is an elusive, complex and contested issue that has different meanings and interpretations and, over time, different schools of thought, which have influenced theoretical debates and empirical research. But the generally agreed understanding of the term civil society is that it refers to a voluntary and non-profit set of institutions, organisations, and behaviours situated between the state, the market, and the family. Some concepts that are used in this connection are clearly political and incorporate notions of dissent and struggle, while others are more normative and idealistic, and generally emphasise the "good side" of civil society. On the other hand some others conceive civil society basically as a process where groupings or individual actors organise themselves with the aim to protect or extend their interests, ideologies, and identities.[60]

Within the framework of this study however, the I did not deal with all the nuances related to the conceptualisation and definition of this term but adopted the definition of civil society as

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[59] Douma, N. and B. Klem. 2004. "Civil War and Civil Peace. A Literature Review of the Dynamics and Dilemmas of Peacebuilding through Civil Society," Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael.' Unpublished Report. pp.2-3

[60] Kerk, Lutherse. Symposium Report: The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding. 15 November 2005. Utrecht. p.18. (Available at: http://www.gppac.net/documents/Utrecht_Symposium_Report.pdf) Sourced: May 21, 2010

provided for by the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU), which refers to civil society "as comprising social groups, professional groups; NGOs; community-based organisations (CBOs), voluntary organisations; and cultural organisations, among other segments in which women, youth, children, national diasporas and elements of the private sector such as market women women's associations and the media are listed."[61] This definition is most suited for this study as the focus in mainly on LWCSOs, whose membership cuts across all works of life in Sierra Leone to include all of the above mentioned groups.

2.1.2 The Concept of Civil Society: An Ongoing Debate

The concept of civil society has been the subject of considerable and intense debate, but such discussions have been overwhelmingly overshadowed or determined by political discourses on participatory processes, particularly within liberal–democratic states. Thus, John Keane's argument that civil society can be considered "an ideal-typical category that both describes and envisages a complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected non-government institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive and permanently in tension with each other and with the state institutions that frame, construct and enable their activities,"[62] squarely fits within this conceptualisation. Quite a significant number of theorists believe that civil society emerged with the formation of the 'modern' in political and social life, who also place much emphasis on individualism and voluntarism; for others, particularly those engaged in analysing associational groupings in non-Western societies, the purposes of activity rather than the forms of organisations, a classification that recognises 'ascriptive' (ascribable) associations, has been highlighted. Representing this group, for example, Varshney argues that "informal group activities as well as ascriptive associations should be considered part of civil society so long as they connect individuals, build trust, encourage reciprocity and facilitate exchange of views on matters of public concern — economic, political, cultural and social."[63]

Included in these debates is the ideal concept of a "perceived relationship between civil society and democracy as conceptualised through the idea of association."[64] Dilating on the significance

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[61] See ECOSOCC: www.africa-union.org/ECOSOC/home.htm).
[62] Edwards, M. 2004. Civil Society. Cambridge: Polity. p.20
[63] Varshney, A. (2002). Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India. Oxford University Press. New Delhi.p.46
[64] Toohey, A. Social Capital, Civil Society and Peace: Reflections on Conflict Transformation in the Philippines. (2005). p. 3

of associations in contemporary societies, Rudolph in her works "Is Civil Society the Answer?", "traces the influence of de Tocqueville who, in his writings on American society, considered that the associational experience (one that is conducive of respect and trust of the other) fosters an interest in, and a capacity to cooperate in, pursuit of the general or common good."[65] Other prominent theorists such as Coleman and Putnam have drawn on the idea of the capacity to participate, trust and influence others in their respective formulations of social capital. As defined by Putnam "social capital as those features of social organisation such as networks of individuals or households, and the associational norms and values that create externalities for the community as a whole."[66] These externalities, as they concluded, invariably relate to the cohesiveness and strength of a society (degree of trust, rules of civic behaviour practiced, and level of association). For other theorists like Coleman, the conceptualisation of social capital includes "a variety of different entities [which] all consist of some aspect of social structure and [which] facilitate certain actions of actors — whether personal or corporate actors — within the structure."[67]

In her contribution to the debate, Rudolph points out that both Putnam and de Tocqueville, posits a "causal relationship between the social capital constituted by associational practices and the capacity for civic participation and self-government." [68] These ideas were not only acknowledged but have also been developed, and increasingly been incorporated into multilateral agencies' development policies by neo-liberal theorists such as Fukuyama.[69] These policies seek to foster social capital-generating associational forms across the society through enhancing specific qualities within civil society organisations that interface with, and as a consequence of this interaction, strengthen relations with the market.

With the recognition that civil society encompasses a diversity of associational forms, there has been a keen focus by many theorists on the commonalities rather than differences between groups. A number of common features relating to these associational forms have been suggested

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[65] Rudolph, S.H. (2004). 'Is Civil Society the Answer', in S. Prakash & P. Selle. (eds). Investigating Social Capital: Comparative Perspectives on Civil Society, Participation, And Governance. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, California. p.68

[66] Grootaert, C. & Van Bastelaer, T. (eds.) (2002). The Role of Social Capital in Development: *an Empirical Assessment*. Cambridge University Press, New York.p.2

[67] Coleman, J. (1988). 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital', *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 94.p.98

[68] Op. Cit. Rudolph, S.H. (2004). 'Is Civil Society the Answer', in S. Prakash & P. Selle. (eds)…..p.69

[69] Toohey, A. Social Capital, Civil Society and Peace: Reflections on Conflict Transformation in the Philippines....p.4

by Edwards such as: consensual nature of membership rather than legal, the possible exit without loss of status or public rights or benefits and that voluntaristic mechanisms are used to achieve objectives, and dialogue, bargaining or persuasion are used instead of enforced compliance by governments or market incentives by firms. Such a definition recognises civil society's positive engagement in civic life and implicitly, social cohesion.[70] However, even as these ideas are very helpful in theorising associational relations within communities, especially within sectarian communities, yet such conceptualisations of civil society does call into question the identification of civil society as having non-violent tendencies. Cochrane therefore warns that "an inclusive definition of civil society should recognise groups and organisations that might be perceived as having negative and destructive influences, and that civil society itself can be used to justify and defend a multiplicity of political values and objectives."[71]

It is important to acknowledge that these debates concerning the conceptualisation of civil society are also applicable to the Sierra Leone context, with the qualification that the mobilisation of quite diverse civil society organisations starting from the late 1990s, meant that such groups while sharing an interest in socio-political transformation, had markedly different perceptions of what this transformation entailed. Hence, civil society's contribution to Sierra Leone's social life, though not a well-developed and extensively researched phenomenon, has begun to receive some considerable debate and analysis by researchers and activists.

2.1.3 Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Establishing the Importance of Social Capital

Peacebuilding is difficult to define and even more so to achieve in practice.[72] Therefore to be able to successfully and effectively establish the relationship between civil society and peacebuilding requires an understanding of the developing theories of peacebuilding, whose assistance will help place the notions of civil society in the framework of efforts towards peace in areas of conflict, that can enable us analyse the key role that civil society and the associated concept of social capital can play in the peacebuilding process in Africa, and especially in Sierra Leone.

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[70] Ibid

[71] Ibid

[72] Cousens, Elisabeth M. "Introduction" in Elisabeth M. Cousens & Chetan Kumar (Eds), *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2001), pp. 1-20.

For the purpose of this study, I adopted the definition of peacebuilding as offered by Kerk. According to Lutherse Kerk, peacebuilding is "the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately, peacebuilding aims at building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security ….Peacebuilding may involve conflict prevention, conflict resolution, as well as various kinds of post-conflict activities. It focuses on the political and socio-economic context of conflict, rather than on the military or humanitarian aspects. It seeks to ….institutionalise the peaceful resolution of conflicts."[73] In other words the goal of peacebuilding is to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. On the other hand, it also empowers people to foster relationships at all levels that can sustain them and their environment. Peacebuilding supports the development of networks of relationships at all levels of society - between and within individuals, families, communities, organisations, businesses, governments, and cultural, religious, economic, and political institutions and movements.[74] Relationships are a form of power or *social capital*. Connecting people together allows relationships to become the architecture of peacebuilding networks or "platforms" that allow people to cooperate and coordinate in order to constructively address and prevent violent conflict. In order to accomplish this goal, the peacebuilding process therefore requires a combination of approaches to peace through a connecting space or *nexus* for collaboration. Each approach makes a unique contribution and complements other approaches.[75]

The overall concept of peacebuilding in itself literally presents an assumed situation of an existing vacuum that depicts the absence or lack of peace that needs to be built, and that is, a situation of conflict. According to Azar "conflict is an inescapable part of social interaction"[76]and

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[73] Op. Cit Kerk, Lutherse. Symposium Report: The Role of Civil Society in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding…. p.18.

[74] Schirch, Lisa & Manjrika Sewak. The Role of Women in Peacebuilding. European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP). January 2005. p.5.
   (Available at:
   http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf

[75] Schirch, Lisa & Manjrika Sewak. The Role of Women in Peacebuilding. European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP). January 2005. p.5.
   (Available at
   http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf)

[76] Azar, E (1990). The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases, Aldershot: Dartmouth. p. 5

Doucet espoused that it is a "multi-dimensional social phenomenon."[77] In other words, conflict in the social sphere is an essential element of social engineering and development and need not necessarily be seen as a negative process. This therefore practically means that there exists both 'positive' and 'negative' forms of conflict that can produce 'constructive' and 'destructive' results.[78] In the light of this therefore, the process of any meaningful peacebuilding is not to eliminate conflict, but to transform destructive conflicts into constructive ones.[79] Since an examining of the social nature of conflict has clearly shown that there exists a relationship between opposing parties or communities, the most important criteria that is required to be achieved for a positive outcome is transformation in the social sphere. As Burton explains, the important thing to do is for all parties to work to redefine that relationship.[80] This therefore implies that in order to move beyond conflict, relationships between all of the parties involved need to be re-aligned, not just between a selected few.

The long search for a traditional and practical means of addressing conflict has always revolved around negotiation - as Galtung and Jacobsen have often emphasised methods of negotiating an outcome that transcends the conflict terms of reference,[81] or the Mitchell and Banks' collaborative problem-solving workshops.[82] To make the negotiation venture an effective and successful one, various mechanisms of this sacred act have been developed to help bring representatives of conflicting parties together to engage in a process of finding ways to ensure peaceful relations. Desmond Tutu has always emphasised a 'face to face' talk by all parties concerned as a necessary condition that would allow conflicting parties to engage one another on a personal level, as was the case where Michael Cassidy arranged informal meetings for leaders of adversarial groups in the South African context.[83] Referred to as 'Track Two' diplomacy, this approach expunges leaders out of their public positions, offering them a more freer environment to manoeuvre without the fear of being scrutinised by those they purport to represent.[84] Nonetheless, even as this approach may seem a logical step, more so during the

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[77] Doucet, I (ed) (1996). Resource Pack for Conflict Transformation, London: International Alert. p.3

[78] See: Conway, (1972: 4) and Kriesberg (1998: 22)

[79] See: Tidwell, (1998: 72) and Kriesberg 1998: 22

[80] Burton, J. (1996). Conflict Resolution: Its Language and Processes, Lanham: Scarecrow. p.40

[81] Galtung, J and Jacobsen, C (2000), Searching for Peace: The Road to Transcend, London: Pluto. p.210

[82] Ibid.

[83] See: Cassidy, 1995: 67-69

[84] Op.Cit. Azar, E (1990). The Management of Protracted Social Conflict…..p.3

extreme and heated stages of conflict where contact is difficult, the methods affect only elites. In this light therefore, Lederach however points out that elite accommodation is "a more formal and more superficial process."[85] If conflict is regarded as a social phenomenon, there is therefore the need for society to be involved, and not only those in leadership roles, but many of whom are not as representative as they may claim. Hence the need to inform civil society and especially women's civil society.

In a move to deal with conflicts amicably, Arendt Lijphart has proposed consociation, a mechanism geared towards bringing conflicting parties together in the form of a coalition government. This speaks of a "grand coalition" of leaders of all sides, having a mutual veto on decisions, proportionality in executive posts and autonomy of the various "segments" or communities. This method accords a remarkable degree of power to elites in lieu of their leadership status during conflict, that is, they are "conflict elites."[86] And for this reason, the creation of consociational structures in various scenarios have been criticised. For example, concerning the Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland that was an outcome of consociation, Taylor remarks that it supports the "ethnonational group identity as the social base for political devolution,"[87] which emphasises the divisions of conflict. With regards the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Glenny points out that "the three local elites are comfortable with the arrangement as it guarantees their hold on power within their own communities,"[88] predicting the resumption of war following the withdrawal of international forces. In the same vein, Manning's analysis of the case of Mozambique concluded that the involvement of Renarmo in government was as a result of the extra constitutional concessions, but that their chances of remaining in office was unlikely in electoral terms.[89] This in itself is reasonable proof that elite accommodation has its own inherent problems.

As long as elite supporters of conflict remain in power or positions of governance, their communities will ever be conflict prone. Therefore Voutat views the effects of clientelism as a

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[85] Lederach, J (1 999), Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Research. p.55

[86] Lijphart, A (1977). Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration, New Haven: Yale University Press.p.25

[87] Taylor, R (2001), 'Northern lreland: Consociation or Social Transformation?' in ' in McGarry, J (ed), Northern lreland and the Divided World: The Northern lreland Conflict and the Good Fridav Agreement in Comparative Perspective, Oxford: University Press.p.46

[88] Glenny, M. (2000). The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, London: Granta. p.652

[89] Manning, C (2002). 'Conflict management and elite habituation in postwar democracy' in Comparative Politics, Vol 35 No 1 October 2002. p.83

phenomenon that defines the relationship between political leaders and the 'client' populations, that forms the support base in return for elites articulating (and emphasising) fears.[90] Briquet, in her examination of the form of relationship that exists in Corsica, found out that "clans maintain power by holding communities in a conflict stance, while adapting to political environments outside the community context."[91] In general, conflict scenarios give rise to a phenomenal thoughts by which communities see events in terms of the conflict affecting them, and which may lead to the distortion of alternative visions beyond the conflict discourse, which Hunter refers to in the Northern Ireland context as "mediated reality" and by Briquet in the Corsican context as "insular reality."[92] This basically leads to elites control over the flow of information to client groups, even when there is access to such information, the effects of conflict creating a process of information selection, is reinforced by elite rhetoric. Invariably therefore, the sharing of roles by other groupings within a given society would serve to bypass, if not eliminate, this phenomenon.

In addition to maintaining lines of conflict, Pauline Sallembien in her remarks on the clan system in Corsica intimated that "such arrangements exclude alternative discourses, significantly that of women,[93] a view that has won the support of writers such as Kate Fearon in Northern Ireland.[94] Put simply or more glaringly, the possibilities of development for both women's organisations and individual women are often times reduced if not terminated by conflict discourses, which also leads to a shortfall in the development of empowerment and equality agendas. The silencing of women by elite-led processes jeopardise the possibilities of an equitable and sustainable peace.

If conflicts are considered as social interactions and in relation to Love's description of peacebuilding, which is the "practical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction and development;"[95] then so also remedies ought to be. Bloomfield refers to this as a cultural approach, which requires community development in a two-stage

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[90] Voutat, B (2000), 'Territorial identity in Europe: the political processes of the construction of identities in Corsica, the Basque Country, Italy, Macedonia and the Swiss Jura' in Contemporary European History, Volume 9 Issue 2. p.286

[91] Briquet, J. L. (1997). La Tradition en Mouvement: Clientelism et Politique en Corse, Paris: Belin. p.65

[92] See: Hunter (1983: 10) and Briquet (1997: 5)

[93] Loughlin, J and Daftary, F. (1999). Insular Regions and European Integration: Corsica and the Aland Islands, Helsinki: European Centre for Minority Issues. p.39

[94] Fearon, K. (1999). Women's Work: The Story of the Northern lreland Women's Coalition, Belfast: Blackstaff. p.2

[95] Love, M (1995). Peacebuilding Through Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, Aldershot: Avebury. p.44

process - building the capacity of communities themselves and engagement between communities.[96] In a confirmation remark, Montague opines that the development of communities is an important first step. Fitzduff, Byrne and Irwin refer to it as a strategic goal that should go hand in gloves with economic development, a phenomenon that has always been a key area of peacebuilding activity in many places including Northern Ireland, although with mixed responses as regarding its effectiveness.[97] The World Bank strongly believes that social capital is a critical ingredient for human and economic development, and therefore claims that if economics have a role to play in peacebuilding, then social capital invariably is central to that strategy.[98] The existential support for this notion is the fact that peace has been increasingly associated with democracy in various works by various scholars such as Moskowitz.[99] In addition to what has already been discussed above, "the inclusion of civil society in decision-making processes has been increasingly linked with the development of effective democracy."[100] It is therefore very clear from the discussion above that all of the processes that are associated with peacebuilding have a direct link to civil society and the development of social capital.

If the task of peacebuilding is associated with the processes of community development, economic development and the development of democratic structures, it therefore comes as no surprise that civil society plays a central role in the development of theories of peacebuilding. This engagement of civil society in the peacebuilding process has therefore been identified and divided into three separate levels by Lederach - the top level (elites), the middle range and the grassroots level, adding that although there is need for all to be engaged, yet he identifies the middle range level as the most important.[101] According to him, the middle range is the realm of the active areas of social groups that make up civil society, a position Kumar agrees with, "seeing the creation and involvement of civil society as an important part of the rehabilitation of war-torn societies." This is by no means suggesting that the involvement of civil society is limited primarily to post-conflict reconstruction, but an essential element also at every stage of

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[96] Bloomfield, D (1997). Peacemaking Strategies in Northern Ireland: Building Complementarity in Conflict Management, Houndmills: MacMillan. p.55

[97] See: Montague (2001: 24), Fitzduff and Byrne and Irwin (2001: 26)

[98] See: www.worldbank.org

[99] Moskowitz, M. (1959). Human Rights and World Order: The struggle for Human Rights in the United Nations, London: Stevens and Sons.p.157

[100] Op.Cit. Potter, M (2004), In Their Own Words…..p.22

[101] Op. Cit. Lederach, J (1 999), Building Peace…..p.39

the conflict geared towards the transformation of the conflict. [102] On this note therefore, Rasmussen notes that "the presence of unofficial actors is increasingly visible and valuable" and, with a close observation of the relationship between civil society; and governance, it is said that non-state actors do not displace official representatives, but share the stage with them.[103]

In summary therefore, the inclusion of civil society in every area of the transformation process requires the application of social capital. As Cordero clearly opines:

> *Social capital plays a strategic role in building sustainable peace, both in local process management and in transforming the structural factors that hinder it.*[104]

But more importantly, the creation of any social capital needs to take into account the local contexts, which basically means an indigenous development and not imposed from outside. As evident from Belloni's analysis of efforts to build social capital in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it has been identified that part of the peacebuilding process and mechanisms that ignore local factors have hindered the growth of civil society, not helped it.[105] Even as the principle of building civil society is given much importance in the transformation of conflict, it is equally important to note that the method and manner in which this can be achieved, needs to be examined according to context. As Potter comments "no over-arching generic models can be applied wholesale, but general concepts can be adapted to circumstances."[106]

It is an established fact that civil society and the development of social capital are major and essential components in community development, economic growth and democratic structures; which are all required for peacebuilding. In that light therefore, women are likewise major and essential components of civil society. As Reardon exclaims, "the possibilities for peace rest in large measure on the possibilities for women, for their full emancipation and for the realisation of their visions of peace and security."[107] This support for this notion is glaring in Samuel's analysis of the Sri Lankan peace process. Samuel believes that civil society has boosted official

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[102] Kumar, K (ed) (1997). Rebuilding Societies after Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance…..p.2

[103] Op.Cit. Rasmussen, J (1997), 'Peacemaking in the 21st Century…p.42

[104] Op.Cit. Potter, M (2004), In Their Own Words…..p.23

[105] Belloni, R. 2001. "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Journal of Peace Research, 38 (2), 163-80.

[106] Op. Cit. Potter, M (2004), In Their Own Words…..p.23

[107] *Reardon, B* (1993), *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Society, Albany: State University of New York Press.p.4*

efforts to seek peace and that women have been involved in the de-escalation of conflict at the local level – confirming that indeed women are heavily involved in civil society, in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), collectives and local groups.[108]But Samuel was quick to add that their influence is only hindered by their lack of political power to complement this.[109] This scenario has evidently been part of the Sierra Leone context since independence. Now that there has been a loud call from local women for their total inclusion in all matters of national interest, which has been endorsed by the UN and international community's call for equal participation including the TRC's initial recommended 30 percent political representation of women in the decision making institutions, one of the major or core question that this research sets to unravel is to determine whether Sierra Leone has adhered to this call and to determine the level of its implementation.

Although the theoretical correlation between women, peace and civil society can and has been established in the discussions above, yet it is no guarantee that the relationship is necessarily simple or unproblematic. From practical experience, not all women are peacemakers, which also implies that assuring women's participation in peacebuilding activities is not to avail of their innate passivity, but as half of the population that has been primarily engaged in the maintenance of family and community during conflict, and whose skills and experiences are essential to the process, regardless even of mentioning it as their democratic right. On the other hand, although the involvement of women appears more conducive to the development of social capital, not all structures in civil society benefit women, indeed positions of executive leadership in civil society remain unrepresentative regarding gender. As Potter vividly explains:

> *Not all of civil society is beneficial to the process of a stable, peaceful outcome, nor are civil society organisations necessarily by definition democratic, but the inclusion of actors outside the traditional elites bypasses the narrow form of engagement that can prolong conflict. While theoretical models point to the need for the women-peace-civil society relationship to be utilised and developed, some evaluation of how this occurs as a process is required in order to demonstrate how this affects peacebuilding in practice.*[110]

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[108] Op. Cit. Potter, M (2004), In Their Own Words…..p.23
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.pp.23-24

2.2 Civil Society and Peacebuilding in the 21st Century: A Means to an End?

There has never been a general consensus between observers about the importance of civil society to peacebuilding. Supporters of the Marxist ideology in particular, have always argued that civil society and, especially civic culture have the tendency to frustrate change and progress towards a just and equitable society.[111] However, with the proliferation of armed conflicts in the 1990s, which is accompanied by the complexities of peacebuilding efforts faced by the international community, a grown agreement leading to a sharp turn and increasing attention by international community, donors and peacebuilding practitioners to the potential role civil society can play. In other words, "civil society actors have increasingly become vital forces in discourses, initiatives and programmes that foster peace and security across the world."[112]

Africa, south of the Sahara, has experienced quite a number of civil wars and intra-state wars in the past decades. These wars have resulted into an acrimonious number of deaths, displacement of communities, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), thus rendering growth and development stagnant. Interestingly, according to Ekiyor (2008), the nature of these conflicts clearly exposes and draws in the local populations as "West African conflicts are intricate, multifaceted and multi-party, and as a result it is impossible for state actors to prevent, manage or resolve them without the assistance and involvement of non-state actors. It is therefore imperative that any peacebuilding initiative in these conflict prone states or regions requires the total involvement of its populations."[113]

Civil society has been in the forefront of dislodging entrenched authoritarianism to replace them with democratic governance, initiating and promoting reconciliation processes, localised peacebuilding initiatives, advocating for the adherence to peace agreements and the tactical building of capacities through peace education. Most remarkable amongst the activities of civil society in West Africa, is the active participation of trade and student unions, women's groups and professional associations in the struggle for independence of their various countries. In the post-independence era, CSOs in West Africa have acted in most cases as important catalysts for

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[111] Hauss, Charles (Chip). "Civil Society". Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Resolution Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. August, 2003. p. 1. (Available at: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/civil_society)

[112] Ekiyor, Thelma. (2008). The role of civil society in conflict prevention: West Africa experiences. p. 27 (Available at: http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art2835.pdf) Sourced: 17/03/2011

[113] Ibid

ending military dictatorships, advocating for the building of pluralist and open societies, and promulgating democratic governance.[114] In the more recent past, CSOs have been actively involved in developing regional frameworks for conflict early warning and response, which Ekiyor describes as the sine qua none of conflict prevention. Similarly, CSOs also advocate against the proliferation of small arms, ensuring that peace processes yield inclusive agreements, contributing towards post-conflict reconstruction, and promoting the involvement of women in peacebuilding.[115] For example, the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), whose headquarters is in Accra, Ghana, has been very instrumental in conflict monitoring on the ground as part of the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN).[116] Civil society actors have also been very vital as primary providers of basic social services in war affected areas where the public institutions and state apparatus had seized to function or have been considerably weakened due to the conflict. In these situations of anarchy, CSOs have often played the role of mitigating conflict and building peace.

However, worthy of acknowledgement according to Ekiyor is the fact that civil society is not a homogenous group and, therefore cannot all be regarded or defined as peacebuilders. For example in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, some CSOs have been accused of collaborating with warring factions and assuming political positions in the conflict. However, this discredit in no way, diminishes the important contributions of civil society other CSOs have made in the promotion of peace and prevention of conflict in the West African sub-region, especially Sierra Leone. Since the outbreak of war in Sierra Leone up to the present, CSOs in Sierra have been key in cushioning the socio-economic effects and disparities in communities, assisting with humanitarian relief, medical care, awareness raising, advocating for and promoting women's rights, and contributing to the security sector.

The increase in democratic regimes and the observance of the rule of law in many countries all over the world in recent years has also led to increased support for popular engagement in political life and all other activities relating to the political, basic values and beliefs that affect the way a state is governed. In lieu of the activities of civil society that has led to its recognition

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[114] Ibid. p.28
[115] Ibid. p.29
[116] Ibid.

and many more of its envisaged and potential roles, there has been a recent upsurge of interest in how strengthening civil society can contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. To achieve this goal, there has been a tremendous support both financial and material by the international community in the move towards the capacity building process of civil society organisations in conflict societies. It is interesting to note however, that despite the massive rise in peacebuilding initiatives that is aimed at strengthening civil society, these initiatives have not been backed by a systematic research and documentation agenda. This anomaly has led to very little exposition of the role of civil society in peacebuilding, its potentials in reducing conflict, ending violence, ending armed conflict and the building of peace,[117] in Africa, and especially that of the local women's civil society organisations in Sierra Leone.

Although most analysis of the processes to peace in Sierra Leone have mainly focused on international and diplomatic maneuvers 'from Abidjan to Lome,' it is important to note that these processes were preceded by and facilitated by a series of efforts and inputs of civil society initiatives, especially by women, that were aimed at a peaceful settlement to the conflict. These third-party or sector efforts by a whole range of different groups employing different strategies, were initiated at the very early stages of the war but went unnoticed before attention through international media cameras were focused on Sierra Leone. Even as they did, it attracted very little outside attention as very high-profile actors came to the scene. But despite this, coupled with their apparently 'limited initial successes' either because of limited resources and or the intensity and diabolic nature of the war; yet these local efforts need to be valued and commended. Local civil society organisations were the first to mobilise public opinion in Sierra Leone in support of peace and democratisation (e.g. Bintumani I and II), efforts that formed part of the foundations upon which the successful post-war accountability incarnate of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the proceedings of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) were grounded. Since their participation and contribution is regarded as most vital for peace, security and sustainability in Sierra Leone, as both national and international consensus has shown, their efforts need to be examined and documented. Hence, the need for

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[117] Paffenholz, Thania. Civil Society and Peacebuilding. The centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding – CCDP Working Paper. p.5
(Available at: http://www.graduateinstitute.ch/ccdp). Sourced: 21/5/ 2010

and importance of this project to investigate, assess and fill this existing knowledge gap on LWCSOs peacebuilding activities in war torn Sierra Leone.

2.3 Women and Civil Society Building Peace: Evidence for Inclusion?

'Civil society' and 'social capital' are two important notions that have received much attention during the last two decades, in connection specifically with how a state and its constituent population interact. For a clear understand of how women fit into this concept, there is need to trace the evolution and development of both ideas of civil society and social capital, how they are defined or measured and more significantly, their relationship with ideas of democracy and civil participation. Thereafter, a critique of how these theories are formed in relation to gender can then be made and an analysis made of how this affects notions of how women are integrated or not into participative processes. Realistically, the theoretical and practical applications of peacebuilding processes in areas of conflict increasingly indicate that meaningful participation of civil society to a greater or lesser extent. This does not only recognise the important role of civil society in participatory democracy, but also imbibes the understanding that since conflict involves and affects whole societies, the transition from conflict to peace must also include whole societies. In another light, the predominance of conflict elites requires alternative mechanisms to bypass their influence in maintaining lines of division, requiring the multiple channels of communication and participation that exit in civil society to be involved in the peacebuilding process. As women are a defining factor in the understanding of civil society, their participation in the peacebuilding process is a sign that civil society is being meaningfully engaged.[118]

Aristotle, one of the renowned philosophers of all times, defined the state as an "association", where people interact for mutual benefit.[119] But interestingly, Thomas Hobbes' notion of the state, which he referred to as a 'contract of fear' by which individuals surrender their liberty in exchange for protection has gained popularity among some modern writers, such as Robert Nozick, who conceives a state as the 'dominant protective association.'[120] In contrast however to

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[118] Op. Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Training for Women Network. June 2004. p.30

[119] Aristotle. (1991). The Politics, London: Guild. p.53

[120] See: Hobbes, 1909: 107 and Nozick, 1974: 24

the 'Leviathan' doctrine propounded by Hobbes, where the state has 'supreme power for the common good of the people', John Locke's construction of the state sees the community as the custodian of 'supreme power' in the state, whereby the communal good is exercised by government as a representative of the people or community.[121] In essence therefore, the state consists of bodies of institutions that operate on behalf of and for the benefit of those under its jurisdiction.

As noted by Trentmann, the genesis of 'civil society' can be traced to Europe in the Eighteenth Century, adding that this ideology experienced a decline in the Twentieth Century basically as a result of the rise of totalitarianism.[122] In contrast to these views of Trentmann, numerous and alternative views on the subject has been offered by other authors. For instance McIntosh traces the history of civil society using other timescales, such as England 1300-1640, while Khaviraj and Khilnani have also pointed out that the idea of civil society is not just a western phenomenon.[123] The inconsistencies in these views about civil society and many more that exists, are reflected by the ambiguity of the definition of 'civil society'. One approach that can ease the problem is to define what civil society is not. According to Baker's analysis of African countries, where the state has ceased to function, it has been revealed that "anarchy does not prevail, as in Hobbes' account of nature, but sub-state structures appear to endure." Civil society therefore could simply be defined as 'where the state is not.'[124] In an attempt to separate 'state' from 'society', Margaret Thatcher alluded to this concept in the following statement (that has often been interpreted as a call for individualism). She said:

[T]here is no such thing as society. There are only individual men and women and there are families, and no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then our neighbour.[125]

Kumi Naidoo, the Chief Executive of the International Civic Society Organisation (CIVICUS) sees civil society as more of a relationship or state that 'enables all citizens to contribute.'[126] The

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[121] Locke, J. (1988). Two Treatises of Government, Cambridge: University Press. p.367

[122] Trentmann, F. (2000). PARADOXES OF CIVIL SOCIETY: New Perspectives on Modern German and British History. Berghahn Books: Oxford and New York. Pp.4-5

[123] Kaviraj, S and Khilnani, S (2001), Civil Society: History and Possibilities, Cambridge: University Press. Pp.11-12

[124] Baker, B (1999). 'African anarchy: Is it states, regimes or societies that are collapsing?' in Politics, Vol 19 No 3. p.131

[125] Thatcher, M (1995). The Downing Street Years 1979-90, New York: Harper Perennial. p.626

concept is therefore quite nebulous. According to Oxhorn, civil society is an 'extremely ambiguous' concept, and this implies that there are two general streams of thought, the 'continental/corporate' definition and the "market-oriented liberal."[127] The lack of consensus on this issue has led Trentmann to conclude that:

> *rather than crystallising into a single master definition...the modern history of civil society is an unfolding dialogue between different imaginaries of the social.*[128]

Based on these prevailing difficulties associated with the attempt to define or measure civil society, the idea of 'social capital' has been developed to describe the qualities of human interaction indicative of civil society or the "basic raw material" of civil society.[129] Putnam further explains that "the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value,"[130] indicating that all members of the collectivity that is the state, have responsibility to its maintenance.[131] Hence, the necessity and importance of this study on LWCS as partners in the maintenance, building and development of war ravaged Sierra Leone.

The whole idea of social capital is not seen or regarded as a new phenomenon but rather, an old one but newly defined as even Putnam himself relates the concept to the fraternity of the French Revolution.[132] If civic cohesion and relationships are significant indicators of social capital, the roots can be traced in the thought of a range of political thinkers. As clearly pointed out by Aristotle "[T]he task of all citizens, however different they may be, is the stability of the association", which is indicative of the fact that all members of the collectivity that is the state have a responsibility to its maintenance.[133] If this submission is anything to go by, then "the philosophical notion of 'civic virtue' is comparable to social capital, this being the virtue of Machiavelli, a high degree of which is needed to constitute a republic, or the virtue of Rousseau

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[126] See: Naidoo, K. (2003). Speech at the 'Divided Societies' conference, Armagh, 14-10-03. Northern lreland Council for Voluntary Action. (2002). Research in Focus, Issue 1 October 2002.

[127] Oxhorn, P. (1 995), Organising Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. p.311

[128] Op. Cit. Trentmann, F. (2000). PARADOXES OF CIVIL SOCIETY………p.7

[129] Onyz, J. and Bullen, P. (2000), 'Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities' in Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, Vol 36 No 1, March 2000. p.24

[130] Putnam, R. (2000), Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community, New York: Simon and Shuster. p.19

[131] Op. Cit. Aristotle. (1991). The Politics,…p.179

[132] Op. Cit. Putnam, R. (2000) Bowling Alone: The Collapse…….p.351

[133] Op. Cit. Aristotle. (1991). The Politics…p.179

or Montesquieu."[134] In brief summary therefore, social capital is firmly related to how people inter-relate and how they interact with the structures that administer them.

Robert Putnam, an influential figure who provided the definition of social capital notes that 'the touchstone of social capital is the generalised principle of reciprocity'.[135] Put simply he alludes to 'a society characterised by people who are willing to do things for others, not for immediate return, but with the confidence that others would do the same for them.' In addition to reciprocity, Putnam also added concepts of 'trust' and 'networks of civic engagement' as essential components of social capital, and further illuminated on this subject by concluding that societies with high levels of civil society/ social capital are more efficient, more prosperous economically and carry general benefits to its members.[136] Putnam also insisted that there are dimensions to social capital that needed to be emphasised – firstly, as he mentioned, is the difference between 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital, the former being good for the community, but exclusive, and the latter reaching out to other parts of society.[137] Secondly, is the idea of 'vertical' networks, which are hierarchical and 'cannot sustain social trust and co-operation', and 'horizontal' networks, which are more beneficial.[138] Nonetheless, the writings of Putnam have not gone unchallenged. He has been accused by Edward and Foley of "using social capital as a label for the norms and values of 1950's moral theory."[139]

Adding a voice to the debate, 'Grootaert suggested that Putnam's theory of social capital is of a "narrow" kind, because it concentrates on networks. A broader category looks at a variety of relationships and includes negative notions of social capital'. The broadest sense is a general social and political environment "that enables norms to develop and shape social structures."[140] In their discussion on this issue, Paldam and Svendson focused their attention on a single attribute, that of "density of trust" as defining social capital.[141]

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[134] See: Russell, (1985: 496), Foster, (1958: 297); Rousseau, (1979: 128); & Montesquieu, (1970: 82)

[135] B Op. Cit. Putnam, R. (2000), Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community…..p.135

[136] See: Putnam, R. (1993: 157, 170, 173) & Putnam, R. (2000: 21)

[137] Ibid. (2000).p.23

[138] Ibid. (1993).p.173

[139] Edwards, B and Foley, M. (1998). 'Social Capital and Civil Society Beyond Putnam' in American Behavioural Scientist, Vol 42 No 1.p.124

[140] Op. Cit. Grootaert, C. (1998). Social Capital: The Missing Link?...Pp.2-3

[141] Paldam, M and Svendson, G (2000), 'An essay on social capital: looking for the fire behind the smoke' in European Journal of Political Economy, Vol 16 No 2.p.339

Efforts by other scholars to measure social capital have also resulted in varying opinions. In their thesis, Onyx and Bullen adopted a general formula based on the degree of social interaction between individuals, organisations and the polity in New South Wales, by 'using Putnam's three main factors - networks, reciprocity and trust', while concentrating on 'lateral associations' that are 'voluntary and equal.'[142] In the aftermath of all of these however, fifty-two indicators of social capital were identified by Grootaert under separate headings such as: 'horizontal associations', 'civil and political society', 'social integration' and 'legal and governance.'[143] With various attempts to clarify ways to measure such a phenomenon, it is unsurprising to note that all of these efforts have failed, thus pointing to the fact that the concept is essentially a disputed one.

Also worthy of note regarding civil society and social capital is that there are negative sides to the concept in relation to the ideas of 'bonding' and 'bridging' types that were put forward by Putnam. Describing civil society, Khaviraj and Khilnani referred to the concept as a "multiplicity of non-negotiable entities and colliding self-righteous beliefs."[144] In an attempt to bring out the difference in social capital, Naidoo points to the Ku Klux Klan and National Rifle Associations as examples of civil society, stating that these two largest civil society organisations in the USA are the pro- and anti-abortion lobbies.[145] In other words, there are clearly, then, different forms of social capital that are of variable value from a normative perspective.

Taking a closer and thorough examination of the philosophy of civil society, one can clearly find that its relationship with the state in the context of democracy is an important dimension. As defined by Finer, democracy is a "government which is derived from public opinion and is accountable to it."[146] The whole idea of civil society is centered on the mode of mobilising public opinion and making government accountable, amounting to participative democracy and consultation. For example, as articulated by (former) United Kingdom (UK) Home Secretary David Blunkett, "policy making, is to be responsive to socially derived evidence, such as evidence-based policy-making. In other words, "Government policy ought to be informed by sound evidence social science research and ought to be contributing a major part to that evidence

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[142] Op. Cit. Onyz, J. and Bullen, P. (2000), 'Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities'…p.24

[143] Op. Cit. Grootaert, C. (1998). Social Capital: The Missing Link?...p.14

[144] Op. Cit. Kaviraj, S and Khilnani, S (2001), Civil Society: History and Possibilities…..p.12

[145] Op. Cit. See: Naidoo, K. (2003). Speech at the 'Divided Societies' conference….

[146] Finer, S. (1970). Comparative Government, Harmondsworth: Penguin.p.63

base."[147] In an attempt to throw more light on the issue, Harold Laski commented that beyond social science research, in which civil society has input, are processes of consultation with citizens and that "the first great need of the modern state is adequately to organise institutions of consultation."[148] This consultation, as Laski emphasised, should comprise active participation in policy-making processes by civil society, which "humanises the bureaucracy and strengthens the capacities of individuals and communities to mobilise and help themselves."[149]

Though a criteria for enhancing the development of a people living in a state, community or environment, yet the active engagement of civil society is not always a positive experience for society as some of the variations highlighted above have indicated. This has even led to some shadow of doubt being cast on the benefits of civil society participation as popular democracy. Even Friedman, a supporter of this view, "raises some doubts as to whether elements of civil society that help develop policy are democratic themselves."[150] Naidoo and Friedman welcome this criticism and thus emphasise the need for the development of democratic structures within civil society organisations, which he describes as "oligarchies." [151] Notwithstanding these propositions however, and in the absence of a viable engagement with the state, both authors claim that civil society has a positive role to play, not as a replacement of the state, but as an assistant in making state intervention realistic. By and large, it is important to note that developing social investment models clearly suggest that organisations in the community can provide services on behalf of the state.[152]

On the whole, the disparate nature of civil society and differing definitions of social capital give these notions an uncertain form in current political and social thought. But more uncertain is how these concepts include women. The careful consideration of the role of civil society in ideals of participative democracy is a crucial aspect of how citizens influence state decisions about them. 'The exclusion of women from public political processes suggests an alternative route of policy development that may serve to bypass some of the barriers that are encountered. But regardless

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[147] Clarence, E (2002): 'Technocracy Reinvented: The New Evidence Based Policy Movement' in Policy and Public Administration, Volume 17 No 3.p.2

[148] Laski, H. (1973). A Grammar of Politics, London: George Allan and Unwin.p.80

[149] Midgley, J. (1986). Community Participation, Social Development and the State, London: Methuen.p.8

[150] Friedman, S (2003). 'The state, civil society and social policy: setting a research agenda' in Politikon, Vol 30 No 1 May 2003.p.3

[151] See: Naidoo. (2003) and Friedman. (2003: 22)

[152] See: Review of Administration…, (2003: 15) and Pathways for Change, (2003: 23-9)

of all of these, if democratic principles are based on equality of access and opportunity, the experience of women in the context of civil society is of prime importance.

Right from the outset, women's civil society has long been excluded from public political processes by historical notions of citizenship and the polity.[153] Observers of the philosophical construction of social capital have noted that Machiavelli's virtue equated to "manliness", Rousseau regarded women as transgressors on a "male domain" in the polity and the "socialist fraternity" has been more about "male bonding."[154] Hence, if theories of citizenship are integral to the construction of civil society, the exclusion of women is integral to its fabric. As Ainhorn and Sever have opined, politics are gendered "male" and the home "female", with civil society in the middle. But even this middle ground, they argue 'is also gendered.'[155] But as noted by Rotberg, "the definitions of social capital in terms of neighbourliness and assistance linkages reflect the domains of women and it is in the interests of women to protect and develop social capital."[156] In addition, it is glaring that it is in this middle space that women have been able to organise and influence the state. For instance Clemens acknowledges that women gained the vote without having the vote, which is an "object lesson in the political uses of social capital."[157]As the research findings by Keen shows "the government's relationship with women's associations ... came purely through collective action that sought legislation to protect women and children."[158]

As is common with most, if not all, in situations of conflict, women have always used the opportunity spaces presented by the middle ground of civil society to create the instruments of their own emancipation. The decision by the women of Sierra Leone to get themselves actively involved in the peacebuilding process, politics, administration and development of their country, irrespective of their long marginalisation from the public sphere and their final exclusion from the Lome Peace Talks amidst their enormous sufferings and peace efforts, stemmed out of the

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[153] See: Pateman, (1989: 1), Jones and Jonasdottir, (1988: 1-2) & Carroll and Zerilli, (1993: 55)

[154] See: Pitkin, (1984: 25), Vogel, (1995: 215) & Phillips, (1993: 8)

[155] Ainhorn, B and Sever, C. (2003). 'Gender and civil society in Central and Eastern Europe', in International Feminist Journal of Politics, Vol 5.p.167

[156] Rotberg, R. I. (1999). Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation. Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.p.347

[157] Clemens, E (1999). 'Securing Political Returns to Social Capital: Women's Associations in the United States, 1880s-1920s, in Journal of Interdisciplinary History, V0129 No 4. p.614

[158] Keen, S (1999). 'Associations in Australian History: Their Contribution to Social Capital' in Journal of interdisciplinary History, Vol 29 No 4 .p.651

arena that the Sierra Leone civil society created for itself. However, to consider the arena of civil society as favourable to women would be an overstatement as gender is often excluded in notions of social capital. For example, research findings by Onyx and Bullen "claims that social capital does not correlate with demographic variables such as gender."[159] In Putnam's vision of social capital, although not the primary reason for decline:

> [T]he long-term movement of women out of the category of 'affluent housewife' into other categories has tended to depress civic engagement.[160]

Many scholars have stated that this claim is problematic in the assumption that the primary engagement of women in civil society is at the level of "affluent housewife", not other identities or classes, and also suggests that the trend of women entering the labour market in their own right or into other lifestyles to "housewife" has a negative impact on society. Given the proper thought, the 'first issue ignores the level of participation and interaction that takes place in communities in favour of the exclusive "dinner party" culture of the US middle class that Putnam associates with civic engagement and the second issue creates difficulties in that labour force as participation is seen as an important step towards the liberation of women, providing opportunities for economic independence.'[161] To suggest that the economic independence and occupational satisfaction or alternative choices of relationship of one gender is anathema to the development of social capital clearly presents a simplistic and gendered view of the concept.

The discussion touches on a wider and deeper issue of how women are integrated into the theory of civil society. It is no secret that women predominate in voluntary and community organisations, for example, comprising 72 percent of the paid workforce of voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland.[162] These organisations constitute the "horizontal" relationships that Putnam identifies as important for social capital, and community-based networks that comprise both "bonding" capital within communities and 'bridging' capital between communities on the basis of issues such as equality or domestic violence. Furthermore, the idea of utilising input from civil society to increase the quality of democratic participation should be

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[159] Op. Cit. Onyz, J. and Bullen, P. (2000), 'Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities'…p.36

[160] Op. Cit. Putnam, R. (2000), Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community…..p.202

[161] See: Galligan, 1998: 26

[162] Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action. (2002). Research in Focus. Issue 1. October 2002.

applied in accordance with the principle of equality, which allows women to have equal influence on policy-making structures. In actual fact however, women are underrepresented on the structures that form the intersection between society and the government, for example, making up around a third of the membership of public bodies in Northern Ireland and only 35 percent of directors of voluntary organisations.[163] Nevertheless, the qualities associated with the definitions of high levels of social capital accord with those predominantly practiced by women, whether in women's organisations (the 'women's sector') or in wider voluntary and community organisations of which they comprise the largest component.

Irrespective of the fact that women appear to predominate in "horizontal" civil social structures, they are however 'not necessarily prominent in positions of influence either in executive roles in civil society structures, public bodies or the more formal political structures, such as political parties or government institutions ("vertical" networks).'[164] It is no gainsay therefore that the greater the influence of those involved in civic society organisations in policy making processes, the greater the participation of women. However, the foreseeing danger with this phenomenon is that it could lead to an acceptance of gender-specific realms of policy influence, consigning women to the structures gendered "female" and leaving men to dominate the traditional political structures that are the main legislative and executive instruments of the state. Hence, worthy of acknowledgement is the fact that it is 'primarily women who are involved in the relationships that have been identified as comprising high levels of social capital and also that the prevailing thought on participative democracy presents opportunities for women to become more involved in the formulation of policy via the civic engagement route.'[165] But at the same time however, this cannot be seen as an alternative to the equal representation of women in the formal structures of government, which retain executive power and the primacy of electoral mandate.

Anne Phillips opines that there has been a general avoidance of the concept of civil society by feminists basically due to the fact that "its formation was generally along masculine lines and many interpretations of the idea involve state and civil society competing for the public sphere,

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[163] See generally: Ward, (2003) and NICVA, (2002)
[164] Op. Cit. Potter, M. (2004), In Their Own Words: A Research Report into the Victims Sector in Northern Ireland…p.19
[165] Ibid

not the all-important private sphere."[166] But on the whole, civil society and feminism have much in common says Phillips as: "both are pluralist, both have a looser, more informal structure, both appear natural allies in contest with the state and if the battle for equality is to be won, it has to happen in civil society, acknowledging the limitations of legislation alone."[167] Yet there still remains some unattractive elements or claims that postulates that civil society formation tends to adopt existing power structures, which can be discriminatory due to the lack of regulation and can be used to challenge state benevolence in favour of a self-help ethos, an idea that resulted in Phillips' assertion that "celebrating civil society as the sphere of freedom and autonomy is not really an option for feminism, given the inequalities that so often mar the cosy associational world."[168] However, this view may be overly pessimistic. There are opportunities for women to claim spheres of influence within civil society and use its growing importance to structure an equality agenda. Many areas of civil society are sympathetic to the empowerment of women and others form a powerful platform to have the ideals of equal participation aired in a public, sub-state space. There is therefore the need to juxtapose the potential pitfalls with the possible gains inorder to arrive at a fair judgment.

Civil society as a notion has been experienced in a variety of forms, generally taking the form of non-state activities and relationships between citizens. The concept of social capital has often been used to define the strength of civic engagement and cohesion, but again there is little consensus on the measurement of this phenomenon. Historically, notions of citizenship have been formulated in the absence of women and more recent ideas relating to social capital appear to have ignored gender as a factor or to have accepted gendered norms in their understanding. Uncertain as these concepts remain, they are of critical importance in prevailing attitudes regarding participative democracy, where civil society and especially women's civil society, is expected to be consulted during the course of policy development. Such engagement offers opportunities to women to become more involved in policymaking processes, the majority of people involved in organisations associated with civil society being women. However, "this cannot be seen as a substitute for effective representation on formal political decision-making structures and there would need to be a greater representation of women on the bodies that claim

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[166] Op. Cit. Phillips, A. (2002), 'Does Feminism Need a Concept of Civil Society?.....Pp.72, 74
[167] Ibid. Pp.76-9
[168] Ibid. Pp. 80-1, 87

to speak on behalf of civil society to ensure that even this limited contribution to policy development does not exclude the views of half of the population."[169]

2.4 Women, War and Peace

From the literature on women's involvement in peace and peacebuilding ventures, the subject is not a new phenomenon but a well-documented and publicized one.[170] My aim in discussing these issues is to examine the relationship between women, war and peacebuilding, drawing on the prevailing theoretical assumptions that link them, and to subject the literature to a critical analysis from the perspective of challenging the often narrow parameters within which women are inserted to justify essentialist notions of gender.

But a closer look at the available literature on women's involvement with war and peace reveals the numerous examples of women's organisations devoting their energies to peace and its building process such as: Women in Peace Network (West Africa), the International Women's Peace Service (Palestine), Zene za Mir (Former Yugoslavia), Journee de la FLe Tre Ghinee (Italy), and Association des Femmes pour les Initiatives de Paix (Mali): to mention but a few.[171] Additionally, the centrality of women to peace has been emphasised in specific studies such as the Women's Peace Union in the United States, the Greenham Peace Camp in the United Kingdom[172], and many more including those on women in conflict ridden countries such as Northern Ireland, or profiles of individual women documented from a variety of contexts.[173]

But even more significantly, the United Nations Security Council's recognition of the importance of women to peace was demonstrated by the passing of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) aimed at increasing and enhancing women and their gender participation in all their field operations and peacebuilding initiatives[174] is proof of their centrality to the process.

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[169] Op. Cit. Potter, M. (2004), In Their Own Words: A Research Report into the Victims Sector in Northern Ireland…p.20

[170] Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8 (Available at: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/women/potter04b.pdf) Sourced: 25/5/ 2010

[171] Ibid

[172] See generally: Hammond, M (2002), Anderson, I. (2003), Alonso, H. (1997) and Harford, B (1984)

[173] Morgan, V. (1995).Peacemakers? Peacekeepers? – Women in Northern Ireland. 1969-1995, Paper delivered at the University of Ulster. October 25, 1995 in Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8

[174] See Appendix 1

One school of thought that explains the relationship between women and peace believes that women are naturally more peaceful. Johann Galtung one of the proponents of this school argues that women "have innate qualities that make them more peace-loving. High in empathy, their characters are horizontal and centripetal, making them more prone to peaceful relationships, combined with the chemical programming of the cyclical and complex estrogen and high levels of mono amino oxides, the chemical responsible for controlling violence."[175]

But Elise Boulding, although not in contravention with the views of this school of thought, explains women's disposition to peace from a different perspective. She says:

> *I don't think women are normally more peaceful than men. They have to learn to be peaceful, just like men do, but women are in situations where they develop their peacebuilding capabilities, such as child rearing. You have a chance to learn things when you work with children. Men who are removed from that process of human growth don't get the same chance to cultivate that peaceable nature. It's not inherent.*[176]

Brock-Utne added his voice to the debate by saying that young girls tend to share and co-operate, whereas young boys compete,[177] a notion that Alonso affirms by insisting that "almost every group has portrayed women as more sensitive, more caring, more thoughtful and more committed to producing a more humanistic and compassionate world than men as a whole."[178]

On the contrary, men have been portrayed as makers of war and perpetrators of violence. Galtung clearly refers to the low empathy, vertical, centrifugal, expansionist character of man, adding that 95 percent of direct violence is committed by men.[179] Some people generally believe that there is something in the nature of men that makes them fight, as Skjelsbaek and Smith point out:

> *Some of the violent acts perpetrated by men in armed conflicts are perpetrated precisely because the men have become convinced that that is the way to show their masculinity.*[180]

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[175] Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace, conflict development and civilization*, London: sage. Pp.40, 43

[176] Boulding, Elise cited in Judith Porter Adams. (1991). Peacework: Oral Histories of Women Peace Activists. Twayne Publishers: Boston. p.188

[177] Brock-Utne, B. (1989).Educating for Peace: A Feminist Perspective. New York: Pergamon. p.99

[178] Alonso, H. (1993). Peace as a Women's issue: A History of the US Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights, New York: Syracuse University Press. p.11

[179] Op.Cit. Galtung, J. (1996). Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace, conflict development and civilization…p.40-1

[180] Skjelsbaek, I and Smith, D. (eds). (2001). Gender, Peace and Conflict. London: Sage. p.3

Cynthia Adcock in her book "Fear of 'Other': the Common Root of Sexism and Militarism", vividly argues in support of this concept by exploring the connections between patriarchy and women's oppression and how women have collaborated in this , in which she says:

> *Militarism is primarily a male phenomenon and the ultimate power of patriarchy is the organized, legitimized violence of the nation state. For millennia, part of women's role has been to decay male aggression. We often see ourselves as posing a better way – a more loving, nurturing way of life than the masculine mode poses.*[181]

Skjelsbaek adds that patriarchy, which emphasises the male value system in most societies as in Sierra Leone lead to wars that bring untold suffering to women and children. Skjelsbaek and Brock-Utne bluntly expressed the problem thus: "women pay for the male priorities of this world."[182]Contributing to this debate, one school of thought represented here by Ruddick opines that even military thinking is imbued with male values.[183] These views have moved the debate further from the earlier idea of innate qualities of 'warlike men' and 'peaceful women' to acknowledgements that a degree of social conditioning drives men to fight. Logically therefore, if war is seen as a masculine enterprise, then areas of conflict are masculine, a view vividly supported by Monica McWilliams who refers to the conflict in Northern Ireland as an "armed patriarchy."[184] But taken a departure from this line of argument, another school represented by Moser and Clark are not satisfied with this explanation as they conclude that:

> *Stereotypical essentialising of women as 'victims' and men as 'perpetrators' of political violence and armed conflict assumes universal, simplified definitions of each phenomenon.*[185]

From the available literature on women and peace, some scholars like Karam are equally critical; suggesting that the literature on women and conflict "tends to view women as victims rather than as active actors, largely as a result of patriarchal structures."[186] However, contrary voices to this

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[181]Adcock, Cynthia. "Fear of 'Other': The Common Root of Sexism and Militarism", in Ferris, Elizabeth. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute. P.O.Box 1520, S-751 45 Uppsala Sweden. (2004).p.7

[182] Skjelsbaek, I. (2001). 'Is femininity inherently peaceful? The construction of femininity in war' In Skjelsbaek, I and Smith, D. (eds) (2001). Gender, Peace and Conflict. London: Sage. p.65
See also: Op.Cit. Brock-Utne, B. (1996). Education for Peace: A feminist Perspective. New York: Pergamon. p.15

[183] Ruddick, S (1990). *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women's Press. p.145

[184] Miller, R. Wilford, R and Donoghue, F. (1996).*Women and Political Participation in Northern Ireland*, Aldershot: Avebury. p.217

[185] Moser, C and Clark, F. (eds) (2001). Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence. London: Zed. p.4

[186] Karam, A. (2001). 'Women in War and Peacebuilding' in international Feminist Journal of Politics. Vol 3 N0 1. April 2001.p.22

view believe that women are not as peaceful as they are portrayed nor men as warlike. In his argument, Reardon proffers that woman "are not predisposed by their hormonal balance to pacifism any more than men are predisposed to warmongering."[187] Women, by this view, are being squeezed into a pervasive model that portrays them as peaceful and men into one of violence through a process of socialisation that accords with prevailing gender roles.[188] But there are examples of documented cases and abounding evidences of women participating in active combat - from fighting in terrorist groups such as Baader-Meinhoff, to military participation in national struggles, as in the case of the 40 percent women's composition of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).[189] Similarly so, the much talked about abuse of Iraqi prisoners by the US Army in 2004, where the three of the seven soldiers accused being women, the commander of Abu Ghraib prison where the abuses took place and the officer in charge of intelligence for the area being a women, and the senior government figure ignoring allegations of abuse, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, also being a female; are all incidences that dashed the feminist illusions of Ehrenbach of women having a moral edge over men.[190]

But on a broader basis however, an indebt analysis of the available literature on nationalism and nationalist conflicts clearly illustrates this gendering process, with a clear indication that discussions and policy formulations about nations and nationalism take place in the public sphere, where women have been excluded for a long time, leading to women not been part of the formulated national identity.[191] Consequently, as Roberts affirms the "issues of the flag" become those of "war, trade and imperial expansion" and women's participation is "edited out" of nationalism.[192] But as Timmerman writes "women are essential to the image of nationalism, becoming a sign or marker of cultural identity, having symbolic value as "maidens and mothers."[193] Taking the argument further, Beasley and Bacchi have added their voices by saying that "[W]omen are assigned roles in the nationalist project. In effect, their bodies are

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[187] Reardon, B. (1993). Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 15

[188] Op.Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women….p.9

[189] See Colan, T. (2002). 'In Demand: Women', in *The Irish Times*, October 26, 2002. Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (2003). Taking 'Calculated' Risks for Peace //. Belfast: CFNI. p.

[190] Ehrenbach, B. (2004). 'Feminism's Assumptions Unpended' in *Los Angeles Times*. May 16, 2004.

[191] See Yuval-Davis, M. (1997). *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage

[192] Roberts, Y. (2000). 'Home Truths' In *The Guardian*. March 30, 2000.

[193] Timmerman, C. (2000). 'Women and Nationalism: The Power of the Image' in Current Sociology, Vol 48 No 4
See also Op. Cit. Roberts, Y. (2000). 'Home Truths' In The Guardian. March 30, 2000 and Moghadam, V. (1994) (ed). *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies*. London: Zed. p.2

appropriated and utilised for political goals,"[194] adding that women are often "regarded as reproducers of the community, reproducers of ethnic boundaries, transmitters of communal values, markers of ethnic distinctiveness and active participants in war."[195] Jacoby hammers home this view by using the Israeli context, where women are recruited as fighters in a war and are afterwards relegated to hearth and home when not in use, a practice usually referred to as the "mobilisation-marginalisation" phenomenon.[196] In other words, the efforts and support of women are often appropriated for the furthering of a national project for which they are absent at the point of formulation.

The utilisation of women's potentials for nationalist goals also impacts on them negatively as their opportunities are limited by the experience. In relation to the Israeli context mentioned above, Jacoby saliently noted that "conflict and conflict management in Israel tend to glorify patriarchal authority while restricting women's domain to the symbolic sphere of hearth and home."[197] A similar effect was identified in a study conducted by Racioppi and O'Sullivan See of unionist nationalism in Northern Ireland, where national identity is gendered, with "Ulster's loyal sons" as the prevailing image and the Stormont government as an "ethno gender regime."[198] Morgan in his works "has also pointed out that the political priorities given to nationalism has led to difficulties in women cooperating across the divide, lest they be regarded as 'disloyal' to their own 'side.'"[199] These clear-cut limitations to women's horizons caused by these circumstances prompted Kaplan to opine that: "Feminism and nationalism are almost always incompatible in the European context."[200] It is therefore evident that women are often marginalised, as restrictive national identity-related roles are imposed upon them, which intensify in times of conflict due to the need to emphasise cultural or national cohesion. It must

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[194] Beasley, C and Bacchi, C. (2000). 'Citizens bodies: Embodying citizens – a feminist analysis', in International Feminist Journal of politics. Vol 2 No 3. p.338

[195] Wilford, R. and Miller, R. (1998) (eds). Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Politics of Transition. London: Routledge. p.15

[196] Jacoby, T. (1999). 'Gendered Nation: A History of the interface of Women's Protests and Jewish Nationalism in Israel' in International Feminist Journal of Politics. Vol 1 No 3.Autumn 1999. p.398

[197] Ibid. p.382

[198] Racioppi, L and O'Sullivan See, K. (2001). '"This we will maintain": Gender, ethno nationalism and the politics of Unionism in Northern Ireland' in Nations and Nationalism. Vol 7 No 1 January 2001. pp.93-95

[199] Morgan, V. (1995).*Peacemakers? Peacekeepers? – Women in Northern Ireland 1969-1995*. Paper delivered at the University of Ulster October 25, 1995 (Available at: www.cain.ulst.ac.uk) Sourced: 26/4/2010

[200] Kaplan, G. (1997). 'Feminism and Nationalism: The European Case' In West, L (ed). *Feminism and Nationalism*. New York: Routledge. p.3

be therefore reckoned that if conflict generates a restrictive nation for women, there is therefore little to wonder that it is women who appear to be more aligned to peace.[201]

The above painted picture of women's passive acceptance of a symbolic role for the benefit of the nation however, has never gone unchallenged or unquestioned by some academics, writers and conflict commentators, nor has the idea of nationalistic projects being detrimental to women's goals and aspirations been universally accepted either. In Algeria for example through the national liberation movement, women were involved in the whole of society and actively elevated themselves from their subservient position under colonialism, but were unfortunately eclipsed after the war was over.[202] In a similar vein women benefited from a range of reforms that were ushered in by the short lived Saur Revolution in Afghanistan.[203] From the literature, it is clear that nationalism offers various opportunities for the improvement of the statuses of women in their countries. In the words of Timmerman, nationalism can help women "acquire a more positive and esteemed identity."[204] Contrary to the stereotype, Karam writes, "women play an active role in combat and, while women suffer in the same way men do, they can also gain from conflict situations,"[205] therefore the above evidence for women's passivity is ambiguous. This is mainly because women are not universally passive and opposed to male-imposed nationalist doctrines, so the apparent dominance of women in peace movements cannot be explained by a blanket assumption about the passive nature of women.

There exists a complex relationship between women, conflict and notions of liberation as clearly shown in the findings of studies on the Palestinian Intifada. During the first Intifada, Berger writes "women were active in paramilitary organisations and cultural practices dividing men and women were subverted by their mutual engagement in political activity, forcing a discourse between women's groups and the more conservative notions of 'women in the family' perpetuated by organisations such as Fatah and Hamas."[206] The participation of women in the

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[201] Op.Cit. Potter, Michael. (2004). Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women….p.10

[202] Cherifati-Merabtine, D. (1994). Algeria at a crossroads: National liberation, Islamicisation and women, in Moghadam, V (ed). Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies. London: Zed. p.40

[203] Op.Cit. Moghadam, V. (1994) (ed). Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies…p.96

[204] Op.Cit. Timmerman, C. (2000). 'Women and Nationalism: The Power of the Image'…… p.15

[205] Op.Cit. Karam, A. (2001). 'Women in war and Peacebuilding' in *International Feminist Journal of politics*….p.22

[206] Berger, S. (1997). 'Shifting sands: The feminist-nationalist connection in the Palestinian movement' in West, L (ed). *Feminism and Nationalism*. New York: Routledge.p.122

staged demonstrations and confrontations alongside their male counterparts with Israeli security forces, led to the formation of Action Committees that established a political activism that offered them alternative hierarchies to the male ones. Women engaged in demonstrations and confrontations with Israeli security forces, formed Action Committees and this political activism established alternative hierarchies to male ones. [207] It is disappointing however to note that because women were not part of the process that established an autonomous Palestine, which led to as Johnson and Kuttab puts it "an authoritarian male-dominated leadership structures for the second Intifada, resulting in a lack of women's activism and eroding the mass-based organisations of the previous rising."[208] This case and many more can show poignantly the often variable roles played by women in conflicts even in a single context, which casts huge aspersions on the universal assumptions regarding women and peace or war.

Women's association with and commitment to peace, if not innate, may as well be as a result of their experiences with conflict. [209] Adding his voice to this dialogue, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said: "Existing inequalities between women and men, and patterns of discrimination against women and girls, tend to be exacerbated in armed conflict."[210] As an addendum to the issue of women's predicament in wars, Alonso in his book titled "Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the US Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights" states that in war women "were the ones to suffer most, both in the perpetual violence against women during the occupation and through the deaths of sons, husbands, lovers, brothers and fathers."[211] Although Moser and Clark have agreed that "women suffer severe forms of victimisation and men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators" yet they also believe that "… the relationship can be complex."[212] In their report of 1995, The Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 acknowledged and outlined the particular sufferings that women experience in conflicts, which ranges from "murder, torture, systematic rape, forced pregnancy

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[207] Abdo, N. (1994). 'Nationalism and Feminism: Palestinian Women and the Intifada' in Moghadam, V (ed). Gender and National Identity: women and Politics in Muslim Societies. London: Zed. p.168

[208] Johnson, P and Kuttab, E. (2001). 'Where have all the women (and men) gone? Reflections on gender and the second Intifada' in *Feminist Review*, Vol 69 No 1. p.7

[209] Potter, M. 2004. In Their Own Words: A Research report into the Victims sector in Northern Ireland, Belfast: Training for Women Network. p.11

[210] Annan, Kofi. (2002). Speech to the UN Security Council. October 28, 2002. Press Release SG/SM/8461, SC/7551, WOM/1366

[211] Op.Cit. Alonso, H. (1993). Peace as a Women's Issue: A History of the US Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights….p.57

[212] Op.Cit. Moser, C and Clark, F (eds) (2001). *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and political Violence*….p.8

and forced abortion"[213] as records show its massive occurrence in the Former Yugoslavia,[214] Sierra Leone[215] and other conflict countries. But more importantly, the statuses and roles of women change during conflicts as they become sustainers of their communities, suffer disruption of social and economic life and, with children, make up over 80 percent of refugees.[216] On the other hand however, women participate in conflict and men also suffer terribly. Logically, if women generally experience conflict disproportionately to men, an affinity with peace is unsurprising. While an aversion to conflict may explain the motivation or reasons why some women pursue peace, this would not provide a universal understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Hammond the Derry Peace Women were driven by civil rights aspirations as well as "maternalist motivations."[217] Sara Ruddick in her submission argues that women's experience of being mothers makes them better suited to peacemaking, adding also that on daily basis mothers think about strategies of protection and nurture towards their children, qualities that women extend to the community.[218]

Maternal thinking, adds Ruddick, is opposed to military thinking, which is not an innate maternal peacefulness, but the fact that "maternal practice is a 'natural resource' for peace politics."[219] Although opposition views of some feminists represented by Shulaimith Firestone, Ann Oakley or Adrienne Rich, strongly contend that mothering is not instinctive,[220] but imposed upon and socialised into women, yet the fact that women are primarily responsible for rearing and caring for children in virtually every culture would indicate that a socialising into a mothering role may have an effect on women's attitudes to peace. But despite the logical and convincing nature of Ruddick's argument, critiques say it expressly lacks the impetus to explain how childless women are involved in peace movements, or those who have rejected the mothering role. Likewise, the

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[213] Platform of Action Report. (1995). Paragraph 11

[214] Benderly, J. (1997). 'Rape, feminism and nationalism in the war Yugoslav successor states' in West, L (ed). Feminist Nationalism. New York: Routledge. p.66

[215] Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. Vol 15 No 1 A (Available at: http://www.hrw.org) Sourced: 7/4/2010.

[216] Op. Cit, Potter, M. 2004. In Their Own Words: A Research report into the Victims sector in Northern Ireland… p.35. Also see: O'Connell, 1993: ii-iv

[217] Hammond, M. 2002. 'Surveying Politics of Peace, Gender, Conflict and Identity in Northern Ireland: The Case of the Derry Peace Women in 1972' in Women's Studies International Forum, Vol 25 No 1

[218] Ruddick, Sara. 1990. *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*. London: Women's Press. pp.23, 80

[219] Ibid. pp.150-7

[220] Tong, R, 1995. *Feminist Thought: A Comparative Introduction*. London: Routledge. Pp.573-87

fact of women's active involvement in conflict clashes with Ruddick's thesis on the mothering effect.

In order to explain the concept of the involvement of childless women's activism in peace movements, Virginia Held, in her book 'The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global,' proffers that:

> *[C]are is both value and practice," which she adds "…has been developed as a moral theory relevant not only to the so-called private realms of family and friendship but to medical practice, law, political life, the organisation of society, war, and international relations.*[221]

She argues that care generally can be seen from the point of view of a moral subject and self-awareness that propels women to take responsibility for living a life that is acceptable, pointing to parenthood as one example. Giving an example of a helpless infant in the care of a moral being that would die if he/she fails to feed and safeguard it, she adds "one must not dissolve into helpless moments, however tempting that might be. One is morally compelled to congeal into an entity capable of agency. One may fail to do so, but then one is probably no longer a morally responsible person. Moral personhood is also conferred on human biological entities by morality, law, and a variety of human practices."[222] But Hilde Nelson, along many others have taken the argument further in support of the caring nature of women to show how "identities are narratively constructed," and how humans change their identities through "counterstories." [223] In support of this view, Diana Meyes says that:

> *narrativity clarifies how people can be profoundly influenced by their social context and yet remain their capacity to shape self-determined moral lives – to transvalue values, reroute their own pathways, and reconfigure their social ideals.*[224]

In this light, Diemut Bubeck makes the point that "[T]raditionally, women have been expected to do most of the caring work that needs to be done; the sexual division of labour exploits women by extracting unpaid care labour from them, making women less able to than men to engage in

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[221] Op.Cit. Held, Virginia. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press, Inc.: New York. p.9

[222] Ibid. p.45

[223] Nelson, Hilde. L. "Identity and Free Agency," in Peggy DesAutels and Joanne Waugh (ed) (2001). *Feminist Doing Ethics*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield. p.45

[224] Meyes, Diana. T. "Narratives and Moral Life", in Cheshire Calhoun (ed) (2004). *Setting the Moral Compass*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.299

paid work. "Femininity" constructs women as carers, contributing to the constraints by which women are pressed into accepting the sexual division of labour." She further argues that although attention is now been paid to the ethics of care, but that "an ethic of care that extols caring but that fails to be concerned with how the burden of caring are distributed contributes to the exploitation of women, and of the work of caring in affluent households, in day care centres, hospitals, nursing homes, and the like."[225]

In summarising the caring nature of women, Marilyn Friedman emulates the characteristics of relational persons as developed by feminists in which she concludes:

> *According to the relational approach, persons are fundamentally social beings who develop the competency of autonomy…in a context of values, meanings, and modes of self-reflection that cannot exist except as constituted by social practices…It is now well recognised that our reflective capacities and our very identities are always partly constituted by communal traditions that we cannot put entirely into question without at the same time voiding our very capacities to reflect. We are each reared in a social context of some sort, typical although not always that of a family, itself located in the wider social networks such as community and nation. Nearly, all of us remain, throughout our lives, involved in social relationships and communities, at least some of which partly define our identities and ground our highest values.[226]*

The association of women with peace can be seen as a foregone conclusion or a logical assumption that a higher percentage of women in decision-making positions would contribute to less hostile activities on the part of the state in question. 'Critical mass' theory therefore defines a certain percentage of women in national legislatures to influence policy positively although his figure differs according to source. Although Dahlerup contends with this view that it is not critical mass that matters, but "critical acts", which can be carried out by anyone,[227] yet Virginia Woolf has added her voice to the critical mass debate by saying that there can never be peace until women's values in private life are included in international decision making, suggesting that women possess values of passivism that are impeded by their exclusion from public life.[228] Put differently and poignantly, Brock-Utne states that "more women rulers would lead to fewer

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[225] Op.Cit. Held, Virginia. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press, Inc.: New York. p.16

[226] Friedman, Marilyn. (2000). "Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women", in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds). *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and Social Self.* New York: Oxford University Press.Pp.40-41

[227] Dahlerup, D. 2001. 'Women in political decision-making: From critical mass to critical acts in Scandinavia in Skjelsback, I and Symth, D (eds). *Gender, Peace and Conflict*. London: Sage. p.113

[228] Oldfield, S. 1989. Women Against the Iron Fist: Alternatives to Militarism 1900-1989. Oxford: Basel Blackwell. p.3

wars,"[229] although some countries such as Spain - 28.3 percent, Eritrea – 22 percent and Pakistan - 21.6 percent with high women political representation have or are undergoing circumstances of conflict, and some may be considered oppressive regimes, such as Cuba – 36 percent, Vietnam - 27.3 percent and Turkmenistan – 26 percent. But this ambiguity reveals that the involvement of states in warfare can also be determined or influenced by a range of other factors such as geography, bellicose neighbours, culture or political considerations. But even more importantly, figures regarding female representation do not reveal how influential women are on policy and many states include gender representation only as a measure in transition from conflict, such as in Rwanda - 48.8 percent, Mozambique – 30 percent, South Africa - 29.8 percent, Namibia - 26.4 percent and East Timor - 26.1 percent. (See, for example, Heineken, 2002 for the South African Context, or The Belfast agreement[230] and Patton Report[231] for Northern Ireland). It could also be argued that the 'critical mass' threshold has only been reached by a few states (9 over 35 percent), or that the threshold has been set too low. Research findings by Caprioli and Boyer have revealed that there is a direct relationship between the level of violence exhibited by states in international crises and levels of gender equality, concluding that "the severity of violence in crisis decreases as domestic gender equality increases."[232]

Research findings however by Regan and Paskeviciute, have also shown that violent conflict has more of a relationship with birth rates than gender,[233] which has a direct relationship with women's discrimination. According to this thesis, younger populations tend to engage more in conflict and the apparent prevalence of women in public life in states with lower levels of violent conflict is more to do with the family planning measures that enable them to be there. For example Fay et al. emphasise the extent to which the lrish Revolution gained momentum from the young and in Northern Ireland, the typical casualty of the conflict was a young male.[234] Huntington makes a particularly convincing case that "young people are the protagonists

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[229] Op. Cit. Potter, M. 2004. In Their Own Words: A Research report into the Victims sector in Northern Ireland…….Network. p.11

[230] Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity, Paragraph 1: "Pending the devolution of powers to a new Northern lreland Assembly, the British Government will pursue broad policies for sustained economic growth and stability in Northern lreland and for promoting social inclusion, including in particular community development and the advancement of women in public life"

[231] See: Recommendations paragraph 15.11

[232] Caprioli, M and Boyer, M. 2001. 'Gender, Violence and International Crisis', in Journal of Conflict resolution, Vol. 45. August 2001.p.503

[233] Regan, P. and Paskeviciute, A. 2003. 'Women's access to politics and peaceful states', in Journal of Peace Research. Vol. 40 No 3, May 2003. 287

[234] Fay, M. Morrissey, M and Smyth, M. 1997. Cost of the Troubles Study: Mapping Troubles-Related Deaths in Northern Ireland 1965-94. Londonderry: Incore. Pp.40-42

of protest, instability, reform and revolution", in which he identifies 'youth bulges' in populations of ages 15-24 in incidences of militancy.[235] By this thesis therefore, high birth rates, which are most often caused by the high illiteracy rate among women or the lack of women's access or right to family planning methods because of traditional/ cultural barriers, beliefs and practices. Abundance evidence abounds where woman's access to family planning methods or birth control not only limits the violence perpetrated by a state but also enables women to participate more fully in public life, creating the coincidence of peacefulness and women's representation.

If age profile were a major contributor to militancy in a country, statistics would give a clear indication of this correlation. According to a survey of states with youthful populations[236]states with 30 percent or more of their populations less than 15 years have, with some exceptions, experienced warfare in recent years. This is not universal, and states with older populations, under 20 percent aged below 15 for example, have experienced considerable conflict, such as the Balkan states, Russia and Georgia. Likewise, analysis of states with a low median age [237] produces a similar result, The majority of states with a median age under 20 have experienced conflict in recent years, with particular exceptions among the Slavic states, Bosnia-Herzegovina having the same median age as Australia, for example. Finally, fertility rates[238] show that there is some correlation between high instances of childbirth and conflict - again with the exception of some Slavic states - many states where women produce six or more children having experienced conflict in recent years (for example, Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Yemen)

Realistically though, irrespective of the existence of compelling statistical evidence, there are many other reasons why conflict takes place or not, which can be a complex phenomenon in which simplistic equations cannot be fitted neatly. For example, it can equally be argued that a surfeit of young people in these states leads to militancy and conflict or that the cultural emphasis on women having to bear and rear larger numbers of children prevents their

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[235] Huntington, S. 2002. The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order. London: Free Press. Pp.117-118
[236] See Appendix 3, column 1
[237] See Appendix 3, column 2.
[238] See Appendix 3. column 3.

participation in public life and the consequent restraining influence on conflict. On the other hand, conflict may owe more to structural influences, which links both conflict and women's participation to development. Furthermore, states where women apparently enjoy more freedoms in society may be frequently engaged in violent conflict with others, such as the United States, which questions whether peace or war and gender are related at all.

While women appear to be over-represented in projects of peacemaking or peace building from a broader perspective, explanations of this phenomenon are elusive. Notions of the innate peacefulness of women and bellicosity of men have been largely challenged. However, the socialising effect of the reinforcement of this assumption in the form of presumed gender roles is bound to have a significant impact on the behaviour of women and men. Many women may associate themselves with peace because they have been conditioned to do so, and men with war for the same reason.

A lot of women globally may be more inclined to peace as a result of their life experiences. More importantly also, the suffering of women during and after conflict have been regarded as disproportionate to men, and that the ideological currents necessary for the sustaining of conflict such as national group identity have often appropriated and utilised women to their detriment. Women are also primarily responsible for domestic stability, which is disrupted by conflict, so warfare would appear contrary to the tasks (traditional roles) women have been allocated in society. Yet women have also participated in conflict in pursuit of improvements to their circumstances, often being frustrated in post-conflict arrangements.

According to the critical mass theory mentioned earlier, it is assumed that sufficient numbers of women in political positions of governance will influence more passive decisions in a state. Although opposing views or counter arguments against this notion have been that women in positions of political influence gain their status by taking on 'male' characteristics, the assumptions behind this notion accept gender stereotypes that do not appear to be supportable by empirical evidence.

An even more convincing argument is that societal circumstances that benefit women also promote peaceful responses to potential situations of armed conflict. One example of this has

been offered as the coincidence of a reduction in the youthfulness of a population through birth control, which has been considered as more militant and radical in circumstances of conflict, and the resulting participation of women in public life that has been thereby facilitated. The real relationship between women and peace may be far more complex, however. While women clearly participate in warfare, known also to be perpetrators of domestic violence although on a lesser degree compared to men; and can benefit from goals achieved by conflict, learned experiences of maintaining social stability, coping mechanisms in times of adversity and gender specific conditioning through socialisation equip many women with the skills and insights necessary for post-conflict peace building.

The irony however, is that when it comes to peace and the rebuilding processes that follow, their inclusion, participation and contribution to these processes has been one of the controversial subjects in the field of conflict and peace studies until recently. Although participation can mean many things but its usage in this study specifically refers to women's inclusion and effective involvement in the peace and development projects, and taking part in governance and other political processes as defined and explained by Nelson Kasfir in his book 'The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African politics.' Using the genocide conflict in Rwanda as case study he tried to define and elaborate further on what counts as participation. According to him "….to participation is to be involved,"[239] which could mean involvement in various aspects that may include: politics, economic, social, cultural, religious etc. Since the subject of participation ranges as widely as: talking about politics and holding a monopoly of power to make enforceable decisions; approaching administrative officials; directly influencing government decisions and taking to the streets; conforming to the government administrative procedures in carrying out their daily businesses and leisure concerns by members of the public; voting in an election; holding of peaceful demonstrations etc. Kasfir therefore argues that the solving of an individual's grievance by an administrative officer he importunes may indicate more political involvement than voting or joining a political party. According to him making a critical decision is often seen as a distinctly different sort of activity from participation, but the difference is actually a matter of degree, not kind, as the monopoly over the allocation of resources is the endpoint in the measurement of participation. In other words, participation in

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[239] Kasfir, Nelson. (1976).The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics, with a case study of Uganda. University of California Press. Berkeley. Los Angeles. London….p.5

Africa turns on the ability to influence directly decisions concerning the allocation of secondary and university places, top positions, and new development projects.[240] The participation of women in all peacebuilding processes, including the long term political machinery of the state, clearly is an aspect of good governance and democratic reform that needs to be adhered to, especially in post-war Sierra Leone.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) is therefore a welcomed and timely development in the drive to include women in peace and development issues as its specific objectives are to protect women's rights during armed conflicts, the mainstreaming of gender issues in peacekeeping operations, the prevention of impunity for gender based crimes and increase women's participation before, during and after armed conflicts. The significance of this resolution is seen in its ability to weave together the impacts of war and conflict on women on one hand, and to also promote their participation on the other, in various peace and security mechanisms including peace negotiations, constitutional and electoral reforms, and reconstruction and reintegration processes. But although it emphasis on gender mainstreaming in every aspect of peace and development processes, unfortunately however, it rarely made explicit the designated functions of transitional bodies or international agencies, except for the general provision that accounts or calls for care to be taken of the needs of women as victims of conflict with no guidance on how it could be done.[241] Similarly, the Lome Peace Agreement for Sierra Leone signed in 1999, to which the UN was also a key player, states in Article XXVIII (2):

> *Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone.*[242]

The agreement frames women as victims, not as actors in peacebuilding with transformative potential, hence no reference to the expertise that exist in local women's communities and organizations.[243] However despite these short falls in Resolution 1325,its enactment and indeed

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[240] Ibid.p.6

[241] Training for Peace (TfP) -The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). Introduction - Gender and Peacebuilding in Africa. Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institute....p.41

[242] See the 1999 Lome Peace Agreement for Sierra Leone.

[243] Op.Cit. Training for Peace (TfP) - The Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI).....p.29

other international instruments such as: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA), and UN Resolutions 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1820 (2008) amongst others, are all intended to respond to the many conflicts that have emerged in the past decade and many strategies are now developed to respond to the needs of victims, combat future violent armed conflicts and promote sustainable peace by involving women in post conflict peace building activities. Luc Reycheller defines violence as a situation in which quantitative and qualitative life expectancy of individuals or communities is intentionally reduced.[244] These conflicts emerged resulting from bad governance, misuse of resources like diamonds, political instability resulting from tribal differences, corruption, religious differences and struggles for political power which degenerated into armed conflict that left untold suffering on the masses. The impact of war on women as both victims and perpetrators indicate that women also had to employ sustainable peace back into their communities in the post conflict period, which has resulted in the springing up of several women's group to address issues relating to the conflict.

The spectrum of peace related activities from which these women's groups have emerged and the strategies which they have been employing include: providing basic survival needs like addressing issues relating to food, medical, shelter and counseling of family members. They have engaged in community outreach peace building activities like peace education, leadership trainings, awareness raising, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants. They have also embarked on traditional modes of cross community dialogue, making contact and building bridges across the conflict divide, creating space for dialogue, analysing conflicts, identify needs and priorities and building consensus around critical issues.

According to report by Saferworld, 49 conflicts had been in the post-cold war period and 90 percent of those killed in these conflicts have been noncombatants.[245] Thus in the view of Gifty Abasiya, Ethiopia's Minister of State in charge of Women's Affairs in the Prime Minister's Office noted, as in Resolution 1325, that the victims of war were also women and children, yet:

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[244] Luc Reycheller and Thania Paffenholz- Peace building a Field Guide United States of America: Lynne Rienner publishers INC (2001).

[245] Saferworld (2000) cited in Momsen, Janet Henshall. (2004). Gender and Development. Rouledge. p.102.
   (Available at: http://www.saferworld.co.uk) Sourced: 05/05/2011

'Although the involvement of women is considered to be vital for ensuring sustainable peace, women have so far been marginalized and do not participate fully in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peace initiatives.'[246] Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab, Former foreign minister of Namibia who acted as president of the security council when UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was unanimously passed, he retorted rhetorically that "women are half of every community… Are they therefore not also half of every solution?"[247]

In 2002, Kofi Annan the former Secretary General of the United Nations also stressed the need for women to be involved in peace deals by stating that, "Women do not enjoy equal status with men in any society and that where cultures of violence and discrimination against women and girls exist prior to conflict, they will be exacerbated during conflicts."[248] He further emphasized that if women do not participate in the decision making structures of a society, they are unlikely to become involved in decisions about the conflict or peace process that follows.

In that same report, the Secretary General further stated that the:

> *Participation of women and girls and the inclusion of gender perspectives in both formal and informal peace processes are critical to ensuring that political structures, economic and social institutions and security sectors negotiated through peace talks facilitate achievement of greater equality between women and men.*[249]

In this regard, it is therefore pertinent to support the right of Sierra Leonean women to participate in peace building activities against the emergence of Resolution 1325 because this resolution encourages countries emerging out of conflicts such as Sierra Leone to make women and gender perspectives important and relevant in all decisions ranging from negotiating peace agreements, peace keeping operations, planning refugee camps to reconstructing war torn societies amongst others.

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[246] Abasiya, Gifty. (2002). Call for stronger women's role in conflict resolution in Janet Henshall Momsen. Gender and Development (2004).Rouledge.p.102

[247] United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1325: at its 4213th meeting, October 2000

[248] Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General Report on Women, Peace and Security: Impact of armed conflict on women and girls, 2002 section 11- 5 (Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/s-2002-1154-E.pdf) Sourced: 10/06/2011

[249] Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary General Report on Women Peace and Security peace processes 2002, section 1V -26 on (Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ods/s-2002-1154-E.pdf) Sourced: 06/06/2011

Consequently, the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) also produced the National Policy on the Advancement of women, which acknowledges women's right to participate in peace processes and states that:

> *The inclusion of women at all stages of the peace process at the decision making level is both imperative and important…as their participation in peace-making initiatives is a matter of justice and of their right to have a say in matters that affect their lives, their families and their communities of which in most cases they form more than 50 percent.*[250]

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone emphasizes this and states that, because women and girls became targets in the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone and their vulnerability was deliberately exploited in order to dehumanize them. It states that it is only when the legal and socio political system treats them as equals with men, giving them full access to economic opportunities so as to enable them participate freely in both public and private life that they will realize their full potential.[251] All of the views contained in the above review of the available literature, informed the development of the theoretical frame which is discussed below.

2.5 Women Are Peacemakers and Peacebuilders: Theoretical Views

Women's involvement in peace and peacebuilding ventures, as mentioned earlier, is not a new phenomenon but a well-documented and publicized one[252] as it predates modern times. Women the world over, especially in traditional Africa are very much committed to peace as a result of their primary gender roles as life and care-givers, responsible for children, families and by extension, communities and nations. In her description of women's passion for life and therefore their devotion to peace, Oliver Schreiner says:

> *There is perhaps, no woman, whether she has borne children, or be merely a potential child-bearer, who could look down on a battlefield covered with the slain, but the thought would rise in her, "So many mothers' sons! So many bodies brought into the world to lie there! So many months of weariness and pain while bones and muscles were shaped within; …so many baby mouths drawing life at women's breasts. All this, that men might lie with glazed eyeballs and swollen bodies, and fixed, blue, unclosed mouths, and great limbs tossed. This, that an acre of ground might be manured with human flesh!*[253]

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[250]Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affair: National Policy on the Advancement of Women, Freetown (2000).

[251]A Compilation of chapters from the final report of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

[252]Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8 (Available at: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/women/potter04b.pdf) Sourced: 25/5/ 2010

[253]Schreiner, Oliver in Daniela Gioseffi (ed). (1988). Women on War: Essential Voices for the Nuclear Age. Touchstone Books. New York and

But despite this long involvement of women and their meaningful contributions to peace work, it would be incorrect to assume that all women are 'natural peacebuilders,' as revelations from regions that have experienced protracted conflicts such as the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Liberia and Kashmir have shown that women have and can be active agents in perpetrating violent conflict. However, contributions of LWCSOs to peacebuilding have been significantly high. As discussed in the sample cases in chapter two, it is evident how Women in Peacebuilding Network in West Africa brought international attention to the lack of women and other civil society actors in the Liberian national peace talks; how women in Argentina protested the disappearances of their grandchildren during the repressive military regime; and how the women of Bougainville were able to initiate a peace settlement between the Rebel Red Army and the Papua New Guinean Government over the environmental disaster caused by the Australian Mining Company.

In this section, I examined the relationship between women and peacebuilding, drawing on the prevailing theoretical assumptions backed with some practical examples that link them with peace, and subjecting the literature to an intense analysis from the perspective of challenging the often narrow parameters within which women are inserted to justify essentialist notions of gender. It is now a commonly held view that conflict facilitates change in gender roles and relations and that women and men view and experience conflict differently. As a result, conflict situations create space for the re-negotiation of gendered stereotypes and the consolidation of gains made by women during conflict. But at the same time and more importantly also, traditional roles and relations can also be reinforced in the aftermath.[254]Therefore women's association with peace and hence branding them as peacebuilders stems from their diverse roles and contributions, as can be seen from the literature, both in private and public to enhance peace, which are discussed under the various categories below.

Women's Peace Movements

Globally and from the available literature on women and peace, many examples of women's organisations that are engaged in and devoted to the process of urging, making or building peace,

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London. p.162

[254]See: Meintjes, Sheila. Meredeth Turshen and Anu Pillay. (2002). *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books

among which are Bat Shalom (Israel), Follow the Women (Basque Country), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (International), Frauen fur den Frieden (Switzerland), Association des Femmes pour les Initiatives de Paix (Mali),[255] in addition to other examples and studies that have already been mentioned in 2.4 above. In addition, there also exist specific studies of women peace movements in conflict ridden countries such as Northern Ireland, or profiles of individual women documented from a variety of contexts.[256]

In the international context, examples such as the international Alert programme of Gender and Peacebuilding and the United Nations Development Fund for Women emphasise the essential role of women in projects of peace. Significantly, the United Nations Security Council's recognition of the importance of women to peace passed Resolution 1325 (2000) to increase women's gender participation in all their field operations and peacebuilding initiatives.[257] On the whole and as literature backed by practical application have shown, there ultimately appears to be a wider tendency to associate peace movements.[258]

According to Aruna Gnanadason et al., Women in Europe and North America for example organised in an effort to prevent the outbreak of WW I. Similarly, in July 1914, the International Women Suffrage Alliance presented a petition for peace to the British Foreign Ministry signed on behalf of 12 million women in 26 countries. Once war broke out, the suffrage movement became divided between those who supported their government's war effort and those who convinced to work for peace.[259] This is similar to what the women in Sierra Leone did in 1996 at the Bintumani I and II conferences when they raised their voices infavour of peace and democracy by saying no to the 1992 military junta government and the RUF rebels amidst threats, amputations and killings by the rebels.

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[255] Op. Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women….p.8

[256] Morgan, V. (1995).Peacemakers? Peacekeepers? – Women in Northern Ireland. 1969-1995, Paper delivered at the University of Ulster. October 25, 1995 in Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8

[257] See Appendix 1

[258] Op.Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8

[259] Gnanadason, Aruna A Kanyoro and L. A. McSpadden. (1996). women, Violence, and nonviolent change, Lutheran World Federation, and world council of churches

Aruna Gnanadason et al also acknowledged the International Congress of women at The Hague in April 1915, presided over by Jane Addams, brought together over a thousand women and agreed to send envoys to the European and United States governments in a plea to stop the war. Although that effort did not succeed, the Congress did create a basis for the women's peace movement. The Women International League for peace and freedom was born out of The Hague Conference and the Women's Peace Crusade, formed in 1917/18 brought in grassroots movements. All these groups faced tremendous resistance in their own societies as they sought to mobilize anti-war sentiment.[260] But even though majority of the women in Sierra Leone experienced the war as victims, some of them also perpetrated and collaborated in the violence that took place, and played an extremely important role in influencing the dynamics of the conflict within their homes, communities and country. But notwithstanding the extreme difficult and precarious conditions they were caught in, women cooperated and formed networks and organisations to improve access to basic needs and services such as health and income-generation. They were increasingly committed to providing and meeting the welfare of their families, including the extended ones as the Sierra Leonean culture demands. The Sierra Leone Women's Forum was no exception as they stood against the traditional belief that security and order is not only a man's duty but as partners, women were also capable too.

In thousands of other communities, women have not only opposed war but organized to resist the invasion of their countries. Vietnamese women played a vital role in the struggle for their country for centuries, beginning with the national uprising led by the two sisters of Trung in A.D. 39 against the North. According to Aruna Gnanadason et al:

> *As women confronted with domestic, economic, political or military, social or cultural, ethnic of racial and religious violence respond ... in ways as their settings and their resources, their strength comes from commitment to life rather than death, to peace rather than war, to the future of their children, their families and the communities. Their strength also comes from linking with.*[261]

Women are not only performing their traditional role as mothers but are and have also been instrumental as activists and advocates for peace, and had "waged conflict nonviolently" by pursuing democracy and human rights through strategies that raise awareness on and of conflict

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[260] Ibid
[261] Ibid

issues and pressure others to bring about change. Aptly put by Elizabeth Ferris, women's successes in all of the peace ventures they are engaged in all over the world clearly shows that "[M]otherhood is a powerful motivation for political action in all parts of the world."[262] In Argentina, one of the sample cases of women's peacebuilding efforts that is discussed in detail below, women had mobilised themselves as mothers and grandmothers of their disappeared children and sustained a weekly protest at a time when other activists had gone into hiding due to severe governmental repression. The mothers of 'Plaza De Mayo' in Argentina were acting as mothers and not political activists when they began to protest against lack of information about the disappearance of their children. According to Jane S Jaquette:

> *No mother is asked what her ideology is of what she does; neither do we ask what her children were doing. We do not defend ideologies; we defend life... Our great concern is not to be manipulated by any political party…neither the government's threat nor their riffles are a match for the faith of a mother."*[263]

A similar trend of emphasis on the role of mothers as peace builders is also noted as Elise Boulding put it:

> *[T]he basic energies common to all human beings have been redirected so that men seek power and women protect men from the consequences of power seeking. At the close of every war, destroyed communities have been rebuilding, and much of the physical labour of rebuilding has been women's work. Another traditional activity expected of women is conflict resolution, since it is troublesome to go to war all the time. The old practice of marrying the daughters of one village to sons of the next was a war-avoidance strategy."*[264]

This assertion seems to confirm that women are motivated to build peace simply because they are mothers, who have developed and have a closer tie and love for 'children'; and partly because in the event of war they are the most vulnerable. The literature on violent conflicts clearly show that women have been raped and used over the decades as sexual weapons and objects of violence between warring factions, a reality brought to life in the experiences in Rwanda and Bosnia- Herzegovina. The consequences of these acts, especially rape, which has been used for decades as a weapon of cleansing, led to its recognition by the United Nations as a

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[262] Op. Cit. Ferris, Elizabeth. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute….32
[263] Ibid
[264] Boulding, Elise. (1988). Cultures of Peace: The hidden side of history, Syracuse University Press: Syracuse. p. 228

'crime against humanity.' This has encouraged the delayed recognition of Japan's rapes, sexual slavery and abduction of women from all the colonised and occupied countries during World War II to be 'comfort women' for the Japanese imperial army, as war crimes. A War Crimes Tribunal was held in Tokyo in December 2000 to draw attention to these crimes and to try and get reparations for the now elderly victims. Sexual slavery was also used during more recent wars in Angola, and Mozambique. Under the military dictatorship in Argentina men and women were imprisoned arbitrarily and if women gave birth in prison the babies were given anonymously to government supporters. Most of the families of these prisoners have never found these children who were born in prison and grandmothers continued to publicly protest until their concerns were addressed. [265] However, it is important to note here that the Japanese Government has moved beyond this gloomy episode not only to offer compensation to victims but to also become one of the highest committed donors/ sponsors of United Nations peace and peacebuilding activities around the world.

Women as Advocates for peace

Majority of women have always served as advocates for peace in their communities and countries. From her comparison of women and men, Carol Gilligan finds that men tend to have an "ethic of justice" premised on equality (everyone should be treated the same), whilst women on the other hand, are more likely to have an "ethic of care" premised on non-violence (no one should be hurt). In most societies, especially in patriarchal ones like Sierra Leone, such values are transmitted to boys and girls from an early age. In Sierra Leone for example, girls mainly in traditional settings are raised to be docile, obedient, subservient and nice. More especially and until recently, they are raised to believe that their role is to serve men, to sacrifice their own needs for the good of men, and for the wellbeing of their family. But even more intriguing is the fact that myths and rituals dating as far back as ancient times, affirm the power of women to give life, and hint at societies in which women and their values are central. In other words, they are traditionally seen as closer to the life-giving earth (mother earth), associated with fertility and cycles – with mythic images of women as nature, as sexuality and fertility are deeply imbedded in our cultural psyches. Based on these facts, Gilligan makes the case that women perceive the

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[265] Radcliffe, Sarah. A and Sallie Westwood. (2004). 'Viva' Women and Popular Protest in Latin America. London and New York: Rouledge, 1993, in Gender and Development by Janet Henshall Momsen Rouledge. p.103

world differently than men, seeing it is a web of relationships by which individuals can be identified. She therefore concludes that women's concerns for relationships are the basis for their nurturing role, passion for affirming life, and hence their opposition to war.[266] This concern with earth and the reverence for life manifests itself in many forms – for example from ancient goddess symbols of fertility to women's fascination with modern "deep ecology" movement, which links environmental and spiritual concerns.[267] All of these factors present women's holistic visions of the world integrate concern for the environment, for creation, with reverence for life, and all life in the community.

In Somalia for example, the women had advocated for changes in the clan system and for the first time a woman, Asha Hagi Elmi was signatory to a Somalis Peace Agreement. Instead of attending the Somalia National Peace Conference as part of the delegation of Clans, these women presented themselves as a clan on its own. They used their group to lobby for a quota for women in the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). They faced opposition from the male delegates who told them that "no man will agree to be represented by a woman." Even getting a seat around the table involved a major struggle. The women had to convince skeptical clan leaders and militia figures and women from within their own ranks of the need for the peace process to be more gender sensitive. According to Elmi:

> *The process did not come by accident, but through well-directed, daring struggles, carried out in phases, spearheaded by conscious women leaders in cooperation with the enlightened segments of civil society and the international community. Our main agenda was to vote for participatory peace and change as the basis of a new Somalia. We wanted to facilitate the creation of a stable, democratic, and competitive state in which respect for human rights was preserved."[268]*

The experience of these Somali women indicates that, despite their peace building efforts, women are rarely present at the peace table. It takes fierce determination and intense lobbying for them to be included as participants in transactional governments, especially in Africa and particularly in Sierra Leone. In their bid to developing coping strategies, LWCS in Sierra Leone

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[266] Gilligan, Carol. (1983). *In a Different Voice*: Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Harvard University Press, Cambridge in Elizabeth Ferris. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute. P.O.Box 1520, S-751 45 Uppsala Sweden. (2004).Pp.3-4

[267] Ibid

[268] Elmi, Asha Hagi. "The Other Clan: Save Somali Women and Children", in Tongeren, Paul.V. Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoever (eds) (2005). People Building Peace 11. Lynne Rienner publishers Inc., Pp. 116- 121.

were and are still very active in organising and participating in civil society peacebuilding efforts not only within their communities but throughout the country and across borders, have continued to play an important role and advocating for peace at all levels – local, national and regional.

Women Reduce Direct Violence

It is clear from available literature and recorded sample cases that there are cases where women have used violence in defense of their goals. But much more common has been their non-violence, applied in countless creative ways (and largely ignored in the standard works on the subject); and involvement and contributions to the 'reduction of direct violence' in countries around the world. In their determination to resolve, address and or reduce conflicts non-violently, and practice their caring nature, many women have not only become peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers, but are also doing relief and charity work for and with people in their communities, often through their churches, mosques, or temples. They run soup kitchens to provide for the hungry, offer clothing to those in need, and set up orphanages and shelter for those with no place to go. An example is the women's group in Bougainville that built secret networks for humanitarian assistance when no other groups were able to provide relief to victims of the civil violence. Through prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, peace marches, and petitions, they took a political stand against violence. As Helen Hakena, executive director of the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency espouses "Women are not passive victims, we are contributing actively … our courage and contributions have made the world a better place to live and work."[269]This experience shows that, women's full participation in peace and all its accompanying issues is vital.

Building Cross-cutting Ties

Women's mobilisation takes keen interest in building ties across ethnic, clan and religious lines, especially where there is conflict in relations in the broader society. These movements have permeated society in a way that no other societal interests could. Even environmental and human rights activists hardly claim the kind of popular support the women's movement enjoyed in many countries. For example, in South Africa, no other group united as broad a spectrum of individuals

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[269] Hakena, Helen "Women Weaving Bougainville Together" Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Papua New Guinea in Paul .V. Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoever (eds). (2005). People Building Peace 11, Lynne Rienner publishers Inc. Pp. 123- 125

as the Women's National Coalition (WNC) which was formed in 1991. It brought together eighty-one organisational affiliates and thirteen regional alliances of women's organisations, including organisations affiliated with the African National Congress the Inkatha Freedom Party, the National Party, Pan Africanist Congress, Azanian Peoples Organisation and the Democratic Party. Over three million women participated in focus groups organised by WNC to voice their opinion on women's concerns. Regional and national conferences were held and a Woman's Charter was drafted and endorsed by the National Parliament and all nine regional parliaments in 1994. The Charter addressed a broad range of concerns, including equality, legal rights, economic issues, education, health, politics and violence against women.[270] In Sierra Leone, the peacebuilding activities of LWCSOs have always and continue to be concentrated mainly at the grassroots level, and as such, have extensive reach in the work of mending and rebuilding broken relationships throughout the country. Rita Arditti summarised women's determination, goodwill, love and care for people around them, especially during hard times and sufferings by saying that it is women who give birth and nurse babies and are the primary caregivers responsible for the children and for the family. She further adds that this role of women in nurturing, building relationships and maintaining the family is central to their identity.[271] Elizabeth Ferris sums it all up by saying "[A] mother's concern to keep her home safe expands to working for a safe community or to opposing governments which threaten that security…Motherhood is a powerful motivation for political action in all parts of the world. The mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina acted as mothers – not as political activists – when they began to protest the lack of information about their disappeared children."[272]

Women Build Capacity

As educators and participants in the development process, women also 'build the capacity' of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflicts. Mothers can nurture the values of peace, respect, and empathy for others in their children. The Women In Peace Network

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[270] Amanda, Kemp. Nozizwe Madlala, Asha Moodley and Elaine Salo, 'The Dawn of a New Day: Redefining, South African Feminism,' in Amrita Basu (ed), Challenge of Local Feminism pp. 131- 62 Boulder, CO, Westview Press, in Aili Mari Tripp 'Women in Movement' Transformation in African Political Landscape: Gender in Africa (2005) edited by Andrea Cornwall, International African Institute, publisher. p. 240

[271] Arditti, Rita. 'Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared children of Argentina, in Jane S Jaquette (ed) (1991). The women's movement in Latin America: Feminism and the transition to democracy, Thematic studies in Latin America, West view press New York. p.188.

[272] Op. Cit. Ferris, Elizabeth. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute….p.32

(WIPNET), a sub-regional peace initiative for LWCS peacebuilding, trains women in the skills of peace building to increase their capacity for ongoing peace work in their organisation, communities, and nations. Through grassroots initiatives in peace education and socio-economic empowerment, Athwaas also has emerged as one of the few groups in Kashmir that has transcended the fault lines of faith, ethnicity, class, gender, and political persuasion to facilitate an inclusive, gender-sensitive, and sustained dialogue among diverse stakeholders in the conflict.[273]

Women Grouping and the Culture of Peace

The efforts of women are invisible due to cultural constraints, but in the North and West, they are open and confident. Some efforts are composed solely of women who deliberately distant themselves from men and the social systems they represent. However, women's perspective on war and peace, on violence and gender struggles are beginning to be recognised as offering unique contributions to the great debates on the nature of the society and the international system.

Women have also contributed to peace processes in their involvement in politics, starting with their roles in political parties, transitional governments, elections and even in parliament as was seen with the women in Liberia where Ruth Perry headed the Transitional government,[274] and Ellen Sirleaf as President now, and in Sierra Leone more women are now aspiring for and contesting in elections in the post conflict era than before.

Even though bringing women to the peace table has never been an easy task, nonetheless women have tried to rise up to the challenge and excel by grouping and empowering themselves instead of working in isolation, which has proven effective as can be seen from the various examples mentioned above.

John Paul Lederach therefore stresses on the importance of empowering people through local groups, which he calls "indigenous empowerment." Lederach suggested that the conflict

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[273] Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika Sewak,' Women: Using the Gender Lens', in Tongeren, Paul Van Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, and Juliette Verhoever (eds). People Building Peace 11. Lynne Rienner Publishers. p. 99

[274] Sirleaf, Ellen Johnson and E. Rehn. (2003). 'Progress of the worlds – Women, War, Peace, the Independent Experts Assessment on the Impact of Armed on women's Role in Peace Building, United States of America: UNIFEM

transformation process must actively envision, include respect and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves setting new lenses, through which the "setting" of the people in it is not the "problem" and the outsider the "answer" rather, the long term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources with the setting. Lederach's comprehensive approach entails building an "infrastructure" to peace that involves the affected population which in many cases includes huge numbers of women and children. Thus, the significance of women at the peace table cannot be overemphasised as it is not simple to satisfy clauses on gender equality in international or national resolutions, but instead, bringing women to the peace table begins a process of guaranteeing that women are part of the socio-economic and governance structures that emerge in the post conflict environment and also leverage to decision making. It is important to note that involving women in peace building activities have sometimes proved to signify changes, new opportunities, structures and relationships for women all around Africa. Women have been active in community level conflict prevention and resolution, and in promoting a culture of peace. Women have also developed ways to locally counter the lethal impact of small arms proliferation, working to improve the lives and conditions of girls and women in displacement camps, and mobilising people to pressure for peace. In the absence of men, women assume the roles and full responsibilities of heads of households, and are usually looked upon as maintenance of communities and traditions. In this capacity, women usually find themselves engaged in social dynamics that many defy in one way or the other. As conflict destabilises established social order, it also opens breaches in which women in their new or expanded roles as sole heads of household and keepers of culture discover potentially enabling avenues for action in conditions from which reconstruction sometimes succeed.

The Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Frederico Mayor in 1994, launched an international appeal on the establishment of a right to peace and in February that same year, UNESCO launched it towards a culture of peace programme. The expression "culture of peace" implies that peace is much more than the absence of war but includes a set of values, attitudes and modes of behaviour promoting the peaceful settlement of conflict and the quest for mutual understanding. It also implies that peace is a way of being, doing and living in society that can be taught, developed, and best of all, improved

upon and requires non-violence, tolerance, solidarity and a transformation of institutional practices and individual modes of behavior. For UNESCO, the culture of peace is intrinsically linked to conflict prevention and resolution with its key values being tolerance, solidarity, sharing and respect of every individual's right.[275]

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed the year 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace", and signed the 2000 Manifesto with the aim of mobilising public opinion so as to accelerate the transition from a culture of war and violence to a culture of peace and non-violence as the century was marked by appalling acts of genocide and violence. Most importantly, in 1998, the UNGA declared the period 2001-2010 the "International Decades for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World." The mandate for the 2001-2010 decade specifically emphasised the need for the international community to recognise and implement strategies that focus on and ensure assistance for children exposed to harmful and violent situations and thereby ensure the participation of those affected by violence the creation of effective policies and practices for the decade.[276]

Consequently, hundreds of women from the 53 African countries gathered in Zanzibar, Tanzania during the Pan African Women's conference on the eve of the millennium, to launch the International Year for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence, where they resolved to launch the Pan African Women's peace movement, which aims at stopping violent conflicts and wars on the continent. These women also expressed their regret that peace negotiations were male dominated, regardless of women's efforts and initiatives to resolve conflicts and promote peace on the African continent, notably through consensus building and dialogue. They committed themselves to engaging in consultations, research and networking to develop a comprehensive and gender sensitive view of conflict prevention, management and resolution, whilst calling on various institutional bodies, regional and international, to give support to local women's peace making and peace building initiatives. [277]

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[275] United Nations, "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World" 2001-2010. (Available at: http://www.unac.org/peacecp/intro/index.html) Sourced: 05/07/2011

[276] Ibid

[277] United Nations, Zanzibar Declaration. (Available at: http://www.unesco.org/cpp/uk/declarations/zanzibar.htm) Sourced: 06/07/2011

Consequently, women's participation in any process is essential to the promotion of justice and for fair and sustainable development which can only be achieved when there is sustainable peace which will not be limited to physical improvement such as better food, clothing, buildings, equipments, machinery or capital but also that various less tangible needs are met. These include the need for women to have a say and be listened to, the need to follow their chosen paths and the right to have dignity. Society must be willing to acknowledge and respect the views of women and their needs and concerns must be highlighted and addressed because it is their right to be heard and to participate in public life as spelt out in several international treaties and conventions already mentioned above.

Women as Development Partners/ Practitioners

Clearly war affects women but on the other hand decisions at the international level also have greater impact on women that have helped shape their lives. Although it has been assumed that international aid programmes benefit both men and women, yet findings have shown that women are either excluded or bypassed in many of the supposedly gender neutral development programmes. In Sierra Leone for example, even as women perform most of the agricultural labour, agricultural assistance since colonial periods to the present often focuses on men. Janet Hensell Momsen therefore reiterates the need to meet women's needs and concerns and their inclusion in peace processes in order to promote justice, fair and sustainable development by stating that because sustainable development is a process through which the potentials of an object or organism are released, until it reaches its natural, complete, full-fledged form, the skills and knowledge of the human resources including women, who are the primary sustainers of society, must be utilized.[278] Although some programmes have been developed that focus on women as beneficiaries, yet a decade later, these programmes only reached a small percentage of women. For example, in the 1980s, among the UN agencies, 3.5 percent of programmes (representing 0.2 percent of the budget allocations) were deemed to benefit women. But unfortunately, less than 1 percent of the Food and Agricultural Organisations programmes contain strategies to reach women.[279]

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[278] Janet Henshall Momsen, women and Development in the third world- Britain 1993.
[279] Op.Cit. Ferris, Elizabeth. Women, War and Peace: Research Report. Life & Peace Institute. P.O.Box 1520, S-751 45 Uppsala Sweden. (2004). p.15

In the views of Marilyn Porter, the participation of women as equal partners and decision makers in development efforts is a core value for doing development. This will to promote gender equality which refers to equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men, in short, a transformed partnership based on equality between women and men, is a condition for people centered sustainable development. A sustained and long-term commitment especially by stakeholders is also essential so that women and men can work together for themselves, their children and communities in order to meet future challenges. This involves the removal of discrimination and structural inequalities in access to resources, opportunities and services, and the promotion of equal rights thereby recognising that men and women have different roles and needs, which should be taken into account in development planning and programming.[280]

Generally, the non-inclusion of women in peace and development initiatives has resulted to more conflict and the non-sustainability of peace and development efforts. During the late 1970s after the International Women's Year in 1975, it was recognised that development planning had ignored the important roles played by women in their communities which largely excluded them from the design and implementation of development programs. A move to address this led to the development of several approaches to combat these inequalities between women and men especially in developmental issues. The second UN Decade (1970-9) saw increased integration of women's issues into development planning whereby the idea of creating units responsible for women and development began to develop within government machineries. The "Women In Development" (WID) programme of the USAID was instituted to provide four percent of its funds to women aimed at planning approaches to include their empowerment, equity or equality, efficiency and effectiveness. These approaches were based on different analyses of women's situation and conventional development practice, each with a different focus for integrating women's needs and concerns. WID viewed women as the problem, the focus and therefore tried to integrate them into the existing development process as it was hoped that that will help to integrate projects to develop more efficiently and effectively for women's initiatives to be brought into full play. However, the results of this programme, even in the private sector as well, were disturbing. This led to another development strategy known as the 'women and development perspective (WAD)', which took more critical approach and focused on the

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[280] Marilyn Porter and Ellen Judd, ' Feminist Doing Development: A Practical Critique London: Biddles Ltd. 1998

relationship between women and development, rather than simply devising strategies to incorporate them. WAD also recognised women as important economic actors by emphasising the informal and unrecognised work they do in their households and outside the formal sector. However, it failed to undertake a full scale analysis of the relationship between patriarchal, differing modes of production and women's subordinate and oppressive status which limit their participation in activities relating to peace and development.[281]

These shocking revelations about the failure of the WID programme to achieve its desired goal gave rise to another perspective, the 'gender and development (GAD)' discourse, which was developed to respond to the inadequacies and flaws of the existing women in development (WID) and women and development (WAD) approaches. It however paid more attention to both women and men's roles and responsibilities, and emphasised the relationship between men and women in the development process with the aim of improving the status of women through the active participation of both men and women; and also mainstreaming women's needs and perspectives into all activities. It stresses the need for development processes to incorporate strategies and processes which empower women, challenge existing gender roles and the sexual division of labour and rewards that continually transform gender and power relations.[282]

Women influence the course of events and their actions are constitutive of post war societies. The reduction of women to targets and beneficiaries both fail to recognise their contributions and add to their marginalisation. In this regard, the social transformation and reintegration processes of women should not only be seen as coming home, but about defining new guiding social values and establishing corresponding relationship and institutions based on a combination of factors including Kingdom, socio-economic interest shared experiences and circumstances.

However, in addressing women's level of participation in any peace building process, a gender analysis should be done as it will help to highlight issues relating to conflict to include the differences between the impact of arm conflict between women and men and the role of gender in peace building processes. In this regard and as Reycheler puts it, in order to achieve

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[281] Op. Cit. Momsen, Janet Henshall. (2004). Gender and Development. Routledge Perspectives on Development
[282] Momsen, Janet Henshall. (2004). Gender and Development. Routledge

sustainable peace and development, the situation should be characterised by the absence of physical violence: the elimination of unacceptable political, economic and cultural form of discrimination: a high level of internal and external legitimacy or support, self-sustainability and a propensity to enhance the constructive transformation of conflicts. Sustainable peace and development in post conflict societies like Sierra Leone therefore can only be effectively achieved if it is equitable, sustainable and participatory. It should be one in which active participation of all are combined with a focus on their own interest as they see them, relying primarily on their own resources and carried out under their own control.[283]

The foregone conclusion or the logical assumption that a higher percentage of women in decision-making positions would lead to less hostile activities on the part of the state in question, is one of the views that associate women with peace. "Critical mass" theory defines a certain percentage of women in national legislatures to influence policy positively although his figure differs according to source. Gierycz suggests 30-35 percent to make a difference,[284] but Dahlerup contends, however, that it is not critical mass that matters, but "critical acts", which can be carried out by anyone.[285] This notion clearly acknowledges that progress towards peace or equality as aims can also be equally pursued by men. Virginia Woolf has been quoted as saying that there can never be peace until women's values in private life are included in international decision making, suggesting that women possess values of passivism that are impeded by their exclusion from public life.[286]

A lot of women globally, and especially LWCS in Sierra Leone are more inclined to peace as a result of their life experiences. More importantly also, the suffering of women during and after conflict have been regarded as disproportionate to men, and that the ideological currents necessary for the sustaining of conflict such as national group identity have often appropriated and utilised women to their detriment. Women are also primarily responsible for domestic stability, which is disrupted by conflict, so warfare would appear contrary to the tasks women have been allocated in society. Nonetheless women have also participated in conflict in pursuit

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[283] Reycheler, Luc. and Thania Paffenholz: Peace Building a Field Guide United States of America-Lynne Rienner publishers Inc.

[284] Gierycz, D. (2001). 'Women, Peace and the UN', in Skjelsback, I and Smyth, D (eds), Gender, Peace and Conflict, London: Sage. p.25

[285] Dahlerup, D. (2001). 'Women in political decision-making: From critical mass to critical acts in Scandinavia', in Skjelsback, I and Smyth, D (eds). Gender, Peace and Conflict. London: Sage. p.113

[286] Oldfield, S (1 989). Women Against the Iron Fist: Alternatives to Militarism 1900-1989, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. p.3

of improvements to their circumstances, but their hopes have often being frustrated in post-conflict arrangements. Before the war in Sierra Leone, few women elites outside of the capital, Freetown, were able to participate in the political and administrative machinery; although there are a few of them in the southern region that are Paramount Chiefs (traditional rulers). But giving the limited number of those that did hold decision-making positions, there was no effective translation of their participation into an overall improvement in the situation of women.[287] But dynamics of the war gave momentum to LWCS movements and it provided a uniting vision that was seized and taken advantage of by the women in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Women's Peace Movement (SLWPM), established in January 1995 as a result of the networking amongst LWCSOs, women succeeded in playing one of the most influential roles during the Bintumani I and II conferences in 1995, during which they opted and stood for elections before peace and the prioritisation of civilian democratic rule. The mid-1990s was therefore a period of increased voices of women's movements, as one of the most vocal elements within civil society in Sierra Leone; a period that also increased awareness among women of their right to participate in the future of the country.[288]

A more convincing argument is that societal circumstances that benefit women also promote peaceful responses to potential situations of armed conflict. One example of this has been offered as the coincidence of a reduction in the youthfulness of a population through birth control, which has been considered as more militant and radical in circumstances of conflict, and the resulting participation of women in public life that has been thereby facilitated. The real relationship between women and peace may be far more complex, however. While women clearly participate in warfare and can benefit from goals achieved by conflict, learned experiences of maintaining social stability, coping mechanisms in times of adversity and gender specific conditioning through socialisation, equip many women with the skills and insights necessary for post-conflict peace building. A greater understanding of the role of women in societies that foster peace, outside the gendered assumptions of social norms, is required to clarify the true relationship between women and notions of peace

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[287] TRC Report (2005). Sierra Leone. Pp.94-96

[288] Jusu-Sherriff, Yasmin. (2000). "Sierra Leone Women and the Peace Process", in Accord Issue 9. Conciliation Resources. (Available at: http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/women-peace.php) Sourced: 04/5/2011

One of the challenges or dilemmas in post conflict and transitional societies is that the collective voice and strength discovered by women through this process in times of conflict and war can sometimes be undermined in moments of conflict transformation and peace building. Restoring normalcy in some situations can mean a return to patriarchal norms and control of women's rights and freedoms. The patriarchs may win out in such a scenario and promote the return of women to their homes, families and domestic roles. Women's participation in peace processes and new governments, and their efforts to rebuild judicial and civil structures, cannot be achieved unless their organising is supported. As Ibid rightly said, 'sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men'.

Another obstacle to social and psychological healing is the invisible effect of the accumulated hurt and hatred suffered by hundreds of thousands if not millions of these victims including women which are often harder to treat than the physical effect.

However, it is important to note that despite the trauma, the end point of any successful peace building initiative is reconciliation - a process through which societies move from situations of negative peace characterised by the end of hostilities, to situations of positive peace where trust and cooperation between former enemies have been restored. It is also important to note that because reconciliation is a difficult and complex process which always involves some level of failures and setbacks especially in communities where reconciliation was ignored, post conflict reconstruction requires participatory reconciliation. This should be inclusive of both men and women, young and old if societies are to move from a divided path to a shared future because while democratic compromise will help to resolve the issues which cause the conflict, reconciliation will address the relationship between the people who will have to make these compromises work.

2.6 Why LWCSOs in the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Process for Testing the Research Question?

Providing adequate answers to this question requires an objective and multidimensional approach from the following perspectives: 1) UN and international call for women's inclusion as a measure to achieving sustainability, 2) The negative effects of the war on women and the need to address the human rights and gender inequalities that lead to them; and 3) Traditional roles and contributions of women as agents of peace in Sierra Leone. Added to these are reviews of

three selected successful sample cases of women building peace around the world as back-up evidence for focusing on women alone inorder to fulfill the aim of this study.

2.6.1 UN and International Call for Women's Inclusion as a Measure towards Achieving Sustainable Peacebuilding

Atrocities against women and their sufferings in violent conflicts wherever they occur is not a new phenomenon since it has always been the case from pre-historic times. However, the creation of the United Nations Organisation with the motive of averting the ills of World War I and II, and human rights violation, especially against women became a serious concern for the UN, Human Rights Organisations and the international community, triggered various interventions and a global call for both state and non-state actors to act and make this menace a thing of the past.

The first legally binding step by the UN was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the international instruments that guarantees the rights of women as humans, which clearly stipulates that human rights apply to all people equally, "without distinction of any kind such as race, sex, color, language….or any other status."[289]

The UN's determination to take a more proactive and effective stance against inequality led to a convention in Mexico, that was a global move for a collective women's action for gender justice and equality that drafted the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) documents, laying the foundation for achievement of equality for women; a blue print that was to be followed and incorporated into national legislations of all UN member states. CEDAW, adopted by the UN in 1979 is a very comprehensive tool to protect and promote the human rights of women both in times of peace and conflict with the framework of substantive model of equality. The substantive model of equality means not only the realisation of rights but also the measures, including special measures for overall empowerment of women. Articles 1 to

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[289]Amnesty International USA (2005). "Stop Violence Against women"…. p. 1

5 can be viewed as guidelines for the thematic issues enshrined from articles 1 to 16 for the achievement of this goal.[290]

CEDAW provides room for the constructive interpretation of gender based violence (GBV) and exploitation within the framework of discrimination. This idea can be seen expanded in the General Recommendations (GR) numbers 12 and 19 eventually issued by the committee. GR 19 is the landmark that provides a wide range of scope for gender-based violence. It recommends to the states parties to adopt legal and all other appropriate measures as per article 2 of the convention. The Vienna Declaration reaffirmed the idea subsequently and the Program of Action adopted by the first World Conference on Human Rights. The Four Geneva Conventions (GCs) and the additional protocols are also seen contributing to protect the victims of armed conflicts. The international humanitarian laws additionally provide such protection following the principles of equality and humanity. In the case of women, the humanitarian law further provides protection against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault and also gives the special protection and care to pregnant women and mothers having dependent infants who are arrested, detained or interned for reasons related to the armed conflict with the utmost priority.

Another important resolution or declaration that has contributed immensely to women's liberation struggle is the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action. Under this declaration, 'women and armed conflicts were among the twelve identified critical issues that member states, international community and civil society were encouraged to address. Paragraph 44 of this Platform of Action calls on: governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, to take positive and strategic action in dealing with the effects of armed conflicts or other kinds of conflicts on not only women, but also those that are living under foreign domination. In this declaration also, the Platform adopted several strategic objectives, all geared towards achieving this goal. The year 2000 marked the fifth anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the remarkable development was the establishment of the "Beyond Beijing Committee (BBC)", which included stakeholders at national levels including civil societies.

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[290] Mrs. Sangroula, Geeta Pathak. (13 Nov. 2005)."The Conflict in Nepal: Gender and Human Rights Perspectives -2". Peace Journalism Issue 13…. p. 1

After giving considerations to series of activities undertaking by the international community such as the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the UN Charter also passed an important landmark resolution 1325. This resolution clearly recognises the principles of the UN Charter, including commitments of the BDPA and the outcome document of the special session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) which was titled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century."[291]This resolution also recognises the genuine and urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into the peacekeeping operations with the consolidated data on the impact of conflicts on women and girls and urges all state parties to fight very hard to prosecute crimes related to sexual abuse and put an end to all violent crimes against women and girls. The UN Secretary General was empowered by the resolution to undertake a study aimed at unearthing the impact of conflicts on women and girls, role of women in peacebuilding, as well as the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution. Finally, and more importantly it also empowered the Secretary General to effect gender mainstreaming throughout all peacekeeping missions and other aspects relating to women and girls.

To further demonstrate the commitment by UN and the international community to the priority placed on women's inclusion in all peace processes as a pillar for building sustainable peace in war torn countries, the constant examination and reviews of conditions of women in conflict ridden countries has led to enactment of various international instruments, covenants and resolutions inorder to help close gaps that might exist in the existing ones. Amongst the recent UN resolution enacted are 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889. Many scholars have proffered reasons for the need to include women in the peacebuilding process, which range from their human and democratic rights, being both perpetrators and victims of violence; their experiences with conflict; past peace efforts and maintenance of acquired new gender roles during conflict etc.

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[291] See: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5.htm

Lisa and Manjrika in their work "Role of Women in Peacebuilding"[292] mentioned some of the internationally accepted reasons/ best practices (which this study agrees with) why women should be involved in all peacebuilding processes. According to them, some of these reasons are:

a) Because women are half of every community and the tasks of peacebuilding are so great that women and men must be partners in the process of peacebuilding.

b) Because women are the central caretakers of families in many cultures, everyone suffers when women are oppressed, victimised, and excluded from peacebuilding. Their centrality to communal life makes their inclusion in peacebuilding essential.

c) Because women have the capacity for both violence and peace, they must be encouraged to use their acquired gifts and skills in building peace.

d) Because women are excluded from public decision-making, leadership, and educational opportunities in many communities around the world, it is important to create special programs to empower them to use their gifts in the tasks of building peace.

e) Because women and men have different experiences of violence and peace, women must be allowed and encouraged to bring their unique insights and gifts to the process of peacebuilding.

f) Because sexism, racism, classism, ethnic and religious discrimination originate from the same set of beliefs that some people are inherently "better" than others, women's empowerment should be seen as inherent to the process of building peace.

g) Because violence against women is connected to other forms of violence, women need to be involved in peacebuilding efforts that particularly focus on this particular form of violence.

Irrespective of all these valuable reasons and actions by the international community, some cultural and traditional conceptual issues, until now, had remained unexplained, which often times led to the question of the importance of women in the Sierra Leone peace process. The findings of this study provides the relevant information to fill the knowledge gap, as it describes the important position women occupy in the socio-cultural and traditional context of Sierra

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[292] Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika, Sewak. The Role of Women in Peacebuilding. European Centre for Conflict Prevention. January, 2005.pp.5-6
 (Available at:
 http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf)
 Sourced: 28/07/2010

Leone, followed by a theoretical analysis and justification for women's peacebuilding role in Africa, especially Sierra Leone and by extension, the world.

2.6.2 The Negative Consequences of War/ Violent Conflicts on Women and the Need to Address the Human Rights and Gender Inequalities that Lead to Them

The call for women to be at the center of all peacebuilding and reconciliation processes is not an offshoot of the essentialist definitions of gender - the idea that the term "gender" refers to only women).[293] From a sociological perspective, there is clear distinction between sex, the biological differences between males and females that are distinguishable by their inherent genes and physical characteristics, and 'gender' – which refers to the socially learned behaviour and expectations that clearly makes the distinction between masculine from feminine roles. In other words, humans are not born "men" and "women" but become one through the processes of learning, and rehearsing through the daily performance of these roles.[294] For instance, the social pressures on boys and girls to learn and practice different ways of communicating, thinking, and acting in conjunction to what it means to be a 'man' or 'woman,' as the varying cultures would demand; are key to shaping the individual.

In this respect therefore, assuming that all women will respond to in a similar way to a given situation, or that they are 'natural peacebuilders,' will not only be naïve but also unrealistic. This is because gender is interpreted differently by different cultures and therefore sex and gender identity should be viewed in relation to other identities such as race, class, age, nation, region, education, religion and others inorder to make an informed judgment. Interestingly, shifts in gender roles can be caused by social upheavals as is often the case during violent conflicts when women face new roles and gender expectations. But more importantly, the sociological differences, women's experience with 'patriarchy' and 'sexism' - preference of males over females that excludes women from 'public life' and the attitude that allows women to be physically abused, raped or used for advertisements; and the power imbalances all bring a different dynamic to the role of women in peacebuilding.

Despite the spectacular and important position women occupy in the family life and immeasurable roles they play in the Sierra Leone society, which requires their recognition as

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[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.

partners in development, the tremendous sufferings and negative impacts of the war on their lives and subsequently the entire nation, needs to be given a human rights consideration. Feminist scholarship have argued and shown how the greater social, political, economic, and cultural power of men has structured this 'private' sphere to the disadvantage of women and children, rendering them vulnerable to domestic violence without outside interference, often leaving women economically dependent on men and subject to a highly inequitable division of labour in the family.[295] In traditional homes in Sierra Leone, boys compared to girls until now, have always had a better share of everything provided in the family, do less work in the home; are allowed to go out and play with friends whilst the girls stay at home to help with chores; and giving the priority to go or continue school in the midst of insufficient funds to sponsor all including the girl child; all with the 'patriarchal parental mentality' that he will have to take over from the father as head of the family and continue the care of his sisters. This unequal social conditioning over decades, as further discussed below, produced or had a negative psychological impact on girls, placing women in a weaker and more vulnerable situation that led and continue to lead to abuse of their rights in Sierra Leone. The systematic raping of girls and women, which was among the most abhorrent and distressing features of the eleven-year internal armed conflict that took place in Sierra Leone from 1991-2001 is proof of this point. In the words of Ben-Ari and Harsch, "Sexual violence against women was not just incidental to the conflict, Ms. Nowrojee told *Africa Renewal*, but was routinely used as a tool of war." Rape was used in a widespread and systematic way, and the way that these women were raped in extraordinarily brutal ways indicates a deliberate strategy to use rape and sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war and to instill terror in them.[296] The upsurge in rape cases against women and girls also increased the incidences of HIV and AIDS among women.[297] According to the 2001 report by UN Programme on HIV/Aids (UNAIDS), among the 170,000 people that were affected between the ages of 15 – 49 by the Aids virus, 90, 000 of them were females.[298] According to participant reports of the Harvard Human Rights Journal (HHRJ), the following figures were the war related sexual abuses recounted: rape – 89 percent, being forced to undress/ stripped of clothing – 37 percent, gang raped – 33 percent, abduction – 33 percent, molestation –

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[295] Op.Cit. Held, Virginia. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press.p.12

[296] Op.Cit. Ben-Ari, Nirit; and Ernest Harsch. *(*January 2005*). Sexual violence, an 'invisible war crime* 'Africa Renewal-United Nations. Vol.18 #4. p. 1. (Available at: http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol18no4/184sierraleone.htm) .Sourced: 13/8/2011

[297] Ibid.

[298] Ibid.

14 percent, sexual slavery – 15 percent, forced marriage – 9 percent, and insertion of foreign objects into the genital opening or anus – 4 percent. In addition, 23 percent of the women who experienced sexual violence reported being pregnant at the time of the attack, with an average gestation of three months. There were also many deaths among women, especially as young girls who were targeted specifically for rape because they were virgins could live the excruciating pains they went through.[299]

The Physicians for Human rights (PHR), Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) are the major leading international organisations that constantly monitored and reported on the atrocities and the human rights abuses of people by all the factions, including UN peacekeeping troops that were deployed during the Sierra Leone civil war. According to the July 2002 survey report by the USCRI, 72 percent of the Sierra Leonean women surveyed had experienced human rights abuses; and more than 50 percent had been victims of sexual violence. Based on the PHR records of 2001, an approximated 50,000 – 64,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) had histories of war-related assault. Repeated gang rape, often in front of family members, was a common tactic used to terrorise people into submission and retreat. As Zainab, one of the victims of gang rape revealed:

> *I was among the school children captured by the RUF in 1995. When we were captured, we were all taken to a very remote RUF base. By then I was 15 years old and a virgin. I was gang raped the very night I was captured, as an initiation to the RUF community. We spent three months in military training at the hills there. When government jets bombarded our base, we pulled out to another location for one month. We were drugged whenever we were to go on mission. On coming back to the base, there were three particular rebels who would ask me for sex. If I dare refused, I would be forced at gunpoint or gang raped. They did not want us to escape and join our relatives. They were so cruel to us then. I mean to most of the girls. I seized the opportunity to escape when we attacked Freetown in [January] 1999, by then I was eight months pregnant. Barely two months after my escape I delivered twins – 2 boys.*[300]

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[299] Nowrojee, Binaifer. Making the invisible war crime visible: Post conflict Justice for Sierra Leone's Rape Victims. Harvard Human Rights Journal.pp.2-6 (Available at: http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hrj/iss18/nowrojee.shtml) Sourced: 13/8/2011

[300] Keegan, Marnie. SIERRA LEONEAN WOMEN: Post-Conflict Rights, Resources, and Voice. Advanced Gender and Development Monterey Institute of International Studies. November, 2002. p.1 (Available at: http://seminars2.tripod.com/Sierra_Leonean_Women.htm) Sourced: 13/8/2011

Rebel groups forced boys and men to rape their mothers; mutilate women's genitals with knives, burning wood and gun barrels; sexually assaulted and disemboweled pregnant women; and kidnapped girls and young women and forced into sexual slavery."[301] In an interview with one of the survivors of the sexual slavery menace, I was told that the rebels were so inhuman that 'they would place a bet on the sex (male or female) of a baby in the womb of her mother, then they would slit the belly open of the pregnant woman to determine the winner and leave her to die. Amputation of arms and limbs were very common during the war. These gruesome acts by the rebel outfit were intended to send a counter 'peace before elections' message to the then Tejan Kabba Government as against the agreed notion of 'elections before peace,' which was the general and strong final consensus reached at the Bintumani I and II conferences by all stakeholders, including local women civil society.

The war made women, especially rural women, more unprotected as reproductive health services were and are still scarce and sometimes inaccessible to women in deep forest regions of Kailahun, Pujehun, and Kabala. Poverty, which was made more severe by the war, further worsened women's economic conditions leading to increased prostitution.[302]

As a result of these atrocities committed against women, an estimated 1.2 million women and children were displaced in various camps within the country for fear of their lives and another 1.5 million crossing borders to neighbouring countries as refugees under unbearable conditions of hardship. Women's escape to neighbouring countries did not in any way pacify the atrocities against them but rather intensified it further. According to the USCRI:

> *traumatized and penniless, single mothers found that they faced additional obstacles in the camps: they had to provide for themselves and their children without the support and protection of a husband, which meant building their makeshift houses, making sure their children were fed and clothed, and warding off sexual predators.[…] Those with children struggle to supplement their food rations, but many lack the skills to earn income.[…] Some of the most desperate women and girls enter into relationships with aid workers, some of whom take advantage of their position to extract sexual favors from refugees in exchange for additional food or nonfood items. A February 2002 report by the UNHCR*

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[301] Ibid

[302] Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. Vol. 15, No. 1 (A). p.1

and Save the Children-UK found that women and girls in camps in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia had suffered sexual exploitation by aid workers on an alarming scale.[303]

The revelations about these atrocities were a horrifying image for those who never experienced the acts, and rather an almost 'impossible trauma to overcome' for those who went through the gruesome ordeals as there were insufficient professional trauma healing processes available to them.

Violence against women, which has been presented by the tradition as necessary phenomena and accepted by women themselves as inevitable, has over the decades had far reaching ramifications and consequences on their lives as the magnitude of war related violence targeted at them was incomprehensible. For this reason, couple with their traditional and humane roles as nurturers, givers and builders of life, they are obvious candidates for the inclusion of their voices, perspectives, and experiences in the peacebuilding outfit that is aimed at addressing the inequality and human rights issues that caused the untold misery. But over and above their inclusion, there is also need for adequate and proper reparation process to be undertaken.

The idea of reparation, which basically refers to amends owed for wrongs and wrongful harms, is ancient, universal and a basic intuition of justice.[304] According to Aristotle's discussion of corrective justice in the Nicomachean Ethics, wrongs are set right by giving back to the injured party that which restores "equality," that is, giving back to the wronged party, in this case women, something she properly had that an injustice by someone else caused her to lose. Aquinas has tried to throw more light on some issues that are not clear in Aristotle's idea of reparative justice – such as how material restitution relates to other penalties and what equalises parties in terms of loses that are not readily reckoned solely in material terms. Aquinas makes clear what is implied in Aristotle's work, that restitution or compensation are remedies that aim at equality as it concerns lost things, while judicial punishment is the proper remedy for the wrongfulness of the act itself, whether or not it causes losses.[305]

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[303] Op.Cit. Keegan, Marnie. SIERRA LEONEAN WOMEN: Post-Conflict Rights, Resources, and Voice. Advanced Gender and Development Monterey Institute of International Studies. November, 2002. p.1 (Available at: http://seminars2.tripod.com/Sierra_Leonean_Women.htm) Sourced: 13/8/2011

[304] Walker, Margaret. U. (2010). What Is Reparative Justice? The Aquinas Lecture, 2010. Marquette University Press: Milwaukee, Wisconsin. p.9

[305] Ibid.p.10

Wrongful losses by women in Sierra Leone due to the all-round discrimination against them, especially by the political elites and leaders of the various facets of the Sierra Leonean society (mainly men), needs to be compensated by the GoSL as a matter of principle in order to make the victim whole again. Since it is difficult if not impossible to fully annul by direct restitution the many material losses of women over the years, and because losses that have followed from harm to the women's physical and psychic integrity or from lost opportunities cannot be annulled but only compensated, money payments are a common and commensurating medium for the rectification of these complaints. However, it is very important to state here that reparations do not only consist of material compensation or restitution. Compensation for a loss or harm also needs to be made to avert unfair disadvantage even where the question of wrong does not apply. But in certain circumstances, as Margaret Walker explains, even where there is a wrong to reckon, compensation may be given out of charity or generousity, rather than as a fulfillment of what justice requires.[306] Compensation in the spirit of charity and not obligation by those responsible for the wrongs or their repair is not reparation. Worst still, this may be seen as insulting, since it implies that what is offered is in fact due and denies it being obligatory. Similarly, compensatory measures can be instituted with the intent to do justice that is not reparative. For example, when a government that has impoverished a group of citizens through intergenerational discrimination decides to remedy it because the resultant poverty offends distributive justice; even if the redistribution exercise is just, however, and even if it is intended to satisfy requirements of distributive justice, it is not an exercise of reparative justice if the goods are not tendered with the expressed intent to accept responsibility for the wrong and offer redress. Bernard Boxill clearly distinguishes mere compensation from reparation by saying that:

> *[P]art of what is involved in rectifying an injustice is an acknowledgement on the part of transgressor that what he is doing is required of him because of his prior error.*[307]

Reparation must therefore address the harms that wrongs create; but acts and awards of reparations must also acknowledge the wrongs themselves and the obligations of justice that flow from those wrongs. In other words reparation must always include a gesture of recognition

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[306] Ibid. p.17

[307] Boxill, Bernard. (1972). "The Morality of Reparations," *Social Theory and Practice* 2 in Walker, Margaret. U. (2010). What Is Reparative Justice?: The Aquinas Lecture…..p.18

of a wrong and acknowledgement of responsibility from those who have done wrong, or are responsible for its repair, to those who have been wronged. This study therefore adopts the following description of reparations as offered by Margaret Walker inorder to capture this crucial issue, giving the Sierra Leone context:

> [r]eparations are made when those who are responsible for repair of a wrong intentionally give appropriate goods to victims of wrong in a specific act (or process) that expresses acknowledgement of the wrong, responsibility for the wrong repair, and the intent of wrongful treatment.[308]

This definition does not provide the theory of reparative justice, but proffers the sort of acts or programmes that are clearly cases of reparations, which also characterises what remains to be examined and justified through an adequate conceptualisation of reparative justice. However, its description includes acts ranging from simple cases of personal apology as well as cases where monetary and material amends are made, and also comprehends the diverse fields of gestures that are now recognised as part of the reparation process such as official apology, creation of memorials, the exhumation and reburial of human remains after atrocities, access to medical, social, or legal services, and attempts to uncover and make available to victims, their survivors, and their societies the truth about abuses. Considering the nature of the atrocities committed against the women during the war, it is worthy to take serious consideration of what Margaret Walker has hinted upon that cases of successful or failed reparation measures have revealed that any gesture of reparation needs to work expressly on the two levels as mentioned below.[309]

Firstly, the reparative message of wrong, responsibility, and intent to do justice that is inevitable. The should be an official apology by those offering reparations, which is a symbol of recognition of a relationship that is in need of repair due to wrong, and a demonstration in their attempt at reparation an appreciation of the victim's experience of suffering and loss; which must be full, careful, and sincere. There is also need for material transfer or other concrete measure (e.g. building of a memorial to victims or the creation of a scholarship fund for the children of victims) is appropriate, however, whatever is offered to the victim must be recognisable as an attempt at justice by its fittingness to the nature, meaning, and magnitude of the particular wrong

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[308] Op. Cit. See explanatory notes 18: Walker, Margaret U. (2010). What Is Reparative Justice?: The Aquinas Lecture, 2010…p.54
[309] Op. Cit. Walker, Margaret U. (2010). What Is Reparative Justice?: The Aquinas Lecture, 2010…Pp.21-22

that requires reparations. But even more importantly, acts and offers of reparation must come from those responsible for the wrong or repair in ways that convey recognition of a threatened or damaged relationship and their responsibility to address it; accept the reality and nature of the wrongs committed, and followed also by an appreciation of the insult and harm suffered as a result of the wrong treatment; and to affirm the victim's deservingness of repair as a matter of justice. Finally, the offer also must convey the seriousness and sincerity of the intention to fulfill an obligation of justice. The question that remains is, how does what is offered achieve these meanings? The reparation process must be, in brief, "interactive, useful, fitting, and effective" in order to achieve meaning.

Secondly, a reparation process must invite an interaction with those who have suffered injury. This interaction must be such that it is able to create a new phase in the repaired relationship, in which case it must be open to views, desires, and expectations of victims rather than attempting to set the terms of rectification unilaterally or to foreclose dialogue and negotiation concerning the meaning of wrongs, the nature of harms and responsibilities, and the victim's needs for vindication. In other words, what is offered must be valuable for and valued by the victim of wrong; it must be suitable for their own use in coming to terms with the losses and harms they have suffered, conferring choices and restoring powers of victims over their own lives and their relationships with others.

Although the "potentials of women have however been under-utilised"[310] in the Sierra Leone peacemaking process as they were not giving the opportunity to sit and articulate their views in the search for the way forward at the negotiation table in 1999 at Lome, LWCSO's such as MARWOPNET, WIPNET, and the 50/50 group have empowered themselves and have taken up the lead to educate other women at the grassroots level to stand up for their fundamental rights. The recorded successes in these areas are not accidental when we examine women's peacebuilding roles from both the cultural and psycho-social perspectives. The theoretical analyses of women's peacebuilding roles in the Sierra Leone context, from these two perspectives, are discussed below.

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[310] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. (2008). The role of civil society in conflict prevention: West Africa experiences…p.6

2.6.3 Traditional Roles and Contributions by Women as Agents of Peace in Sierra Leone

In conflict areas across and around the world, women's movements have amicably and sustainably worked with the United Nations to rebuild the structures of peace and security, to rehabilitate and reconcile societies, to protect refugees and the internally displaced persons, to educate and raise awareness on human rights issues and the rule of law.[311] The United Nation's Population Fund (UNFPA) 2010 report on the "State of the World Population: From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal – Generations of Change" acknowledges the role women play in forging peace.[312]But irrespective of these meaningful roles women play in every conflict zone, their peacebuilding initiatives remain invisible to policy-makers and development institutions, as well as to their own societies. [313] Apart from being marginalised, exploited, oppressed and discriminated against, women are often primary victims of conflicts but are not recognised as stakeholders in West Africa.[314] However, the effects of violence and conflicts on women have necessitated the rise of women's groups to take up the mantle to make women recognisable stakeholders. In the recent past peacebuilding initiatives in the sub-region have been growing and have only recently begun to realise the need to include and involve women in conflict transformation and peacebuilding processes.[315] As "building peace means engaging women as well as men in the process of resolving conflict, rebuilding institutions and society, and achieving sustainable peace,"[316] it is therefore very crucial to examine the specific roles the LWCSOs have and continue to play, particularly in the building of the 'fragile peace' and communities affected by the rebel conflict in Sierra Leone. Little wonder therefore, that even the Lagos Plan of Action, which was adopted by the African Heads of State and Governments in

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[311]Anan, Kofi A. Forward: Women, Peace and Security. Study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).UN, United Nations Publication 2002, Sales No.E.03.IV.1ISBN 92-1-130222-6 (Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/eWPS.pdf) Sourced: 26/01/2011

[312] Mackenzie, Megan, Empowerment Boom or Bust? Assessing Women's Post-Conflict Empowerment Initiatives" Journal Article, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, volume 22, issue 2, pages 199-215 *June 2009*

[313] Dini, Shukria. The Role of Somali Women's Organizations in Peacebuilding and Reconstruction in Somalia (PhD Thesis). York University. Canada.

[314] Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women. WANEP-From the Field 3rd Edition. p. 1 (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/107/tp_women_in_peacebuilding.pdf. Sourced: 26/01/2011

[315] Ibid. p.1

[316] Government of Australia. Gender Guidelines: *Peacebuilding*. Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). July 2006 (Available at: http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender_peacebuilding.pdf. Sourced: 26/01/2011

1980, acknowledges women's role as key to the search for alternative strategies for the achievement of peace in Africa,[317] especially Sierra Leone.

As a traditional patriarchy Sierra Leone's culture upholds an implied supremacy of men over women. But irrespective of this, Sierra Leonean women have and continue to perform numerous and vital productive (farming, fishing, small scale business etc.) roles alongside their male counterparts and reproductive roles that have ensured the survival of the nation of Sierra Leone even during some of the worst economic and social crises especially during the 1970's and even to the present.[318]Despite their lack of enough positions in formal politics, women "constitute active and courageous defenders of the democratic movement in Sierra Leone,"[319] and have continued to wage conflict non-violently by pursuing not only democracy as mentioned above, but also human rights through strategies that give raise to awareness on issues of conflict and pressure government and other stakeholders to bring about change. For example in the 1950s, they were actively involved in the local and municipal government and their effective participation in the struggle for independence pressured the British colonial masters to grant it in 1961.I must hasten to add however that bringing these bare facts out is without any intention of entering into a debate of women being peace makers or rather more peaceful than men because of their tenderness and skills associated with their mothering nature. But my point here is that it is interesting to know however, that women perform all these roles in relation to their perceptions and experiences with conflict in general. "Men view conflicts as a "struggle or war" which needs to be won and in the process of winning there are casualties. On the contrary, majority of women see conflict as a necessary evil in communities, and the injured and dead in these conflicts are sons and husbands to them. So, unlike men, they focus on the cessation of violence and rehabilitation of their homes."[320]

There exists series of works both by activists and academics on women's political activism and commitment to peace. One of the most outstanding and influential authors in this field is Sara

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[317] West African Network for Peace (WANEP).

[318] Walters, Valerie E.L. and Mason, Gwen. Women In Top management In Africa: The Sierra Leone Case. Public Administration and Management. November 1994. p.3

[319] Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance. Unique Rights: Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone. Reffo Printing, Kissy L.C, Freetown. p.6

[320] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women…. p. 5

Ruddick. She has examined the relationship between maternal thinking and peace politics, especially the implications of caring for children as a regular and substantial part of one's work life. In her thesis she argues that to be a 'mother'[321] is to take "upon oneself the responsibility of child care, making its work a regular and substantial part of one's working life….Mothering is essentially different from fathering as "fatherhood is more a role determined by cultural demands than a kind of work determined by children's needs."[322] Ruddick also finds that mothers acquire a fundamental attitude toward the vulnerable, a protectiveness, which she calls "holding", which means:

> *to minimize risk and to reconcile differences rather than to sharply accentuate them. Holding is a way of seeing with an eye toward maintaining the minimum harmony, material resources and skills necessary for sustaining a child in safety.*[323]

She also adds that maternal thinking is reinforced by women's work in the "caring labor" of "sheltering, nursing, feeding, kin work, teaching the very young, tending the frail elderly….When maternal thinking takes upon itself the critical perspective of a feminist standpoint, it reveals a contradiction between mothering and war….Mothering begins in birth and promises life; military thinking justifies organised, deliberate deaths."[324]

Though women are sometimes perpetrators of violence in Sierra Leone, especially as some were part of the rebel forces, yet majority of them most often stay at home to keep their families and communities going whilst the men are fighting and most times get killed. Consequently the woman assumes the role of head of the family and continue to care for all and sundry, and sometimes can remarry and add up to the already prevalent polygamous practices. But the death of their sons in the conflict/ war requires them to bear the hurt as they have to still continue to take care of other children - paying medical bills, school fees, providing transport fare and lunch; leading to increased burden on them, school drop outs and high illiteracy rates; unemployment and struggle for survival by youths and young people – the result of it all been violence as was seen unleashed in 1991. But more importantly, because of the high value on the male child basically for many reasons in traditional Sierra Leone, women have to continue to rear more sons even when it may be dangerous to their health because of the age.

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[321]The use of mother in this context does not only refer to women, as is the normal understanding, but includes men also as some men can identify with maternal work.

[322] Op. Cit. Ruddick, Sara. (1989). Maternal Thinking Toward A Politics of Peace. Beacon Press: Boston, USA.p.42

[323] Ibid.p.79

[324] Ibid.p.148

Notwithstanding the odds against them, women in Sierra Leone who are 52 percent of the population of 5.7 million, have for decades played useful roles of identifying with communities by offering their services to people that suffered as a result of inter-communal violence like the '*Ndorgborwusui*'[325] fighting that took place in the Pujehun District even before the rebel attacks irrespective of tribe, religion or creed. During the civil war, women ran soup kitchens to provide food for the hungry, come to the rescue of children and the helpless cut in the midst of the conflict, and offered clothing, care, medication and humanitarian assistance to those in need where no other groups ventured. But more striking is the fact that amidst the deepened insecurity as the war raged on in the border regions of Sierra Leone; they did not only jeopardise child immunization campaigns, take food and essential goods to sell in war ravaged zones but also displayed bravery by intervening (which no man was ready to do) to secure the release of 500 United Nations Mission (UNAMSIL) Pakistani forces that were held by the RUF warlord, Foday Sankoh.[326] In the past, women in traditional Sierra Leone observed an old practice of giving their daughters in marriage to sons of hostile and perhaps stronger neighbouring communities with whom their own communities were either in conflict (either over bush or other natural resources like rivers etc.) or at the risk of falling into one as a goodwill gesture to avert further conflict – since the stronger warlord will reframe from attacking his 'in-laws' as tradition and custom demands. From a conflict management lens, these women could be seen as conciliators in the conflict and their activities as an illustration of love and shared bond of friendship that were temporarily overshadowed by these conflicts.

The importance and uniqueness of women to peace in Sierra Leone and thus their choice as case study group can also be viewed firstly, from the cultural perspective. In traditional Sierra Leone and Africa in general, "women are regarded as life givers, life–sustainers and society builders."[327] One of their main jobs is the nurturing and care for children, which includes feeding, training and looking after the health of people as many herbalists in Sierra Leone and even West Africa, are

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[325] The '*Ndorgborwusui*' is a mende name for 'human like creature' residing in the bush, which is believed to possess mystical powers to appear, cause havoc or mischief and disappear into thin air again without notice by the enemy. The bush or guerilla war in Pujehun District was purportedly led and fought by this creature whose mystical power many believed protected all of its battle allies from bullets of the enemy for as long they all remained together, whilst unleashing mayhem on his target – the APC party supporters who cruelly killed his friend Kemokai who was accused of betrayal during the 1982 general elections.

[326] Op. Cit. Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE). Nurturers of Peace, Sustainers of Africa…… p. 83

[327] Ibid

predominantly women.[328] Through their traditional roles as care givers and having to deal with difference, women in Sierra Leone have been moulded into becoming experts not only in accepting and tolerating difference but also in nurturing an atmosphere of appreciation and respect for others with a profound ability to draw strength from diversity. These qualities and skills have become very much uniquely inherent in women comparatively, not because they are women but basically as a result of their love and determination to effectively carry out their sacred traditional roles as life and care givers entrusted to them by society. The effective performance of these scared duties earned her the respect of all in her community and by extension, the entire country. As George-Williams shared in his writing, one of the first local groups that contacted the RUF inorder to persuade them to lay down their arms was the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL). Among them was a female Haja[329]whose salient experience is recorded thus:

> *".....on one of the visits a member of the RUF told her that she bore remarkable semblance to his mother. Throughout the meeting this rebel soldier was extremely nice and on leaving he gave her a hundred Dollar note bill."*[330]

The act of kindness by the rebel soldier to an unknown woman clearly signifies the importance of women to the children and generation but regrettably though, irrespective of all these valuable contributions to society, these women are regarded by the same society they build, which are often male dominated and controlled, as inferior beings. This sounds paradoxical by all standards. It comes by no surprise therefore that the erosion of traditional and moral values of child mentoring; care and social control, and sources of income for women by the British colonial administration and the continuity of these practices even after independence, led to collapse of the family system upon which the fabric of the Sierra Leone society stood; leading to the violent explosion that we saw unleashed in 1991.

Secondly, a staking revelation that strongly links women with peace and men with war was made during one of my preliminary investigative visits to Sierra Leone in December of 2009. Being a member of the mende tribe and a son of the community, I was able to successfully conduct an

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[328] Ibid.

[329] Haja is an Arabic nomenclature for a Muslim female person who goes to Mecca, Saudi Arabia on pilgrimage

[330] George-Williams, D.O. *Changing Gender Roles in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in Africa*. In Gender and Peace Building in Africa. University for Peace. Ciudad Colon, Costa Rica. 2005. p.69. ISBN 9977-925-37-2

interview with some mende female and male elders in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone. In this interview, it was shockingly revealed that the two traditional institutions (*Poro and Sande*) initially served as training grounds for young men and women to take up their individual responsibilities in the community. In traditional Sierra Leone, the *Poro* and *Sande* (also known as *Bondo*) institutions are of immense significance among all the major ethnic groups including the Mende, Temne, Limba, and Loko. These institutions took the sole responsibility for the social and moral training of the initiates, which made it virtually compulsory for both sexes. As Kenneth Little explains "[M]arriage, for example was impossible without it, and a non-initiate, irrespective of biological age, was treated as a grown-up person, and much less allowed to hold a position of importance."[331]The head of the Poro is known as 'Sowaa'[332] who oversees all the processes that go on in the school. Boys were/ are initiated into the poro bush school when they reached puberty age, where they were or are mainly taught basic skills ranging from hunting, soil testing and farming, house construction, wrestling and warring. An oath of allegiance is normally sworn by initiates to remain committed to the secrets, values, beliefs and practices of their tribes.

As with the Poro, the head of the Sande institution, which conducts initiation rites for young women, is known as 'Sowei.'[333] During the period of initiation (conduct of FGM, which is not only harmful but also a violation of the human rights of the girl) that may last from one to three months as the case may be, girls are taught the sacred skills of care for their husbands and children as well as to keep the peace and harmony of their families and ethnic groups. In addition they are also taught skills in cooking, singing, mid-wifery, gardening, story-telling, fishing and herbal training and they also swear an oath to remain committed to the secrets, values, the beliefs and practices of the tribes like their male counterparts. But more importantly, both institutions placed emphasis on respect for elders, especially women; and the violation of this sacred responsibility by anyone bore the penalty of a curse (as most provincial Sierra Leoneans believe in the intercession of the ancestors to God on their behalf and thus possessing the ability to cast a curse on them if they violated the laws) and the risk of being regarded as a vagabond or an

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[331] Little, Kenneth. The Political Function of the Poro. Journal of the International African Institute. Vol.XXXV. RS 366.9664. 1965. Fourah Bay College (FBC), Sierra Leone. p.356

[332] Sowaa is both the traditional and spiritual head of the *Poro* and the custodian of the principles, laws, values, traditions and acts as the link between the living and the dead. He offers all sacrifices, prayers on behalf of the initiates, oversees all the training exercises and all major decisions must meet his approval before they are implemented.

[333] Sowei is both the traditional and spiritual head of the *Sande*. She performs just the same functions as that of her male counterpart (Sowaa) as outlined in No. 16 above.

outcast. Conflict resolution, especially in the case of war, was conducted by the Sowaa and Sowei among their tribes. A woman, mostly of middle age had the privilege to attend and be trained in the skills of both the *Poro* and *Sande* societies. Known as the *Mabole*, she did not only become the chief officiator over the final initiation into poro but was also responsible for the arbitration of major crises, like war.[334] Today, even though the initiation rites still continue, yet the good and moral aspects of training and moulding initiates into good and respectful citizens no longer obtains, hence no regard and respect for elders in society, especially women.

Traditionally, peacemaking has always been part of the daily life of women in Sierra Leone since pre-historic times. They act as peace brokers among and between family members and those of their communities. During initiation rites, girls were taught peacemaking strategies in the S*ande 'bush'*. These trainings literally had a great deal of influence on the behaviour of boys and girls alike, as they matured into men and women with regards to their roles and the level of participation in violence and peace-making issues in Sierra Leone.

In relation to the trainings received at the *Sande '*School*'*, women have demonstrated that they can endure oppression, discrimination and neglect to become better agents for transmitting messages of peace. During the civil war, they employed multitrack approaches, skills, techniques and strategies such as inclusivity and collaboration to tackle the war, including the positive influencing of their sons, brothers, and husbands, as fighters, and by reinvigorating trade in places where it had been disrupted.[335] These interventions brought 'positive and meaningful change' that propelled the peace process to its logical conclusion in 1999. The ongoing capacity building activities through training of LWCSOs in the skills of peacebuilding to increase their capacity for peace by organisation such as MARWOPNET, WIPNET, the 50/50 Group, the Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW), UN Women and many more; which can be likened to organisations such as: Jerusalem Link and women in black (Israel/Palestine), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace – WISCOMP (Pakistan/ India), Women's Initiative for Peace in South East Asia (WIPSA), the Women's Mass Action for Peace (Liberia)

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[334] Op. Cit. Little, Kenneth. The Political Function of the Poro. Journal of the International African Institute…Pp. 356
[335] Op. Cit. Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE). Nurturers of Peace, Sustainers of Africa….p.73

and many more, have all helped and continue to help other women engage in peace work in their communities in order to move Sierra Leone beyond intractable conflicts to peace.

The cultural belief that women are the care and life givers and peacemakers, through which they have earned the admiration and respect as mothers, I believe, are vital cultural resources to draw on, encourage, and document as a better way of building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

It is common sense that women do not only subscribe less readily than men to the myth of the efficacy of violence. Studies by many scholars including that by Zur, Monrism and Zaretsky on gender and attitudinal differences towards war have revealed that "…men are more prone than women to justify war to rational and legal criterion."[336] Women find it more difficult than men to accept, condone, or justify any acts of violence, killing, and destruction during war. In the words of a Soviet dissident, Tatyana Mamanova, writing from exile emphasises; this point further firmly hammered home as she remarks that:

> *It is natural for women, who give life, to be opposed to war and violence – war of any sort, be it in Vietnam or Afghanistan, and violence against any being. We do not distinguish between guns and nuclear bombs, because all are weapons used for the death and destruction of people.*[337]

Research findings have also highlighted various attributes of women that lean them towards peacebuilding, one of which is affection. Gender scholars have proven that "girls think more in terms of relationships than boys do, that they care more for other human beings, show more empathy, and think more about human and social consequences of acts."[338] In the same light, the Dalai Lama in his forward to a book, *All Her Paths Are Peace,* emphasised the crucial and necessary role of women as mothers, as teachers of life's first lessons on peaceful living that is the needed foundation for an effective development of all human beings. He describes peaceful living as "trusting those on whom we depend and caring for those who depend on us."[339] Both of these qualities, he adds, are experienced in relationship with women; who are our mothers. This was clearly demonstrated as LWCSOs in Sierra Leone were able to appeal to the fighters who

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[336] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women….p.8
[337] Mamanova, Tatyana. (1984). *Women in Russia*. Boston: Beacon Press. p.xix
[338] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women….p.7
[339] Ibid

are their sons, husbands, uncles, fathers and brothers, through reasoning with them to lay down their arms because of the confidence and trust reposed in them by the fighters, which had been built for decades in performing their role as mothers.

The second attribute is women's concept of power. The possession and control of 'power' in various societies forms the core around which conflicts revolve, as it is the manifestation of power that leads to the protection of positions. Feminist peacemakers believe that "the dominant and competing form of power to which men are oriented is in actual sense powerlessness", whereas women maintain that the ultimate goal of any power should be happiness or "pleasure and felicity" and that "cooperating with nature, the willingness to be vulnerable; risk taking; empathy; listening; caring for humanity; and cooperating with even those we consider our enemies, is power in its highest existential understanding."[340]

These facts are in no way suggesting that women cannot be perpetrators of violence as "women will support war as enthusiastically as men, when an appeal is made based on empathy for oppressed and vulnerable human beings, or an emphasis is on group cohesion and intensification of interpersonal relationships in the country during war."[341] But nonetheless, the truth is women's organisations in Sierra Leone did not only bring a renewed approach, enthusiasm and breath; quality and balance of vision to a joint effort of moving from the culture of violence to re-establishing, nurturing and maintaining the culture of peace but also possession of the gift of lobby and use of soft power. As mediators and trauma-healers, women in Sierra Leone clearly demonstrated their overarching influence to achieve a positive turnaround of events and transform relationships even in the face of hopelessness. Following the worsening tension and impasse for example between President Lansana Conte (Guinea-Conakry) and former President Charles Taylor (Liberia) in August 2001over the question of the latter's negative role in the Sierra Leone war, which saw the expulsion from Monrovia of the Guinean ambassador, MARWOPNET – Sierra Leone (one of the case study groups for this study) "rose to the challenge and urged former Sierra Leonean President Tejan Kabba to mediate between his

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[340] Ibid.p.8
[341] Ibid.p.7

feuding peers."[342] This resulted in the summoning of the Mano River Summit to address the issue. Being mothers and care givers, lovers of life, country and peace, women in Sierra Leone again resulted to the formation of various efficient networks to spread early warning information on attacks and safe routes, actions that saved lives and reduced the impact of violence on the local population. Spurred by the untold sufferings and their determination never to keep silent again, MARWOPNET successfully lobbied the government of Sierra Leone as well as the RUF, by visiting first the rebel held northern headquarter town of Makeni (by helicopter) to plead with the RUF commanders to see reason and dialogue with the government. After their meeting with the rebels, they then went back to meet with the government in Freetown, explaining the rebel's stance. All of these contributed to the final peace that was signed in 1999.

It is important to note at this junction that all the numerous peace or ceasefire talks – from Abidjan, Conakry, Yamoussoukro, Abuja to Abidjan were all negotiated by men before the Lome Agreement, failed because of greed, relying on the military option, but mainly as a result of mistrust in one another by the parties. These outstanding and unprecedented performances of women have earned them lobbying strategies and have given them a vibrant fearless outlook.[343]

From a sociological point, taking up of arms by women during the war was a complete contravention of the traditional, cultural, and social beliefs and practices that had dictated the ethical codes of behaviour for centuries past. Shying away from being docile and harmless as tradition had taught and conditioned them to becoming perpetrators of violence, was not only a signal that it was now time to revisit the excesses of the laws, practices, traditions and make adjustments to the modus operandi but also a resounding call for inclusivity if society was to thrive again. In other words, the impact of wars on women both as victims and perpetrators means that the tactics of women as peacebuilders have also had to change, from holding less visible roles to assuming more strategic and influential roles.[344] The recognition of LWCSO's contributions to peace in the past by the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), a key and renowned organisation contributing to promoting peace, stability, and the enhancement

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[342] Op. Cit. Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE). Nurturers of Peace, Sustainers of Africa….p.83
[343] Ibid
[344] Ibid. p.31

of sustainability in the West African Sub-region, reinforces their call and strong advocacy for the total inclusion LWCSOs in peace processes; which states:

> *[In] West Africa where culture and tradition has made patriarchal practices a norm, women's roles and their voices as critical stakeholders in societal or community peacebuilding have been underutilised and/or undermined. WANEP believes that for peacebuilding to be effective, it must be all inclusive and take in to account the voices and contributions of women, who make up more than half of the population of the sub-region. WANEP holds that until women are supported to occupy the space to promote peace and human security in the sub region, sustainable peace and development will continue to be elusive.*[345]

2.7 Summaries of Three Sample Cases to Show LWCSO's Relevance to Peace: Additional Evidence for Inclusion

Case studies are intensive written summaries or synthesis of real-life cases and or testimonies based upon data and research that stress the developmental factors in relation to context.[346] The employment of real life sample case analysis in dealing with similar subjects to the subject of study is a common practice in the social and life sciences. In other words, sample case study basically refers to both single and multiple case studies, and can include quantitative evidence, relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions. The issue of case study should not be confused with qualitative research as they can be based on any mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence. Single-subject research provides the statistical framework for making inferences from quantitative and qualitative sample case-study data.[347] Lamnek (2005) gives support to these views in a well-formulated thesis by saying that "[T]he case study is a research approach, situated between concrete data taking techniques and methodological paradigms."[348] Case studies may be prospective as they establish criteria, in order to enhance cases that fit into the criteria are included as they become available, or retrospective, in which criteria are established for selecting cases from historical records for inclusion in the study. According to Thomas, "case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studies holistically by

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[345] See generally: WANEP – http://www.wanep.org/wanep/programs-our-programs/wipnet.html

[346] Bent, Flyvbjerg. (2011). "Case Study" in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln, (eds). The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, (4th Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.301-316

[347] Yin, Robert K. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. (4th Edition). SAGE Publications. California, ISBN 978-4129-6099-1.
See also: Lamnek, Siegfried. (2005). Qualitative Sozialforschung. Lehrbuch. 4 Auflage. Beltz Verlag. Weihnhein, Basel

[348] Ibid

one or more methods. The case that is the *subject* of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame - an *object* – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates."[349] Based on these profound and compelling arguments as evidence for the use of sample case studies, I decided to review some successful and recorded cases inorder to validate and add meaning to the study's focus on LWCSOs activities as potential peacebuilders in Sierra Leone. I reviewed three cases, one each from South America and Asia and one from Africa as summarised below.

The reviewing process was done in comparison with the widely agreed upon civil society functions as contained in the peacebuilding analytical framework that I developed (see chapter three) from the existing peacebuilding literature;[350] to determine whether LWCSOs involved in these cases were indeed contributing to building peace in comparison to the widely acclaimed potentials of women's civil society to contribute. As much as possible and as indicated in this study, quotations by interviewees have been used to illustrate their points and opinions rather than using my own interpretation to summarise or paraphrase their responses. The analysis of policy frameworks and interventions by UN and GoSL was done firstly, to determine whether these policies and interventions have had any influence on the increased and sustained involvement of women in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. Secondly, it is to determine whether LWCSO's activism in Sierra Leone is purely as a result of outside influence (e.g. the 2005 Beijing Conference or the 2006 Dakar Conference) as mentioned earlier or is purely as a result of their experiences with war and violence and their resolve that never again will they sit idly by and allow it to happen.

The criterion for the selection of this sample cases was based upon the typology of methods employed and the similar aims and objectives of the determined and peace loving LWCSOs in the different countries as those in Sierra Leone to bring about and maintain peace in their countries.

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[349] Thomas, G. (2011). A typology for the case study in Social Science following a review of definition, discourse and structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17, 6, 511-521

[350] See Figure 1

2.7.1 Sample Case 1: The Fate of the Disappeared Children: The Grandmothers of The Plaza de Mayo in Argentina

The 1970s was the darkest episodes in the history of Argentina that witnessed the disappearances of thousands of people, who were regarded as opponents of the military regime of Pal port. Children of many detainees at the time of their arrest, also "disappeared" and for thirty years women were trying to figure out the fate of these detainees without success.[351] But on 30 April 1977, a small group of women who had carefully devised a strategy to tackle the issue, gathered at Plaza de Mayo, the airy main square of Buenos Aires, where exists the presidential palace and the Ministry of Interior and a cluster of government buildings and staged a poignant protest. They matched in circles waving placards and photos of their loved ones and demanded answers to their painful questions – the release of their sons and daughters who stood accused of subversion by the military dictatorship and the return also of babies that were snatched from these "disappeared." Being determined to continue their stay at the square until success was in sight, the women resulted to christened after their regular, almost ritualistic vigils in the square that became known as Abuelas de La Plaza de Mayo (Grandmothers of the Plaza de mayo).[352] Human Right groups estimated that 80 percent of those detained that amounted to between 10,000 and 30,000, were aged between sixteen and thirty five years, 30 percent being women, and 10 percent were pregnant when taking into prison and gave birth in these detention centers. These babies were also taken away as some other "missing" children were kept in these same detention centers as their parents. Eventually, these babies and children were adopted by military officers and their friends and had their identity changed.

After realising that their initial search strategy of detention centers and hospitals was not yielding dividend, the women used direct appeals to churches, published the announcements in most prominent newspapers appealing for information, printed posters and leaflets and solicited successive military governments, the Supreme Court, United Nations, and other Organisations of American States. Thousands of petitions were also signed and filed on behalf of family members, relatives of families, and children who had doubts about their identity. Investigations were

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[351] DasGupa, Sumona and Meenakshi Gopinath. The Fate of the Disappeared Children: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina in Tongeren, Paul V. Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, & Julitte Verhoeven. (2005). People Building PEACE II: Successful Stories of Civil Society. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder: London.p.127-130

[352] Ibid

launched and whenever a potential "disappeared" child was found, these cases were handed over to the right authorities. They also demanded legislation to preserve the right to identity, all aimed at raising awareness on human rights in general and to bring those responsible for these kidnappings to justice. The following were some of the recorded successes of the national "Grandmother" and international solidarity:

i) In 1974, a land mark declaration by Supreme Court of Argentina that the adoption of minors who had disappeared was null and void and a violation of the law. This ruling paved the way for obtaining court orders to prosecute ex-military officials responsible for the kidnaps.

ii) International attention was caught leading to the insertion of Articles 7, 8 and 11 – on the rights of children to preserve their identities, including nationality, name, and family relations into the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by UN General Assembly in 1989. The search activities of the "Grandmothers" and their volunteers, researchers and experts in genetics established a 99.95 percentage accuracy of a child belonging to a given family through specific blood analysis on the grandparents, brothers, sisters, and the aunts and uncles of the victims.

iii) With international support, the National Bank of Genetic Data to preserve the blood information of disappeared children was created.

iv) In 1987, the Argentine Congress unanimously approved a law to check and keep the DNA record of any suspected missing child.

v) The establishment of an Inter Disciplinary Dialogue for Identity – a sort of forum for sharing knowledge, combined with other psycho-rehabilitative tools, including theater, music, cinema, the plastic arts, and literature.

vi) In 1997 the organisation celebrated their twentieth anniversary and in 1999 the women won the World Methodist Award for their fight in restoring identity of the missing, while adapting to new methods and broadening the range of their work.

vii) The ideas of these women have been popularised by music and television stars and in the successful theatrical work *A Proposito de la Duda* (with Regards to the Doubt) in 2000 that was seen by more than twenty thousand young people.

viii) In April 2000, the film Both de Guerra (War Booty), which summarises the history of the 'Grandmothers' and told the story of the children, won several awards at the film festival in Valladolid, Spain, and the Ecumenical Prize at the Berlin Film Festival.

What began as essentially a personal struggle has transformed lives, changed laws, and inspired a whole country toward the pursuit of truth. The yearly gathering of women infront of the Plaza de Mayo is now only for commemorative days to look back on an idea that has now removed the walls of silence that existed during the dark periods of the history of Argentina.

2.7.2 Sample Case 2: Women Weaving Bougainville Together: Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Papua New Guinea

Bougainville is one of the clusters of some forty islands comprising Papua New Guinea (PNG), a country that is located north of Australia in the South Pacific. PNG gained independence from Australia in 1975. Worthy of note is the fact that traditional Bougainville society is matrilineal: the women's line determines kingship and the inheritance and use of land rights. "Women" as the local goes "are mothers of the land."[353] However, "the stereotype of Pacific island as a lushly landscape and social tranquil was tainted in the late 1980s when separatist rebels known as the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) declared a "Republic of Bougainville" took up arms against the central government in Papua New Guinea."[354] They were concerned about the environmental destruction and other aspects of the operations of the Australian cooper-mining companies. This led to the forced closure of the Papua cooper mine, which was the biggest in the world at the time. The civil war that ensued was bloody and intense as government troops blockaded the island, preventing medicines, clothing, and food supplies from coming from reaching the island, leading to grave economic and other hardships - closure of schools, more than half of the population was displaced, thousands of women and children housed in car centers had no access to basic services, malnutrition and poverty was rife, there was shortage of medicines in hospitals and health centers and thousands of people died. People who lived off the land and relied earlier on hydropower and solar panels for electricity resorted to using coconut oil to operate chainsaws and to run their vehicles.

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[353] DasGupa, Sumona and Meenakshi Gopinath. Women Weaving Bougainville Together: Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in Papua New Guinea in Tongeren, Paul V. Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, & Julitte Verhoeven. (2005). People Building PEACE II: Successful Stories of Civil Society. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder: London. p. 122-126

[354] Ibid

The dial need and outcry of the general population for humanitarian aid led to the formation of the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency in 1992. Comprising of two main organisations (Catholic Women's Association and Bougainville Community Integrated Development Agency), the organisation was a humanitarian network of like-minded people that found a self-reliant and sustainable solution to the crisis. Their motto "Women Weaving Bougainville Together," was an accurate representation of what they were doing – distributed food items, clothing, and medicines to the deprived population in both Government and rebel controlled areas. Using prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, silent and peaceful marches, all night vigils for peace, and petitions as tools/ weapons for their course, earned them major successes; and they took a strong political stance against rampant domestic violence, especially that of incest, child abuse and rape of women/ girls, which became a weapon of war used by the fighters. For example, in 1990 a group of women staged a protest march on the island of Buka to confront the commander of BRA whose rebels were preventing the soldiers from Papua New Guinea (PNG) from distributing emergency supplies. Through their non-violent struggle, the women were able to prevail on the both the PNG Defence Force and BRA to lay down their arms and negotiate peace. When in 1996 the formal peace negotiation failed, a week-long meeting of women in Arawa was held and women went into the bush to convince their sons to return home, helping them to resettle back into their communities. In other areas, they went into the jungles and negotiated with the BRA leaders to accept peace. Fifty women from Bougainville traveled to Lincoln, New Zealand for a meeting that led to the signing of the Lincoln Peace Agreement in January 1998. During and after the war, the Leitana Nehan Women's Development organisation offered counseling services to help women and young people deal with the emotional trauma of violence and between 2000 and 2003, it assisted more than 1,4000 victims. The organisation also assisted in the rehabilitation of ex-combatants, and using es-guerillas as role models at anti-violence workshops, they were also able to rehabilitate the minds of people. Through appeals and lobbying with authorities, women in Bougainville were also included in the autonomous and provincial government.

This Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency became very successful as the clandestine networks were the only source of assistance. Commenting on their success, the executive

director, one of the organisation's founders Helen Kakena said "we were very successful…, we learnt how to look after ourselves."[355]

2.7.3 Sample Case 3: Women's Peace Activism in West Africa: The WIPNET Experience in Liberia

During the British colonial era in West Africa, women of Aba in eastern Nigeria on October 1929, rose up in protest against tax policies, low prices in locally produced goods and the artificially sky rocketed prices of imported goods; and their hatred for the British appointed warrant chiefs (who were second class citizens with no formal influence over governance, security or economics) and their native courts. Attacks were mounted by women against these key targets such as the native courts, European owned factories, and those warrant chiefs that presided over cases. The Aba women were able, using their huge number, ability to mobilise, and their role in traditional society to force a change in the African society. Since then the legacy and spirit of Aba has continued to linger on in West Africa "…as women groups have continued to use their numerical strength, sisterhood, and shared experience to bring about change." [356] Unfortunately though, the effectiveness of this tool for social change was overshadowed in the 1980s by the plague of the fourteen years of armed conflict in Liberia that had a horrific spillover effect on neighbouring countries and the West African sub-region.

However, in 2001, women in Liberia found themselves playing an important role in helping to push the reluctant warring factions to reach a negotiated settlement to end the rebel war. Although the peace agreement was reached in 1997, yet by 1999 the war flared up again producing hundreds of thousands of displaced people, girls were often captured by fighters and used as labourers or as wives; and rape and sexual assault of women were rampant. Women were involved in many roles including fighting as combatants, peacemakers at all levels of society, providers of safe havens, and as informed mediators. But despite all of these, they were absent in the formal peace processes and the peacebuilding initiatives that were implemented by the NGOs. The West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), whose headquarters is housed in

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[355] Ibid.p.122

[356] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. A & Leymah Roberta Gbowee. Women's Peace Activism in West Africa: The WIPPNET Experience, in Tongeren, Paul V. Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema, & Julitte Verhoeven. (2005). People Building PEACE II: Successful Stories of Civil Society. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder: London. pp. 133-140

Ghana with regional chapters in almost all of West Africa, reacted to the marginalisation of women by establishing the "women in peace programme in 2001 known as Women in Peace Network (WIPNET) after serious consultations with women across West Africa. After its launch, WIPNET helped with the development of a training manual on peacebuilding, helped organise various regional women's workshops, organise training workshops; conferences, and other meetings; conducted research; published stories on women's peacebuilding activities, engaged in peacebuilding and other activities such as democracy – building in Nigeria, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, Mali and other activities aimed at building regional peace and mobilising women.

In 2003, women's group from all works of life (churches, markets, schools, displaced camps, ordinary jobs, and NGOs) in Liberia under the auspices of WIPNET decided not to sit on the sidelines but to launch a campaign of Mass Action for peace when they found out that the rebels were closing on the Capital, Monrovia. The effective message of the campaign was "We Want Peace; No More War." Realising their efforts were not taken seriously, women (both Muslim and Christian) came out in their thousand dressed in white to protest on the streets of Monrovia and Totota carrying placards and posters, and every day, stayed together and had prayers at an Airfield whether rain or sun shine. With the visit of the women at the Airfield by Bishops and Imams as a show of solidarity the protest quickly spread to other places and the effective use of the media caught the attention of the international community. Being able to pressure President Charles Taylor into meeting with them, they spelled out their programme calling for an immediate and an unconditional cease-fire, dialogue for a negotiated settlement, and an intervention force. In Accra, Ghana the WIPNET sponsored delegation of seven who went to monitor the peace talks solicited the services of Liberian refugees in Ghana and their counterparts in Ghana who joined them stage a big demonstration at the Akosombo conference center where the talks were held. With various messages on placards, they also issued strongly worded statements expressing their concern for the civilian casualties to the Heads of states and other dignitaries including MARWOPNET and other Liberian women in the diaspora who were meeting for the peace talks and also had separate talks with all the fighting. Realising the delay in the talks, as delegates moved between Accra and Akosombo, the women adopted a compelling but non-violent strategy of barricading the entrance to prevent mediators, warring factions and

other delegates from leaving the hall until they reached an agreement. The approach was effective as two WIPNET women were invited to attend the political and security committee meeting where strategies for peace were explored for both sides.

On June 17, a cease fire agreement was signed although amidst an escalated fighting in Liberia as parties were trying to reach a comprehensive agreement. Another quick mobilisation and barricading of the entrance of the meeting room by women with placards that read "[K]illers of our people – no impunity this time," "Butchers and murderers of the Liberian people stop" and "How many babies do you intend to slaughter."[357] Publicity of this incidence by the media coupled with mounting international pressure positively influenced the resumption of the talks and on August 11, President Taylor agreed to resign and a week later, the comprehensive peace agreement was signed.

Through the mass action women recorded several successes such as:

a) Through the actions of WIPNET, they earned the appreciation of the Liberian people and the transitional government appointed WIPNET members to posts with government agencies – the National Human Rights Commission of Liberia, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and one became the deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

b) Awareness among the citizens, especially the rural communities was raised and Liberians were sensitised on their important role to peace.

c) The presence of the women demonstrators shifted focus from the warring parties, as is normally the case, to the real people.

d) The mass action was not a respecter of persons as they met and exerted the required pressure on each party to achieve the desired outcome.

e) The delegation was determined not to return home without any success and so did not allow their enthusiasm to die out due to lack of funding, poor morale and frustration among members, as is often the case with women non-violent initiatives, by constantly referring to their constituency in Liberia who were at the brunt of all bombardments between the rebels and government troops

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[357] Ibid. p. 137

f) The presence of WIPNET and other women's groups assured that women's issues would be addressed in shaping Liberia.

g) WIPNET was one the institutions that partnered with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to promote the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process.

This activism by WIPNET did not only lead to the above mentioned successes but recorded a final break in the traditional male domination of the governance machinery, especially the presidency to elect the first female president in Africa.

2.8 Conclusion

The atrocities committed, especially against women and children during the Sierra Leone rebel war is a clear demonstration of women's low statuses, which also made the conflict very unique comparatively. The unique nature of the conflict was reflected not only by the robust nature of intervention by UN and the international community, strong belief and support for the important role civil society can play, but also further demonstrates their commitment to include all stakeholders, especially women in order to attain gender equality; the building of sustainable peace and achieve development. Since it was not very clear at this point, the concrete contributions of LWCSOs surveyed, the study reviewed three similar cases of LWCSO's peace ventures in Argentina, Papua New-Guinea and Liberia.

From all three sample cases reviewed above, it is very clear that women's determination and tremendous efforts contributed to change, not only change of their statuses but also to peace for all, using the non-violent strategies such as: peaceful protests, peaceful demonstrations/ marches, use of placards and signatures, awareness raising through the effective use of the media and effective mobilisation and use of numerical strength, advocacy and lobbying policy/ decision makers, sit-ins and many more. Like the Aba women's riot of the twentieth century in Nigeria, WIPNET's mass action captivated the imagination of West African women, a clear demonstration that women are capable of making a change, and indeed the required change, foster peace and contribute to the building of equitable and sustainable societies. Based on these successes recorded by women in the reviewed cases and many more that exist, and being fully aware of the effective employment of these strategies by LWCSOs of Sierra Leone since the start

of the war onto the ongoing peacebuilding phase; I felt compelled to access their contributions to the ongoing peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN, A FEMINIST METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

3.1 Research Design and Methodology: The Case for a Feminist Approach

This section explains the design and adopted feminist methodological approach and issues as they relate to this study. To academically interrogate an intricate and sensitive issue such as gender equality/ inequality, especially in a traditional and patriarchal context like that of Sierra Leone, requires a strong defense and illumination for a thorough understanding of the research design and methods that inform it. Firstly, this study is neither explanatory nor predictive. Rather, it is an exploratory descriptive study that involves analysis of concepts of civil society and peacebuilding, especially women's civil society building peace in Sierra Leone. The goal firstly, is to investigate the contributions by LWCSOs to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone from 2002 - 2012. Secondly, it is to either support, refute or obtain and establish another perspective on the widely held view by UN and the international community including peacebuilding practioners of CS's invaluable and potential role in sustainable peacebuilding from an academic stand point. As the main target or researched groups are LWCSOs, this study is informed by feminist theory and methodology, which provides a theoretical conceptual frame work to investigate the now widely acclaimed notion that gender equality and increased women's political participation at all democratic levels is an essential phenomenon for post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. This study is a blend or combination of both theory and practice inorder to dig out the underlying and relevant issues and to lay bare the facts. The methodology is essentially ethnographical in nature, relying on careful and detailed observation as well as interviews in the field.[358]I chose an ethnographical approach to this study simply because of the consistence of this methodology with those suggested by Baszanger and Dodier, summarised as:[359] the need for an empirical approach; the need to remain open to elements that cannot be codified at the time of the study; and a concern for grounding the phenomenon observed in the field. A proper understanding of how gender equality issues are viewed and

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[358] As an insider-researcher , having spent almost all of my life in the country with a clear understanding of the culture, traditions and issues concerning the people, belonging to one of the two major tribes (Mende); speaks some of the native languages including the lingua franca (Krio), my study has what it takes to produce an ethnographic report. See Berg (1998, pp.120-159) for a useful analysis of ethnographic field study.

[359] Baszanger, I. & Dodier, N. (1997) "Ethnography: Relating the Part to the Whole", in Silverman, D. (ed.), Qualitative research: Theory, Method and Practice, London: sage Publication, pp.8-23

understood from the traditional perspectives cannot be deduced without empirical observation in the field. Many writers and scholars of peace have analysed issues of gender in relation to peace from a hermeneutic perspective, discussing the meanings of these concepts using their own ideas and those by other theoreticians without going to the field to get first-hand information from the researched group. As a Sierra Leonean, interested not only in how equality is perceived at the moment in line with the changing trend of events, but also in the dispensing of it at all levels irrespective of sex or tribe; inspired the needed to go to the people once more to ask them about these issues.

The study's focus firstly, is to assess the contributions made by women as part of civil society to the ongoing peace process in Sierra Leone, highlighting the challenges they face. Secondly, it is also to investigate whether (i) the required political space, support, and resources required are made available to them and (ii) whether the programmes implemented and the activities undertaken by these local women civil society organisations are contributing to improving the statuses of the general population of women in Sierra Leone. It also assesses how the strive and focus by the LWCSOs on ensuring gender equality in peace and peacebuilding processes has helped to resolve the numerous undesirable outcomes, especially as the violent civil war delivered a devastating blow to the socio-economic and political development for a decade. It is important to note that the attainment of gender equality, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has helped propel the rapid realisation of the other goals which are: eradication of poverty and hunger, women's empowerment; improvement of maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS; malaria and other diseases; reduction of child mortality rate; achievement of universal primary education; ensuring environmental sustainability; and development of global partnership. In this light therefore, there is need for the government of Sierra Leone to revisit every aspect of the society, including the laws and traditions of the land that have and continue to give men an edge over women.

Considering the issue of gender roles in peacebuilding, especially women's roles, this study shares the views of many renowned gender scholars that the strategies that are employed in order to enhance women's roles in the building of peace should go beyond the current academic, elitist, reductionist and legalistic perspectives so as to have a direct impact on both men and women.

This may require well designed strategies specifically for the rural settings where the greater number of Sierra Leoneans reside and where cases of inequality are prevalent due to cultural beliefs and practices that suppress women such as: restriction of unvalued reproductive and community works, sexual violence, human rights, property rights, marriage rights, female genital mutilation, and all other forms of practices that might encourage subjugation of women are prevalent.

Generally, women have been long associated with peace and peacebuilding. Accordingly, the participation of women in peacebuilding efforts has been justified on the basis of justice and equality, the necessities of policy criteria, contributions to economic growth and the strengthening of societal cohesion. However, a direct causal relationship between women as peacemakers, women as essential components of CS and CS as a pre-requisite for peacebuilding has not been thoroughly explored. The exploration of this issue requires a methodology that sufficiently represents the viewpoint of women and their experiences of political and social influences. To this end, a methodology that is 'feminist' is needed in order to examine and assess the issue using the gender lens. The contention though, is that the form and even the existence of such a methodology is in dispute among many scholars and gender specialists. Therefore, an exploration of the background to the use of such a methodology in this study should first be explained.

Political feminism always poses challenges to society's structures regarding gender relations as social research analyses of various aspects of social interaction. Hence feminists would therefore tend to clearly adopt a particular perspective when research is being carried out. However, before establishing whether there is a distinct feminist methodology, there need to clearly establish an understanding of what constitutes 'feminism' is of paramount importance. It is then prudent thereafter to ascertain how such a political ideology can form the basis for a methodology, before identifying what distinct characteristics a feminist methodology might have.

There are many political manifestations in existence today that have been labelled as 'feminism' and the description of the various aspects of this diverse concept has often resulted in attaching the 'feminism' label to another political ideology or philosophy that is closely related. For

example, nowadays there are talks of liberal feminism, Marxist feminism; radical feminism, socialist feminism, existentialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, black feminism and postmodern feminism, to name the better known branches.[360] But Coole has however bemoaned these divisions, complaining that feminism has become "disjointed and indistinct", and hence concluding that although there has been much research and political agitation, there still remains no common purpose.[361] With all of these compartmentalisation, which are often plagued with conflicting ideological notions, the idea of an agreed methodology for the various forms of feminism seems ambitious.

However, notwithstanding this ambiguity, various thinkers have pointed out with emphasis that there is more to unite feminists than divide them.[362] Marilyn French thus adds a resounding boost to the above statement by offering a broad definition of feminism, which she says is "any attempt to improve the lot of any group of women through female solidarity and a female perspective."[363] Hence, there is a sense of action to address a situation and a way of looking at society that is distinctive. In addition, a comprehensive attempt by Arneil to unify feminism did not only incorporate the same ideas of 'action and perspective', but also adds normative and epistemic features by saying:

> *The recognition that, virtually across time and place, men and women are unequal in the power they have, either in society or over their own lives, and the corollary belief that men and women should be equal; the belief that knowledge has been written about, for and by men and the corollary belief that all schools of knowledge must be re-examined and understood to reveal the extent to which they ignore or distort gender.*[364]

According to Arneil, feminism is a combination of notions of equality with a critique of conventional epistemology, which is also suggestive of the fact that there is a place for a methodological approach that could be defined as distinctly feminist.[365] Rosalind Delmer took the

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[360] Training for Women Network. (2003). Annual Report 2002/2003. Belfast: TWN, in Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding-Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women. Belfast: Training for Women network (TWN). June 2004.p.8

[361] Coole, D. 'Threats and Plaits, or an Unfinished Project? Feminism(s) through the Twentieth Century', in *Journal of Political Ideologies*. Vol 5 No 1. February 2000.p.37

[362] Op.Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding......p.4

[363] French, M. (1992). *The War Against Women*. London: Hamish Hamilton.p.4

[364] Arneil, B. (1999). Politics and Feminism. Oxford: Blackwell.pp.3-4

[365] Ibid

discussion further by offering her three-step definition of feminism,[366] which are summarised thus, that:

i) Women suffer discrimination because of their sex,

ii) Specific needs remain negated and unsatisfied and

iii) The satisfaction of these needs requires radical change in the social, economic and political order.

In other words, feminism is not just about redefining knowledge, but actively bringing about fundamental change. The most important thing is that if there is agreement that there are common themes within feminism that can be related to knowledge and justice issues, then a feminist epistemology may be formed. In tracing the formation of western political thought, Carole Pateman was able to identify how women were excluded, suggesting that the subjugation of women has been central to this process.[367] The French feminist Luce lrigaray refers to Pateman's finding as "the adoption of the masculine as universal and the feminine as a copy,"[368] suggesting that the masculine machinery needs to be suspended long enough inorder for the feminine to be seen and heard. In a supposition, Carroll and Zerilli proffers that "if political thought has a bias against women, then the study of politics and political research will retain this exclusion."[369] The epistemic basis for feminism, therefore, identifies a fundamental exclusion of women from the realm of political thought and study, which demands an alternative approach to correct this imbalance.

Based on the above finding therefore, Jones and Jonasdottir came to a logical conclusion that the exclusion of women from political theory creates an absence of the feminine from the practice of political analysis.[370] This exclusion, as Oakley suggests, is as a result of a sustained bias against women in the formation of research methodology that is geared towards the pursuit of knowledge that benefits men, while negating the needs of women.[371] In the words of Lynch, this kind of research that extends the subjugation of women by imposing a male epistemology is

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[366] Mitchell, J and Oakley, A (eds). (1994). What is Feminism? Oxford: Blackwell.p.8

[367] Pateman, C. (1989). *The Disorder o Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.p.1

[368] Leng, K (ed). (2003). 'Luce Irigaray', in Elliot, A and Ray, L (eds). *Key Contemporary Social Theorists*. Oxford: Blackwell.pp.171-3

[369] Carroll, S and Zerilli, L. (1993). 'Feminist challenges to political science' In Finifter, A (ed). Political Science: *The State of the Discipline 11*. Washington: American Political Science Association.p.55

[370] Jones, J and Jonasdottir, A. (1998). The Political Interests of Gender : Developing Theory and Research with a Feminist Face, London: Sage.p.1

[371]Oakley, A. (1983). The Sociology of Housework. Oxford: Blackwell.p.3

known as 'colonising.'[372] The counter to this has therefore to be 'emancipatory knowledge', arguments that urged the formation of a distinct methodology to overcome the prevailing male universalist assumptions in political science by emancipating women's thoughts and voices and allowing a more equitable system of knowledge acquisition. Virginia Held, one of the notable feminists, emphasising this point further adds that "[F]eminism is a revolutionary movement. It aims to overturn what many considered the most entrenched hierarchy there is: the hierarchy of gender. Its fundamental commitment is to the equality of women, although that may be interpreted in many ways."[373] Catherine Mackinnon makes a deeper intervention for feminist scholarship by first qualifying Virginia Held's proposition and by going further to express her epistemological stance. She mentioned:

> *Feminism not only challenges masculinity's partiality but questions the universality imperative itself. A perspective is revealed as a strategy of male hegemony….Nor is feminism objective, abstract, or universal….Feminism does not begin with the premise that it is unpremised. It does not desire to persuade an unpremised audience because there is no such audience.*[374]

Standpoint feminism challenges the dominant position of the masculine in knowledge, its production and understanding, referring to 'situated knowledge', which assumes as universal one particular perspective.[375] This borrows from Marxism, indicating that alternative views - those of the 'oppressed' should not only be expressed, but also have a better understanding of reality due to their subjugated position than does the oppressor. An addendum to all of these views by Sara Ruddick even entrenches the argument further as she shares the epistemological prejudices of the 'Women's Ways of Knowing' collective, whose members celebrate women for recognising by saying "that all knowledge is constructed … that answers to all questions vary depending on the context in which they are asked and on the frame of reference of the person doing the asking." [376] Hartsock relates this principle to the position of women by postulating that "[W]omen's lives make available a particular and privileged vantage point on male

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[372] Lynch, K. (2000). 'The Role of Emancipatory Research in the Academy in Byrne, A and Lentin, R (eds). *(Re)searching Women: Feminist Research Methodologies in the Social Sciences in Ireland.* Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.p.296

[373] Held, Virginia. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press.p.23

[374] Mackinnon, Catherine. A. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory", in Sara Ruddick. (1989). Maternal Thinking Toward A Politics of Peace. Beacon Press: Boston, USA.p.128

[375] Sayer, A. (2000).*Realism and Social Science*. London: Sage.p.51

[376] Ruddick, Sara. (1989). Maternal Thinking Toward A Politics of Peace. Beacon Press: Boston, USA.p.128

supremacy."[377] Embedded in this view is the idea that the formation of knowledge from a woman's perspective is superior to the prevailing understanding of reality, a position Jaggar summarised thus:

> [T]he special social or class position of women gives them a special epistemological standpoint which makes possible a view of the world that is more reliable and less distorted than that available.[378]

By this reasoning therefore, the application of a research methodology that represents standpoint feminism is essential for a clearer view of social reality. Hence, it's relevance and adoption by this study.

Even though the epistemological argument for a feminist methodology may be clear, yet the need to identify features of a methodology that is distinctly feminist is also essential. In light of this, Ramazanoglu and Holland have made their contribution by indicating what feminist methodology is not. According to them, "it does not constitute merely women studying women, there are no distinctly feminist research techniques and there is no distinctly feminist ideology."[379] But most importantly however, it is indicated that feminist methodology is identified by research that is shaped by feminist theory and is grounded in women's experiences.[380] In contributing to the debate, Spalter-Roth and Hartman in their writing claim that feminist methodology is identified by two functions: that of the researcher excluding bias in research techniques (by "experts") and the utilisation of a feminist perspective in research design and purpose (by "advocates").[381] Daly's definition of feminist methodology strongly echoes the latter point of political purpose that requires the link to ideology, the re-definition of social relationships and a focus on women.[382] Byrne and Lentin following on this discussion, have also

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[377] Hartsock, N. (1993). 'The Feminist Standpoint', in Harding, S and Hintikka, M. (eds). *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and the Philosophy of Science.* Dordrecht Reidel

[378] Jaggar, A. (1999). 'Social Feminism and the Standpoint of Women', in Rosen, M and Wolff, J (eds). Political Thought. Oxford: University Press.p.49

[379] Ramazanoglu, C and Holland, J. (2002). Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices, London: Sage. Pp.3-4

[380] Ibid.

[381] Spalter-Roth, R and Hartmann, H. (2000). 'Small Happiness', in Hesse-Biber, S, Gilmartin, C and Lydenberg, R (eds), Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology, New York: Oxford University Press. p.344

[382] Daly, M. 2000. 'Feminist Research Methodology: The Case of lreland' in Byrne, A and Lentin, R (eds), (Re) searching Women: Feminist Research Methodologies in the Social Sciences in lreland, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. p.62

identified political purpose as an essential feature and added to women's experience, the hearing of women's voices and a more equitable relationship between researcher and researched.[383]

Although feminist methodology can be characterised in terms of a general approach, however, some have advocated for certain research techniques that can be utilised in the application of this methodology. Wylie thus defines the general approach as "critically reassessing the extant ideology and theory where this leaves out women altogether or significantly distorts or devalues their activities or lives" and thus proposes two models of practice: The "collectivist" model, which investigates the experiences of women by asking not telling them what they are experiencing and why, and actively involves the research subject in the research process; and the "self-study" model, which is designed to "recover and re-value the experience of women" and should not be widened into a general theory, using women as a "resource."[384] This approach is clearly seen as a hermeneutic one, focusing on experience and understanding, requiring a subjective perspective in information collection. Adding her voice to the importance of women's experiences as resourceful, Elizabeth Spelman in her book '*Inessential Woman*' states:

> *[E]xperience is central to feminist thought, but what is meant by experience is not mere empirical observation, as so much of the history of modern philosophy and as analytic philosophy tends to construe it. Feminist experience is what art and literature as well as science deal with. It is the lived experience of feeling as well as thinking, of performing actions as well as receiving impressions, and of being aware of our connections with other persons as well as of our own sensations. And by now, for feminist, it is not the experience of what can be thought of as women as such, which would be an abstraction, but the experience of actual women in all their racial and cultural and other diversity.*[385]

Harding vividly acknowledges the subjective approach, but also advocates a "feminist empiricism", with the awareness that male bias and applying strict scientific techniques can squeeze the prevailing societal attitudes out of the research process. In this way therefore she adds that objective methods are also beneficial to a feminist methodological approach. But more importantly, she added that it is not the methods themselves that constitute feminist methodology,

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[383] Byrne, A and Lentin, R. (eds) (2000). (Re)searching Women: Feminist Research Methodologies in the Social Sciences in lreland, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration. Pp. 7-8

[384] Wylie, A (1994). 'Reasoning about ourselves: Feminist methodology in the social sciences', in Martin, M and Mclntyre, L (eds), Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science, Cambridge: MIT. Pp. 612-4

[385] Spelman, Elizabeth. V. (1998). *Inessential Women*. Boston: Beacon Press, in Virginia Held. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press.p.23

it is the awareness, purpose and understanding of the research process in the wider sphere of gender relations in society that mould the relevance of the methods.[386]

By all indications, it is clear from the existing literature, that the existence and application of a feminist methodology has not gone unchallenged. As a matter of fact not all feminists would acknowledge the fundamental difference between the sexes that could define a universal viewpoint. Carol Gilligan in her works "In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development" insists that there can be no generalisations about gender, but acknowledges that there are contrasts and perspectives that can be construed as difference and hence finding a representative methodology would therefore be problematic.[387] Therefore this ignoring of other societal factors and differences between women goes to the heart of debates within contemporary feminism. The subjective nature of a feminist methodology as mentioned earlier has come under intense criticism by positivists and other supporters of the natural sciences. In general these critics do not regard it as sufficiently scientific and objective to be viable. However, Harding's views of feminist empiricism may go some way to counter these criticisms, but if the feminist critique is accurate and all research carries a masculine bias, then a subjective correcting of this imbalance is justified.[388]

Nonetheless Hekman has been able to identify certain problems with standpoint feminism. While reprising the criticism that differences among women are ignored, the suggestion is made that the apparent discrediting of Marxism calls into question the epistemological assumptions of succeeding theoretical concepts, including feminist standpoint theory. Indeed, post-modernist and post-structuralist viewpoints challenge the very basis of feminist analysis, rendering a feminist methodology unsupportable in the prevailing sociological climate.[389] Commenting on the ignoring of differences between women, Sayer gives a further warning that the privileged position assigned to the subjugated perspective threatens to become the new dominant situated knowledge, ignoring other discourses that may be equally valid.[390]

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[386] Harding S. (1987), Feminism and Methodology, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p.182
[387] Gilligan, C. (1991). In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p.2
[388] Op. Cit. Harding S. (1987), Feminism and Methodology, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p.182
[389] Hekman, S. (2000). 'Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited', in Allen, C and Howard, J (eds), Provoking Feminisms, Chicago: University Press. p.9
[390] Sayer, A (2000), Realism and Social Science, London: Sage. p. 52

However, irrespective of these criticisms, the application of a specific feminist methodology makes some general assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the notion of objective reality. In other words, the absence of women from the political and philosophical spheres is regarded as proof of the application of a universal male dominance designed to exclude women, rather than any other explanation or prevailing discourse. Logically therefore, a general female position is assumed to exist in contrast to a general male one, regardless of the historical period, culture, class or social structure. This is made more problematic by critiques from what has been often interchangeably referred to as "black feminists" or "women of colour" and so-called "third world feminists", that accuse mainstream feminists of trying to replace a male, white, middle class, western universalism with a female, white, middle class, western one.[391] From a different point of view, it can also be contested that the standpoint feminist claim to redress an imbalance to establish a more accurate interpretation of reality is flawed. In essence the existence of two conflicting subjective positions, far from establishing a median objectivity, merely represent two discourses among many, and any trade-off agreement between the two to find an "agreed" reality does so at the expense of other perspectives.[392] In the midst of all of these disagreements, however, criticisms of the nature of a methodology that claims to be feminist do not disprove the existence of such an approach. But even more importantly, feminist validation of women's experience has had tremendous consequences in ethics, in so far as leading to a fundamental critique of the moral theories that were (and to a large extent still are) regarded as dominant to the development of alternative, feminist approaches to, for example morality, care and ethics. For example, in the long history of thinking about the human as man, the public sphere from which women were completely excluded was seen as the source of the distinctively human, moral, and creative. Ancient history of the Greek conception of the polis is clear evidence of this view, an idea that was later strongly reflected in the social contract theories. In the same way, as the realm of economic activity was added after industrialisation to that of the political, transformative, and progressive, the private sphere of the household continued to be thought of

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391 Hooks, B. (1984). Feminist Theory: From Margins to Center, Boston: South End. p. 18
392 Potter, M. (2004), In Their Own Words: A Research Report into the Victims Sector in Northern Ireland, Belfast: Training for Women Network. p.7

as natural, a realm where the species is reproduced, and repetitively replenishing the biological basis of life.[393]

Political feminism in its divided nature threatens to deny the existence of a feminist methodology. However, worthy of note and importance is that generalised notions of feminism can encompass many aspects common to most feminists, such as the female perspective, female epistemology and a political purpose. This, in its strictest sense, permits the existence of a methodology that is feminist, not defined by the specific methods and mechanisms employed by the researcher, but by the general approach that encompasses being beneficial to women, illuminates the experiences of women and raises political and sociological questions about the position of women in society. The nature of a feminist methodology may be challenged, but no more than any other methodological approach, and such challenges do not necessarily disprove the fact of a feminist methodology. Whether such a viewpoint holds a more privileged or accurate version of reality or not, there is a feminist methodology which, by laying claim to fundamental justice issues relating to gender equality, challenges the foundational nature of academic inquiry.

From the above review of a feminist methodology, this study believes that a perspective and research methodology that is distinctively feminist is better placed to examine the position and role of women in the area of peacebuilding. Hence the employment of a feminist methodological approach to thoroughly examine or review the related literature on theoretical notions of women, war and peace, women and civil society and civil society and peace as can be seen in chapters two and three of this study. Using this analytical model, the particular context of the contributions of local women civil society organisations (LWCSOs) and their effective participation in peacebuilding and community development projects in the transition from the eleven year conflict in Sierra Leone is analysed and assessed.

3.1.1 The Research Instruments and Justification for their Selection
As the name suggests, instruments refer to tools, mechanisms and devices that the researcher uses to measure the hypotheses of the study. In the light of its functions therefore, the

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[393] Op. Cit. Held, Virginia. (2006). The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global. Oxford University Press.p.23

instruments that are selected and used by any researcher should be able to give validity and reliability to the result. Because of the sensitive nature of this investigation, these research instruments were combined to dig out as much information as possible from the targeted respondents in order to put together a meaningful, factual and balanced report.

Various research works that have been undertaken by traditional researchers over the decades mainly used the qualitative research characteristics of objectivity and neutrality. They basically employed methods such as surveys, random sampling; interviews; participant observations and also relied on the opinions of experts using the other scientific approaches of data collection and analysis for the development of theories or credible and acceptable study. As this method was considered scholarly, universally recognised and assumed to be free of biases, it received credibility and therefore became mainstreamed and a standardised method of conducting a research. However, the emergence of a feminist oriented research methodology brought a challenge to the celebrated objectivity and the ubiquitous mainstreamed old system, pointing to its endocentric nature and covert subjectivity. To these feminist researchers, what is mostly celebrated as mainstream research is actually male stream and androcentric ethos or even misogyny. In their attempt to give voice to the voiceless, the feminist writers have devised and made use of popular methods such as oral history, storytelling, ethnography, personal experiences, informal interviews, photographic research, case study, focus group approach and phenomenology. Comparatively though, some of these methods are not in line with the earlier developed conventional methods which were mainly based on patriarchal phenomena of human relations that considered women as invincible subjects of research processes and other public activities. Feminist researchers are therefore of the firm conviction that the active involvement of the people (researched group) makes them feel a part, which to them (feminist researchers) will help bring the factual and objective perception or result of the study. This explanation informed the choice of this credible and reliable method for use in this study.

Fulfilling the aim of the research, which is to assess the contributions by LWCSOs to and their effective gender participation in the ongoing Sierra Leone peace process, makes this research a purposive one. To successfully carry out the aims and objectives of this research, required the various interviews were conducted, I took a closer look at the activities of the researched group,

visited operational field areas of project implementation; held both informal and formal discussions with government officials (both top and ordinary officers); leaders and beneficiaries of the researched groups and other key stakeholders – both local and international engaged in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. In other words, this research is a combination of both the primary and secondary sources of data.

3.1.2 Sources and Data Collection Methods

The sources and mode of generating information for this research were through semi-structured, unstructured or focused interviews, focus group discussions, analysis of similar sample of cases, photographs, personal stories/ testimonies, government and donor stakeholder consultations, experiences of gender experts, development of an appropriate analytical framework to help understand LWCSO's roles in peacebuilding through functional, institutional and enabling environment perspective and participant/ personal observations; which is followed by a comprehensive review of available literature, results of ongoing observations and experiences; interviews in the field; as well as analysis of policy frameworks and interventionist approaches by the GoSL and the UN in order to enhance gender sustainable peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. In relation to the policies, frameworks and interventionist approaches mentioned, I examined the aims and goals of the policy frameworks, their significance and the political will of the implementing bodies in the pursuit of equality for women and girls in general in the process of building a 'sustainable peace' in Sierra Leone.

The combination and collaboration of these different approaches mentioned above with primary research data from previous gender related surveys validates and strengthens the findings of this study.

3.1.3 Primary Sources of Data

a) Participant observation

Participant observation is to some extent an essential element of all qualitative research or studies.[394]Observation provides a yard stick against which the researcher is able to measure data collected using other methods, which basically requires that the researcher visit the research

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[394] See: Marshall, C and Gretchen B. Rossman. 1989. Designing Qualitative Research. CA: Sage.

site(s) often for a longer time to collect data mainly by observing, interviewing and discussing with the researched group. The French postmodern theorist, Jean Baudrillard, in his writings, has often challenged the ability to represent reality via research instruments. In his view, the ideas of the world have been so saturated by media images, that the difference between reality and its representation has become blurred as "we tend to forget that our reality, including the tragic events of the past, has been swallowed up by the media."[395] In other words, we can no longer differentiate between appearance and reality – "[A]dverts persuade us to consume goods by employing visual media which often have nothing whatsoever to do with the product; we have become sold on and by the images we consume."[396] In this state of uncertainty, the researcher/ analyst needs to take a stroll or go out using his/ her feet now and again, for as Bauman puts it: "strolling still has its uses."[397] To 'stroll' in this usage means to listen, observe and experience and to expose theories and biographies to new and unfamiliar social settings and relations, with a view to enhancing an understanding of them.[398]

The aim of participant observation is different from what is commonly referred to as positivism – e.g. the designing of questionnaires involves the researcher developing ideas and testing or exploring these using questions. Critics of the participant observation methodology argue that researchers who employ it "assume that they already know what is important. In contrast, participant observation is said to make no firm assumption about what is important."[399] But even more important, "the method encourages researchers to immerse themselves in the day-to-day activities of the people whom they are attempting to understand in contrast to testing ideas that may be developed from observations (inductive)."[400]

Since participant observation gives more credence to the research findings as it provides the researcher first hand privy into the issues, I extensively used this method in this study, as I frequently attended programmes such as the launching ceremonies of community development projects and the MARWOPNET FM Radio 88. 4 news gathering process at Gbalamuya, Kambia district – North of Sierra Leone and its evening broadcast; attended gender sensitisation

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[395] May, Tim. (1997). Social Research: Issues, methods and process (2nd Ed.). Open University Press: Buckingham. Philadelphia. p. 132
[396] Ibid.
[397] Bauman, Z. (1992). Intimations of Postmodernity. London: Routledge. p.155
[398] Op. Cit. May, Tim. (1997). Social Research: Issues, methods and process (2nd Ed.)….p.132
[399] Ibid
[400] Ibid

gatherings, meetings and radio/ discussion programmes in Moyamba, Southern province; observed the proceedings of SGBV cases and joined follow-up trips by members of LWCSOs to clients of SGBV under preview in Bo, southern Sierra Leone; and other programme implantations in the field by these LWCSOs in the eastern province during my various visits to the field.

b) *Informal Conversations: Narrative Analysis and Participant Interpretation as an Insider*
Assessment of daily conversations regarding activities and projects by various organisations of ordinary people is a crucial source of information. This method becomes very helpful mainly in situations where it becomes a little difficult to conduct formal interviews in the midst of hesitation by many of the community people to express their views on certain issues that are public and may have some cultural/ traditional undertones. In these situations, most of the important information can be gathered from the normal and informal daily conversations, discourses, gossips, symbolisms, and stories about the above mentioned interventions by individuals and or groups involved in the peacebuilding process. Having been born in a typical traditional home in the provincial city of Bo, grown up attending school; teaching in the University; deeply involved in social/ development work as a civil society and gender activist; and having travelled the length and breadth of Sierra Leone for over thirty five years; I have had and continue to have series of informal conversations with ordinary people (male and female) on numerous topics ranging from traditions, customs, beliefs and practices, gender relations, civil and political issues and many more before, during and after the war. My wealth of knowledge as an academic/ feminist researcher and a native of the land on these gender issues, the perceptions; and behaviour of the typical Sierra Leonean; puts me in a better stead to handle amicably this study. I had lengthy informal discussions specifically on this research topic for six months of my two visits to Sierra Leone whilst undertaking the study.

c) *Interviews*
Interviews are a widely used methodology for data collection in the social sciences. In other words, it is the method of maintaining and gathering information through conversations with people on a specific topic or range of topics and the interpretations which social researchers make of the resultant data, constitutes the fundamentals of interviews and interviewing. As Tim

May puts it "[I]nterviews yield rich insights into people's experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings." [401] But achieving this however means "social researchers need to understand the dynamics of interviewing, sharping their own use of the method and understand the different methods of conducting interviews and analysing the data, together with an awareness of their strengths and limitations."[402] The various interview types that I used in this research among others are discussed below.

d) *Unstructured or Focused Interviews*

The major difference between this method and both the structured and semi structured interview is its open-ended nature, which is said to provide the interviewee(s) with the ability to challenge the preconceptions of the researcher, as well as enabling them to answer questions within their own frame of reference. Although many argue or might regard this as a license for the interviewee(s) to simply talk about an issue in any way they chose. Nevertheless, this disadvantage is apparently turned into an advantage in many cases. For example:

> *[A] phenomenon like rambling can be viewed as providing information because it reveals something about the interviewee's concerns. Unstructured interviewing in qualitative research, then, departs from survey interviewing not only interms of format, but also in terms of its concern for the perspective of those being interviewed.*[403]

Sometimes referred to as informal, unstructured or unstandardised interview method achieves a different focus because of the following reasons: Firstly, it provides interviewees with a qualitative depth to talk about the subject interms of their own frames of reference, drawing upon their ideas and meanings with which they are familiar. This allows the meanings that "individuals attribute to events and relationships to be understood on their own terms". Secondly, it provides a greater understanding of the subject's point of view. This method therefore includes what is known as life-history interviews, which writers have noticed has its importance of preserving the 'feel' of the exchange between the interviewer and interviewee in their resultant

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[401] Ibid.

[402] Ibid

[403] Bryman, A. (1998a). Quantity and Quality in Social Research. London: Unwin Hyman. p. 47

transcripts, biographical and oral history interviews. [404] Thus, in asking women about their experiences, as opposed to assuming that they are already known is what this approach is said or set to challenge. Anderson et al, in agreement with this view concludes by saying:

> *The truths' of official accounts can cast doubt upon established theories. Interviews with women can explore private realms such as reproduction, child rearing, and sexuality to tell us what women actually did instead of what experts thought they did or should have done. Interviews can also tell us how women felt about what they did and can interpret the personal meaning and value of particular activities.*[405]

e) *Individual Interviews*

From December 2009 - February 2010 and May/July 2011 I lived with members of the case study groups and visited various places in the country where the target beneficiaries live, observing the activities of the researched group and also conducted a total of one hundred and eleven (111) interviews in the Western Area, Northern Province, and South/ Eastern Provinces of Sierra Leone combined. Interviews were conducted with ten (10) officials of the case study groups (LWCSOs) and eleven (11) stakeholders and service delivery officials of the peacebuilding process, ranging from the government/ Gender Ministry, UN PBC and the international community including the Director of UN Women in Sierra Leone – Melrose Kargbo and Women's Forum, Commissioner and the former first President of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) Mrs. Jamesina King; some key officials of the two main political parties (All Peoples Congress - APC and The Sierra Leone Peoples Party – SLPP), other civil society members, representatives of some local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the peacebuilding process, as well as some UNDP officials. During this same period, I interviewed one ninety members of the target beneficiaries, ordinary citizens, local authorities; including three main senior officials of the LWCSOs studied in the hierarchy of President/ Director, Vice President/ Director and the General Secretary/ Social secretary. In all of these however, I purposefully skewed the percentage of interviewees towards women (more women interviewees) as it is important to listen to their voices inorder to cross check what is already known form the other side in order to do a fair analysis and to put together an adequate and valid report by analysing their successes, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities

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[404] Simeoni, D. and Diani, M. (1995). The sociostylistics of life histories: taking Jenny at her word(s). Current Sociology, 43 (2/3): 27-39

[405] Anderson, K. Armitage S. Jack, D. and Wittner, J. (1990). Beginning where we are: feminist methodology in oral history, in J. McCarl Nielson (ed.). Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary Readings in the Social Sciences: London: West view.p.95

and the threats/ challenges the face. The preliminary and final formal/ informal interview processes all put together lasted for a period of six months as already stated above.

f) *Group Interviews*

Group interviews constitute a valuable tool of investigation and a major source of data collection, which allows researchers to focus upon group norms and dynamics around issues which they wish to investigate. Since the extent of control over the interviewed group discussion determines the nature of data that is produced – i.e. striking a balance between the group being too small for interaction study or too large thus preventing all group members from participating in the discussion, this research complied with the recommendations by Stewart and Shamdassani. According to them "[T]he contemporary focus group interview generally involves 8-12 individuals who discuss a particular topic under the direction of moderator who promotes interaction and assures that the discussion on the topic of interest… A typical group session will last one and a half to two and half hours."[406]

In compliance with this recommendation for a better result, I conducted series of group interviews with a cross section of interviewees mainly from the case study group - WIPNET, 50/50 and MARWOPNET. I wish to state here that there are other civil society groups that are equally involved in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, and some of the key members of these civil groups were also interviewed to collaborate or dispute findings of the study. But ultimately, the main focus was on the LWCSOs. This in itself makes this research purposive. Focus group discussions with beneficiaries; and series of round table discussions with key stake holders were held as part of the information generation. To get the sample size of the target population, a simple random sampling method was used. This interviewing process, which comprise of both the leadership and ordinary members of the target groups was first conducted on a one to one basis in different locations and followed by a focus group discussion in an agreed location and time in order to allow for both harmonisation of views and to identify whether there are some distinct features of participation at different levels by interviewees. All of these proceedings were based mainly on the willingness of the interviewees to talk and their convenience as a way of guaranteeing respect for their privacy, which is a fundamental human

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[406] Stewart, D. and Shamdasani, P. (1990). *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage. p. 10

right. Experiences of both the researcher and other gender experts and especially the participant observation skills of the researcher were effectively utilised to give credence to this research. All of these methods were geared towards generating first-hand information and knowledge on what mainly obtains at the lower ebb (grass-root) of society, especially away from the international community/ donor's purview and the seat of power.

g) *Semi-structured Interview*

All formal interviews in this research were conducted using the survey mechanism - semi-structured and open ended questions. The questions were normally specific, but at the same time gave ample space and freedom to the interviewees to express their profound and sincere opinions on the subject of inquiry beyond the answers in a manner that would appear prejudicial to the aims of standardisation and comparability. For example information about age, sex, occupation, marital status and so on, can be asked in a standardised format. However, qualitative information about the topic can then be recorded by the interviewer who can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given. This enables the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee.[407] Put simply, this method was deliberately chosen and used in this study because according to feminist ethicist Janice Raymond, interview "… maximizes discovery and description."[408] The sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss added their voices to this notion by saying that "open ended interview research produces non-standardised information that allows researchers to make full use of differences among people."[409] In consideration of these views, I chose to use the open-ended interview method as was seen to be most suited for this study, based also on the divergent views on this highly sensitive and debated issue of gender participation and support in peace and peacebuilding processes amongst the various sectors of the selected interviewees. The designing of the questionnaire was completed by early 2011, pilot tested at the Hiroshima University campus and adjusted before it was be taken to Sierra Leone for administration.

Personal contacts with some of the respondents through mobile phones/ telephones and emails were also utilised. The use of these methods including the questionnaire administration and my

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[407] Op. Cit. May, Tim. (1997). Social Research: Issues, methods and process (2nd Ed.)… p.111
[408] Raymond, Janice. G. (1979). The transsexual empire: the making of the she-male. Beacon Press. p.16.
[409] See Glaser, B. and Strauss, B. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine

excellent communication skills gave me easy access to the respondents, reducing tension and the withholding of information especially in such a sensitive and debated issue of gender participation in a traditional society like Sierra Leone.

h) *Photographs/ Visual Aids and Storytelling*

Photographs are 'visible data,' and material artefacts that can be seen in its own right. It can make some elements of culture and social life visible that we might not otherwise be able to see. But they also record the visual perceptions of those who made them, and they can stimulate additional visual perceptions among people who view them. As distillations of direct observation and other forms of social inquiry, photographs can also be used to represent ideas, and in that respect provide useful tools for visualising and representing social theory.[410] Personal stories or testimonies of women's perception and understanding of their lives and their experiences with violent conflicts are a very rich source of information that this study effectively employed. By telling stories, women do not only present their side of the story but also helps reduce their stress; and assures them of a listening ear, which makes them gather courage and determination to forge ahead, hoping that life will present them with a better future. As Pam McAllister in her two books '*You Can't Kill the Spirit*' and '*This River of Courage: Generations of Women's Resistance and Action*', which are collections of stories explicitly pointed out:

> *[S]torytelling makes the world stronger because the stories reveal the complexity of our truth. In telling our stories we resist diminishing our truths into vague or generalised abstractions; we maintain the urgency and intensity of the concrete … [In the telling of stories of resistance and action,] the courage that has come before is not lost but flows like a river, cutting through history's bleakest terrains and most barren deserts, its waters feeding us still, sustaining life through our valleys of despair.*[411]

Considering their immense importance for this study, I therefore made use of photographs and recorded stories and experiences of women in this research as additional information to present, further illustrate, and corroborate the research findings by shedding more light on unseen events that were undertaken by the researched group for the reader's understanding of the background to some unexplainable events. During my stay, interaction, observation and conduct of

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[410] Wagner, Jon. Visible materials, visualized theory and images of social research. Visible Studies, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 2006. p.58
[411] McAllister, Pam. (1991). *This River of Courage: Generations of Women's Resistance and Action*. New Society Press, Philadelphia. pp.3 and 8

interviews and discussions with the target beneficiaries and members of the case study groups, I took photographs of events/ projects, with the consent of the researched/ beneficiary group, that were undertake by them for the purpose for which they are now being utilised in this research as mentioned above.

In brief summary, I would like to reiterate that since data for this research is analysed mainly using the qualitative descriptive method, I employed an interactive approach that included individual interviews. Although a qualitative method was the main mode of analysis, yet some responses to certain questions by respondents also prompted the rudimentary use of the quantitative method. In other words, although the responses to the semi structured questionnaire was recorded using frequency tallies, yet as the interview involved large numbers of respondents and or other members of the community with variations, there needed to quantify these responses (i.e. how many people said what). Hence the quantitative approach.

Various methods as explained above to collect all data for this study and responses to various classes of questionnaires were assigned codes using numerical values (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4…). These codes were later transferred into a spreadsheet and subsequently into tables and the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program was employed for the various statistical analyses. For proper and indebt analysis of data, this research also employed the use of tables, pie-charts, figures and the chi-square model to calculate simple percentages.

3.1.4 Secondary Sources of Data

This study made use of books, articles, journals, dissertations and internet materials.

Secondly, the contents of various documents relating to reports, evaluations and or assessments that have been undertaken by individuals, groups or organisations (either local or international) were analysed. This collaboration was aimed at capturing important information that may not come out in the interviews and or the observation processes necessary to fill out any existing gap.

A purposive sampling method was used and its choice was deliberate as it is the most plausible method to use in this study concerning the fact that the target group (local women's civil society) is a group that shares a specific identity completely different from other civil society groups

involved in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone (this is the first time women have exclusively and successfully bonded together, out of their traditional spheres into the public domain) and at other times. This research was conducted in Freetown, the capital city and some provincial cities/ towns/ villages in Sierra Leone where peacebuilding projects have been undertaken by the target groups.

3.1.5 Some Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitivity that is associated with gender in strictly traditional or patriarchal settings in Sierra Leone, I constantly kept in sight the ethical problems in the collection and interpretation of data. In the process therefore of shaping, systematising, and interpreting the information that was collected, it was glaring to me that I was arbitrarily imposing coherence, modification, and organisation of the fragmented, multifaceted lives of women. Based on the importance and the crucial nature of this study, not only to make visible but to restore the morale and deserved credibility to women's roles as peace makers in Sierra Leone; all interviews were conducted in relation to proper ethical behaviour as tradition demands and in a manner consistent with the primary obligations of well-meaning researchers to: i) do no harm, ii) protect the anonymity and confidentiality of subjects; and iii) obtain informed consent. At the beginning of every interview, I introduced myself and my institutional affiliation, explaining fully the purpose of my research, outlined the content and purpose of the interview, sought for permission to either take notes or tape-record their responses as the case may be, and always provided an opportunity for interviewees to remain anonymous, especially where sensitivity of information was a part. All interviewees who could read were required to read and sign a consent from that I prepared (see document in appendix). For those who could not read, I read and carefully interpreted the content therein in the lingua franca (Krio), which is spoken by more than 80 percent of the people or indeed the language that was suitable for all of us and asked the interviewees to sign by thumb printing.[412] Majority of the interviewees were very keen on their views been made public and therefore signed the form, some remarked by saying "this is time to have our say and be released from bondage into freedom."[413] Those who opted for anonymity, I ensured their confidentiality

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[412] See Appendix 4

[413] Exciting releases of interviewees, mainly women who thought it was time for them to be recognised as equals, take their rightful places and contribute meaningfully by participating in the affairs of their country

by describing them, for example as 'a 30 year old female/ male respondent said…' without any further information on their identity.

Fairness was observed by interviewing all levels/ categories of women and men belonging to the three selected case study groups (literate/illiterate, skilled/unskilled, employed/unemployed, urban/provincial, wealthy/poor, in positions of authority/ordinary). While the interviewer(s) solicited as much information as possible from each interviewee, the wellbeing, time and the convenient environment of the interviewee were given paramount consideration. Therefore some interviews were shortened as a result. The interviews were conducted in both formal and informal settings and the services of an interpreter/ aide was employed when the need arose. Interviews with all targeted members were conducted either in Krio, the lingua franca of Sierra Leone, English or any local dialect where necessary. But even more importantly, responses to questions were purely on voluntary basis and not by force, as some people refused to take the interview or respond to certain questions.

3.2 The Peacebuilding Analytical Frame: A Feminist Mode of Assessment for LWCSO's Peacebuilding Activities in Sierra Leone

In order to select the three case study groups for a proper examination and assessment of the contributions of LCSOs to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, the study took into consideration the four main dimensions listed below:

a) The structure and capacity of the civil society group (e.g., membership size, extent of giving and volunteering, number and features of umbrella organisations and civil society infrastructure, human and financial resources);

b) The scope, scale and mode of intervention (e.g. monitoring and advocacy, direct or indirect intervention in legislative, political, cultural and economic context, relationship between civil society and the state as well as the private sector);

c) The values practiced and promoted within civil society arena (e.g. democracy, human rights, tolerance, or protection of the environment);

d) The impact of activities pursued by civil society actors (public policy impact, empowerment of people, meeting societal needs).

Based on these four main dimensions, in relation with the functions/ roles LWCSOs perform as discussed in section 3.3, the study developed the peacebuilding map (see below), which are divided into processes that are needed and should be taking seriously inorder to effectively and strategically create an effective and just peace in conflict or post-war Sierra Leone. This figure will be used as basis for assessing the various activities, their importance, effectiveness, and impacts of the peacebuilding ventures by LWCSOs investigated by this study, on both the target beneficiaries and the country at large.

Figure 1: *The Conceptual Peacebuilding Frame of Analysis*
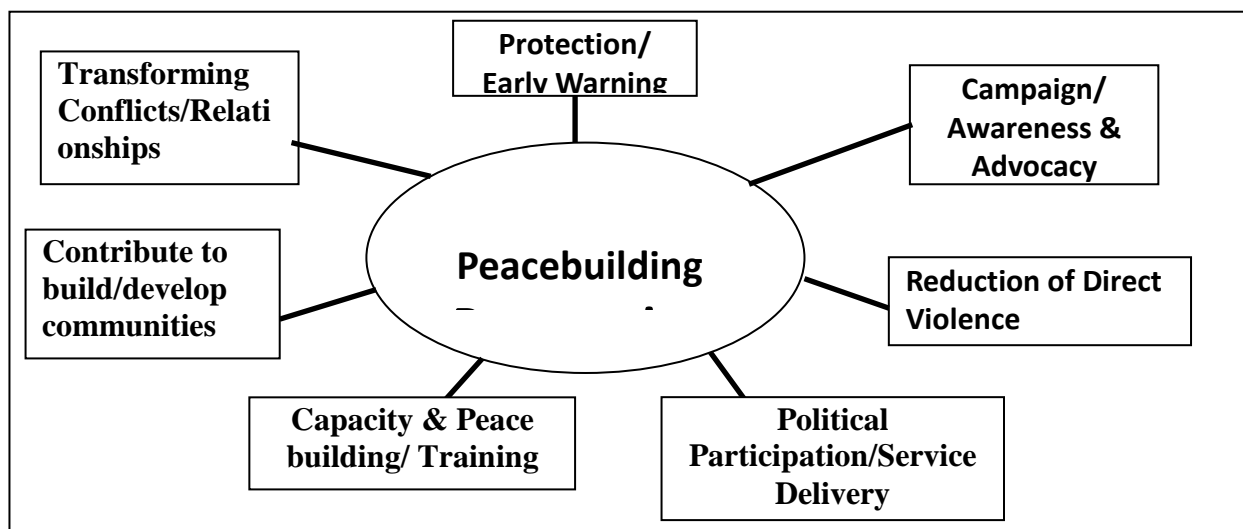
Source: Author

3.3 Conclusion

Although some scholars have expressed their reservations about the effectiveness of civil society in general and LWCSOs in particular in the building of sustainable peace in conflict societies, yet abounding evidence as has been provided in the review above, points to their inevitable involvement, regarding them as the reliable remaining option that needs to be extensively exploited by authorities, governments and the international community. The theoretical and practical application of peacebuilding in various areas of conflict, which is what this study focused on, clearly shows the increasing and meaningful participation of LWCSOs to a greater extent. The extensive review of literature does not only recognise the important role LWCSOs can play in peacebuilding, participatory democracy and development, but also highlights the understanding that, as conflict involves and affects whole societies, the transition from conflict

must also involve all stakeholders, including women. In addition also, the predominance of conflict elites also requires alternative mechanisms to bypass their influences and build a sustainable peace for all of society. In order to achieve this goal, there is an urgent need for multiple channels of communication and participation that exits in civil society, especially LWCSOs to be involved in the peacebuilding process. This study therefore argues that as LWCSOs are a defining factor in the understanding of civil society, their participation in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process is not only essential but inevitable and a sign that civil society is being fully engaged. The engagement of LWCSOs in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process however, is not without its challenges posed by traditions and cultural beliefs and practices, question of political willingness, and many more, which are discussed in detail in later chapters of this study.

Nonetheless, even in the midst of all of these challenges, which may have serious and dial consequences on the performance of LWCSOs, their importance and the reliability on them still remains outstanding in the prevention and building of a sustainable peace. The most essential thing to do in this situation, according to Kerk is to undertake a "critical inquiry into the important work of CSOs in those endeavors is continued so as to derive lessons learnt and best practices."[414]

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[414]Ibid. p.52

CHAPTER FOUR
A HISTORICAL PREVIEW, STATE FORMATION, LWCS's LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION AND DAWN OF ANARCHY IN SIERRA LEONE: FROM PRE-COLONIAL TO POST-CONFLICT PERIODS

Introduction

The history of Sierra Leone from pre-colonial times to the present is as interesting as it is depressing. A thorough examination of the literature on Sierra Leone, like many other countries in Africa, reveals that this nation "failed to make the 'great leap forward' and take its rightful place among the emerging democracies of the 1960s, despite what appeared to many observers at the time as an impressive start."[415] In other words, all the leaders – civilian or military - of this great nation from the onset in one way or the other were faced with two issues (i) how to unite the different ethnic groups into a single and cohesive nation state where every group would identify itself with the goals and aspirations, and collective work towards achieving those goals; and (ii) how to improve the material well-being of the citizens. Through the three main phases into which Sierra Leone history is divided – pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence as discussed below, different leaders and or rulers adopted different strategies, policies and programmes in addressing the issues mentioned above that had lasting negative consequences for the future. Many writings on the rebel war in Sierra Leone by both Sierra Leoneans and outsiders alike have always mentioned corruption, mismanagement, clientelism, regionalism, dictatorship, unemployment, nepotism, patronage system, and poverty as the basic causes of the rebel conflict. Although all of these may be true but regrettably however, none, especially the Sierra Leonean writers, for one reason or the other, have failed to consider a key factor 'discrimination against or neglect of women's issues' as a related core cause to all of those mentioned above. Women, I must mention here are at the core and foundation of the family, its survival and cohesion in the Sierra Leone context. Although men see themselves as providers and protectors, the responsibilities which society has placed upon them, yet women are the home makers, and care providers for all the members including the husband, children and other extended family members, both old and sick; responsible for maintaining unity of the family, its upkeep and sustenance; and are also responsible for making peace not only in their families but also in the communities. In this position and with such enormous responsibilities, it is very clear that any disadvantage against her squarely affects not only her immediate relations but the community at

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[415]Alie, Joe A.D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Africa Future Publishers, Accra, Ghanap.xix

large and hence, the entire nation. I have taken some time to briefly discuss below how the different administrations related with and ruled the people (civil society) of Sierra Leone, with specially emphasis on their discriminatory policies and practices against women and the resultant negative consequences - especially the rebel war that has resulted to the building of a 'better peace', which this study seeks to examine how women are contributing to it. A more detailed explanation of the position and role of women, which gives the necessary credentials and makes them 'a must include group' in any peace venture, in the ongoing peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone; has been already provided in chapter two of this study under the heading why LWCSOs in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding for testing the research question?

There are many debates surrounding the reasons for the extension of colonialism to Africa – the scramble and partition, which some have argued, was for strategic and political reasons. Others claim it was mainly economic as the phase of imperialist expansion is inextricably linked to the development of capitalism.[416] It doesn't really matter to this study which of the two reasons was paramount but of immense importance is that colonialism brought radical changes to civil society that had contradictory impulses and aims that basically involved capital accumulation and social control.[417] These processes had negative consequences on the societies that experienced them as it interrupted and affected the smooth and systematic development and functioning of civic life. For instance, the need to accumulate capital "meant altering social and economic structures if colonies were to be minimally self-financing, to pay for their own administration, if not profitable in the broader sense."[418] On the other hand "attempts to maintain social control meant trying to limit social dislocation as much as possible."[419] These two contradictory processes had profound impacts on civil society's roles, especially local women's civil society; which is the main theme in this chapter.

The effects of colonialism on civil society as a whole varies from different points of views, and has and still remains a debate, and its impacts varying and contradictory. Some scholars have

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[416] Rodney, W. 1972. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. London/Dar es Salaam, Bogle L'Ouverture Publications/Tanzania Publishing House, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.48

[417] Lonsdale, J. and Berman, B. 1979. Coping with the contradictions: the development of the colonial state in Kenya 1895-1914, Journal of African History, 20: 487-505.

[418] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.48

[419] Ibid.

argued that colonialism had an entirely negative impact as it increased local women's subordination, while others believe that this view is overtly simplistic as colonialism, they argue, did give some space to women's civil society to resist, use and challenge both new and existing patterns of gender culture. In order to examine this issue of local women's civil society roles during the colonial period with the fairness it deserves, this research examined the political organisation of colonialism, examined the impact of colonial policy on gender and the different forms of women's civil society political activity (if any) in resisting British colonialism and in nationalist struggles in Sierra Leone.

4.1 Geographical and Social Configuration and State Formation in Sierra Leone, Bad Governance and the Rise to Anarchy

Background

Sierra Leone is a small coastal West African country that is bordered on the north east by Guinea, on the south east by Liberia and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. It has an estimated population of five million and three hundred thousand (5.3million)[420] that comprises of seventeen ethnic groups. Sierra Leone has a territorial area of 72,300 km^2, of which 52 percent comprise secondary forests (forestry in regrowth), 23 percent savanna woodlands and only about 4 percent primary forests (UNDP/FAO 1970).[421] It lies between latitudes 6° 55' and 10o 00' N and longitudes 10° 00' and 13° 17' W.[422] It has a north-south distance of 331 Km and an east-west distance of 326 Km.[423] The entire country can be divided into a land area of 71,620 square kilometers and water of 120 square kilometers (totaling 71,740 km^2) and a population of 4.96 million people (2004 national census) at an annual growth rate of 2.5, with an estimate of 60 percent living below the poverty line, and with a very high population density compared to any other country in West Africa.[424] Sierra Leone's compact shape and coastal situation means that its international borders are only 555 miles in total, sharing 379 miles with Guinea and 158 miles with Liberia. Agriculture is the main occupation with about 75 percent of the rural population

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[420] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): The World Fact Book. July 2010 (Available at: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sl.html) Sourced: 05/16/2010

[421] Poverty and Environment: Environmental Contribution to the PRSP of Sierra Leone…p.3.
 (Available at: www.PRSP_final_env.pdf). Sourced: 05/16/2010

[422] Sierra Leone. 2003. Biodiversity: Strategy Action Plan.p.2. (Available at: http://cdn.www.cbd.int/doc/world/sl/sl-nr-01-en.pdf) Sourced: 05/ 21/ 2010

[423] Ibid.

[424] Ibid.p.12. See also: (http://www.geography.howstuffworks.com/africa/geography-of-sierra-leone.htm)

engaged in it.[425] Rice is the staple food, though supplemented by cassava and other crops such as sweet potatoes and yams, which forms the diet of the people. As a former British Colony, English is the official language and Krio, largely based on the English vocabulary but with its own grammar, is the "lingua franca" that is understood by 95 percent of the population. Forty (40) percent of the population is Christian and the remaining 60 percent is Muslim including traditional indigenous religions.[426]

At independence in April 1961, Sierra Leone was ruled from time to time by a series of governments most of which were plagued by corruption. The first Prime Minister, who was Sir Milton Margai and leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), ruled the country until his death in 1964, when his brother Albert Margai became Prime Minister. Sierra Leone had a manageable population of 2.3 million people at that time and a well-developed educational system - it had the first University in the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa. Based on this fact, Clapham therefore concludes that Sierra Leone had a favourable social endowment: a long standing commitment to western education. Clapham also argues that "Sierra Leone presents few of the inherent problems of governance that bedevil massive territories with very poor communications such as Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, or Sudan.[427] Sierra Leone had a well-functioning democracy and transition to independence was orderly and it maintained a close and cordial relationship with Britain, the former colonial power. Amidst all of these relatively firm and fertile foundations, yet a destructive civil war erupted thirty years after independence. The general literature by many conflict analysts have pointed to several risk factors for civil conflict such as: natural resources dependence (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004), poor growth performance (Miguel et al, 2004); horizontal and vertical inequalities (Stewart, 2000, 2002); and religion, race or ethnicity. However, the specific literature on Sierra Leone highlights and puts emphasis on the domestic causes of the conflict with external factors acting as catalyst and trigger. The domestic factors that ignited the war were centered on bad economic and political governance under President Siaka Stevens who was leader of the former opposition All People's

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[425] Ibid.

[426] UNHCR. (8th March 2006). Comments submitted to the Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI).p. 7 (Available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html). Sourced:0 5/15/2010.

[427] Clapham, C. (2001). "Sierra Leone: the Global-Local Politics of State Collapse and Attempted Reconstruction" In Davies, A.B. Victor. "Sierra Leone Case Study for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)/UNDP Project on Conflict Prevention and Development Cooperation". A paper prepared for presentation at Wilton Park Conference, West Sussex, UK, November 8-11, 2007.p.4

Congress (APC) party, and who ruled from 1968 to 1985.[428] Davies argues that Siaka Stevens created a "shadow state": "information and control of markets and their rewards, and replacement of true political competition with a struggle for his favour".[429] To all of these, this study would like to add 'discrimination,' especially against women as a core cause of the war, which is further discussed in detail below. But interestingly though, one would have imagined that all of these factors put together would have triggered the conflict earlier than it occurred in 1991. The literature clearly reveals that among the key elements that upheld Siaka Stevens' patrimonial system of governance, which led to state failure were political repression and elimination of opponents, state terrorism, political manipulations/ machinations and manoeuvres, economic mismanagement and corruption, rural isolation, diamonds, youth alienation and ethno-regional rivalries. These factors prevented any individual or of group individuals from openly opposing or planning to remove Siaka Stevens from power by any means.

The controversial defeat of the SLPP party in the 1967 election led to coups and counter coups that saw the establishment of the APC one party rule by Siaka P. Stevens in 1973, thus putting a temporary end to these coups. Under the dictatorial regime of Siaka Stevens, the economy declined due to alleged mismanagement, nepotism and corruption. In order to effectively control the citizenry, the absolute dictatorship made the state the dominant source of almost everything that the citizens desired – with politicians, party favourites and state bureaucrats in full control of its distribution (e.g. rice the staple food, fuel, etc.). In 1985, Stevens handed power over to his loyal army chief, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh in a stage managed 'referendum;' whose rule only lasted up to 1991 when the country was invaded on March 23rd 1991 by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group that was headed by a retired army corporal Foday Sankoh.[430] Sankoh's claim of liberating the general Sierra Leonean populace from the scourge of Siaka Steven's dictatorship and the APC misrule to usher in what he called 'genuine democracy' as the main reason for launching the rebel movement, was all but a diabolic quest for the control of state resources, wealth and power. These two motivating factors for the aggressive pursuit of the war and gruesome crimes committed by the RUF became very clear during the

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[428] Davies, A.B. Victor. "Sierra Leone Case Study for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)/UNDP Project on Conflict Prevention and Development Cooperation". A paper prepared for presentation at Wilton Park Conference, West Sussex, UK, November 8-11, 2007.p.4

[429] See Reno, 1995

[430] Adebayo, Adekeye. (2002). *Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia. Sierra Leone and Guinea.* Colorado. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Inc. …p. 79

peace negotiations at Lome, where the RUF did not only demand for the position of vice president, a slot of fourteen (14) of the twenty-five (25) ministerial positions but also the control of the diamond industry. As the ISIS – Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis – WICCE) organisation aptly put it, this situation was akin to "giving the cat the fish to keep."[431]

On April 29th 1992, a group of young military officers overthrew the APC government that was accused of insincerity in pursuing the war to its speedy conclusion; and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). For a quick and decisive victory in the pursuit of the rebel war, they hired a South African private security firm Executive Outcomes (EO) in 1995 to help them fight the war and within a month they had killed many and driven the remaining RUF rebels back to their enclaves along Sierra Leone's borders.[432] However, Valentine Strasser's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire in 1993 followed by calls for the rebels to surrender was a serious blunder, as this announcement was interpreted by junta forces as end of war, who abandoned their positions to attend an international football tournament in Freetown. The RUF took advantage of this act, renewed their attacks and over-ran key army positions, culminating into both a political and military stalemate that gave birth to the idea of a negotiation settlement between RUF and the NPRC. In the words of Lansana Gberrie, "the rebel movement lacked widespread popular support and the military regime had lost credibility for not being able to ensure security or show any marked economic recovery from the devastation of the war."[433]Even as it was clear that the populace were determined to vote the military out of power in the proposed election of 1995, Sankoh demanded for peace before elections. But as a result of popular demand mainly spear-headed by LWCSOs during the Bintumani I and II conferences and mounting international pressure, the NPRC agreed to conduct democratic elections in April 1996, both parliamentary and presidential and hand over power to the democratically elected government. Ahmed Tejan Kabba, a former diplomat from the UN, was elected president. Two months after his election, the first peace talks were brokered between the democratically elected SLPP led government and the RUF in Yamoussoukro, which eventually led to the signing of the

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[431] Isis – WICCE. 2005. Nurturers Of Peace, Sustainers Of Africa: African Women's Unique Peace Initiatives. Kampala, Uganda. P.70

[432] Berman, Eric G. (December 2000). Re-armament in Sierra Leone: One year after the Lome Peace Agreement. Small Arms Survey - Occasional paper No. 1. p. 4

[433] Gberrie, Lansana. First stages on the road to peace: The Abidjan process (1995-96). Conciliation Resources. September, 2000. (Available at: http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/first-stages.php). Sourced: 27/7/2009

Abidjan Peace Accord, on November 30, 1996. [434] As part of this agreement, the Kabba government terminated the services of EOs in January 1997,[435] in order for the RUF to lay down their arms. However, this agreement eventually broke down as the RUF was opposed to disarmament and the creation of an ECOWAS monitoring force. The RUF quickly resumed the fighting immediately after the EOs left the country. Unfortunate though as it seemed for the ruling Tejan Kabba government and fortunately for the RUF, a group of soldiers led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who was imprisoned for his part in an alleged coup, overthrew the Kabba government on May 25, 1997 and formed the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Johnny Paul quickly invited the RUF to join his government, thus forming a potent alliance that was nicknamed by the citizens "sobels,"[436] a name that was coined out of two words - soldiers and rebels.

The AFRC/ RUF coalition however did not last long as the Nigerian led Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) ousted them from power and reinstated the democratically elected government of President Kabba. However, further insecurity and unrest led to the January 6th invasion of Freetown in 1999, which produced its own share of horrifying headlines, highlighting widespread violence and atrocities against civilians, mostly women. There was large scale killings and torture as well as looting and destruction of property that was accompanied by the systematic mutilation and maiming of women and children. The war however came to an end with the signing of a cease-fire agreement on May 18, 1999 that was brokered by the UN, African Union and ECOWAS with the support of the international community that led to the subsequent signing of the Lome Peace agreement on July 7, 1999,[437] which brought the war to its final end. In the aftermath of the peace agreement, the ECOMOG forces departed and UN subsequently established a peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL) in Sierra Leone comprising initially of six thousand (6,000) troops in October 1999. This peacekeeping force was later increased to seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) troops, including 260 military observers by March 2001; making it the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world at that time. [438]

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[434] The UK FCO Sierra Leone country profile (May 2005). In Sierra Leone country of origin information report.(March2006).p. 10. (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html).   (Sourced: 15/5/2010).

[435] Op Cit. Berman, Eric G. (December 2000). Re-armament in Sierra Leone. p. 4

[436] Ibid

[437] Op Cit. Berman, Eric G. (December 2000). Re-armament in Sierra Leone. p. 4

[438] Human Right Watch. (January 2003)."We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. p.20. (Sourced: 7/4/2010).

4.2. Local Women and Civil Society in Pre – Colonial Sierra Leone

In order to understand contemporary gender issues in Sierra Leone, it is prudent and indispensable to look at what prevailed during the pre-colonial period.

Pre-colonial societies (including Sierra Leone) did not conform to the modernization theorists' understanding of "traditional" societies.[439] Various studies on pre-colonial Africa have identified societies that were dynamic and developing, amidst the problems in analysing pre-colonial and colonial periods as much of the available information are so dependent on mediation by colonial texts and sources.[440]Prior to early European contacts with Africa, especially Sierra Leone, which dates as far back as to 1462 when Pedro da Cintra gave the name to the hills surrounding what is now the Freetown Harbour, Serra de Leão (Portuguese word for Lion Mountains),[441] the society was typical of huge diversity and variety in social, political and economic organisation, with immense civic responsibilities that were not static and unchanging. Mostly agrarian (70 percent) and realising production surpluses, what is today Sierra Leone was a loose bunch of varying settlements or communities with sophisticated hierarchical authority. These settlements known as kingdoms (e.g. The Mende, Temne Kingdom, and others) were ruled by royal families - Kings and Queens,[442] similar to that which obtains in the United Kingdom (UK) today. The difference however, is that whilst the UK royal family is basically titular with the Prime Minister as head of government, those that existed in pre-colonial Sierra Leone wielded all the powers – political, economic, religious and social, assisted by a group of chiefs appointed by the King and a council of elders.

From the available literature therefore, it is difficult to assume that formal civil society organisations (CSOs) existed in Sierra Leone. What is clear though is that informal civil society organisations have been part of Sierra Leone, even before the colonisation took place in 1896.[443] Power and control were basically concentrated in the King, who was both the spiritual and political head of the establishment.

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[439] Ibid.p.50

[440] Op.Cit. Rodney, W. 1972. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. London/Dar es Salaam, Bogle L'Ouverture Publications/Tanzania Publishing House, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.50

[441] See generally: Alie, Joe A.D. (1990). A new History of Sierra Leone. New York: St. Martin's Press.

[442] Ibid.

[443] Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone: "A Critical Time for Civil Society in Sierra Leone". An international action research report coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. p.18

Civil Society's role in what is known as Sierra Leone today, which comprised of loosed settlements before been amalgamated into one country; has always been plagued with different challenges at one point and another. During the pre-colonial period (before 1896), all political activities in each settlement that was known as the Kingdom, revolved around the king and his council of subordinate chiefs who were mainly men, not the queen even when they were both souvereign. The Queen's position was mainly titular and had very little political significance as women were not meant to "participate in public life or speak in public and should always be at the back."[444] Comparatively this was and still is quite the opposite in England as the Queen wields and exercises enormous power. This clearly reveals how patriarchal and discriminatory was the Sierra Leonean society that saw, made and positioned women as subordinates to their male counterparts. Civil society if anything at all, did not exist in the strictest sense during this period as the instructions of the King were meant to be carried out and not debated or questioned. This means that dictatorial governance and discriminatory tendencies against women in Sierra Leone did not start in 1968 as is always mentioned. Even under colonial rule (1896 – 1961) by the British, when the position of King was reduced to Paramount Chief and that of Queen completely abolished, hence the genesis of a long 'dominos match' to tyranny and destruction. As discussed extensively in the first and second chapters of this study, the sidelining of women and their total exclusion from active involvement in the governance of their local communities in Sierra Leone by the later part of the 19th century dates as far back to the pre-colonial period.

Traditional governance institutions in Sierra Leone had from the onset excluded women as participants in public life, although there were and still are regional variations in this regard.[445] The powers wielded by leaders (mainly men) of these traditional institutions cannot be underestimated, as they were and are by far the greatest influence over aspects of public and political life in Sierra Leone, especially in the provincial areas. Chiefs, especially Paramount Chiefs, as leaders of these traditional institutions, generally command very high levels of loyalty (or at least obedience) from their subjects (populations under their rule) and with the power to decide who participates or not in both formal and customary political engagements in the

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[444] Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone. 83 Working Paper, June 2009. FRIDE, Madrid-SPAIN.p.30 (Available at: http://www.fride.org) Sourced: 24/3/2011
[445] Op. Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone...p.30

chiefdom.[446] Even during the colonial period, the formally mandated authorities of the district council did not easily take actions that were against the chief's wishes.[447] The power and control of the paramount chief hierarchically filter down to the grass root people even in the smallest village in the chiefdom through his subordinate chiefs (e.g. section, town/village chiefs etc.). At the chiefdom level, women's participation in governance and hence development during the period under review, was minimal although this also varied and even so up to date, across the country. In the north today, women can only play very junior roles in traditional governance such as that of Ya'alimamy (low level female chief) but in the south, women could hold all levels of customary office, including that of becoming paramount chief; although in practice it's difficult for women to achieve high office in the customary setting.[448]

Nonetheless, there existed such renowned and respected community-based organisations as the 'poro' and the 'bondo or sande' (traditional secret societies for men and women, respectively), which had a strong sense of authority and control, especially the poro over its people after that of the King.

The poro, which is the male secret society, was largely the basis for local governance in pre-colonial Sierra Leone,[449] with a large number of activities under its control. For example both the harvesting of palm fruits and fishing, as these settlements were mainly agrarian, were regulated by poro, since the placing of the society's sign prohibited the use of the plantations or fishing grounds concerned until it was removed.[450] The poro also decided trading practices and fixed prices at which various commodities should be sold and at which certain services-for instance, a day's load carrying for the King – should be performed. The poro had its own tribunal which took precedence over other authorities in the settlement of certain disputes, and to which cases involving murder or witchcraft had to be taken.[451] It arbitrated in local wars, and no fighting was permitted while poro was in session. At the same time, the fact that its symbols were understood and obeyed all over the country meant that they could also be used as a general call to war. But

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[446] The nomenclature chiefdom was created by the British colonialist after abolishing the Kingdoms and Kingship. It refers to the constituent or demarcated unit under the control of the paramount chief; which was a replacement of the King.

[447] Op. Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence ...p.14

[448] Ibid

[449] Little, Kenneth. The Political Function of Poro. Journal of the International Institute. October, 1965. Vol. XXXV. (Available at: RS 366.9664, L724 Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone).p.1. sourced: 10/01/2010

[450] Ibid

[451] Ibid

judging from a broader perspective, these CSOs were however not only exclusive (as non-members were required to obey and not question its dictates) but also essentially selfish in the pursuance of their respective interests and also fragmented.[452]

The bondo society for girls, compared to the poro for boys had very little public space as its responsibility mainly was to prepare young women through initiation, for marriage and a rally point by the Queen for women's support when it was required for political expediency – King maker role.[453] But irrespective of their exclusion from the politics of the day, yet they often entailed greater interdependence than modern societies today, in which men and women had different but complimentary roles in many ways; with well-defined roles and structures that ceded to them (women) a certain amount of power and control within their communities. Staudt submits that "women often had a degree of autonomy and control of their lives with high levels of solidarity along the lines of gender as much as social stratification was based on gender."[454] During the pre-colonial period, women were expected to move to their husband's village after marriage and were allowed fewer legal rights, which in turn gave them less economic security, for example, in terms of access to and use of land.[455] However, women's relationship to men was more complimentary than subordinate mostly due to the considerable power and solidarity gained through the collective formed by the near universal membership in the women's 'bondo' or 'sande' society mainly in traditional or provincial areas.

Access to land during the pre-colonial period as earlier pointed out, was indirect through the men and ultimately insecure for women as rights were granted by husbands; a condition which made it precarious, depending on the women becoming or remaining wives. However, there are exceptions to this, most notably among the coastal Sherbro of Sierra Leone where there is matrilineal inheritance or right to property. In this case women can become heads of households, village chiefs, or even lineage heads; and therefore it is not unusual in these circumstances for women to become trustees of land or property.

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[452] Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone: "A Critical Time for Civil Society in Sierra Leone". An international action research report coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. p.18
[453] Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.52
[454] Staudt, K. 1986. Stratification: implications for women's politics, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.51
[455] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.50

Women in the agrarian economy often played or carried out the greater part of the agricultural work and also took responsibility for subsistence food production to feed their children. For example men did and still do the physically intense work of clearing fields and plowing swamps, but planting, harvesting, weeding, gathering wood, cooking, cleaning, marketing, family cohesion, peacemaking, child care and control are duties often shouldered by women. But irrespective of these, there was and still is some form of interdependence and reciprocity in the relationship between men and women as earlier stated. For example among the Mendes (one of the two largest tribes) who occupy the southern and eastern regions of Sierra Leone, subsistence farming involves intercropping – the main crop been rice (staple food) and a mixture of other crops such as cotton, benny seeds, pumpkin, corn, millet etc. for commercial purposes. While this process required the labour of both men and women at different stages, men took and even to today take full control over the rice produce at the end of harvest because they clear and prepare the ground; women tended the plants, intercropping the above named seeds between them. After harvest, the other crops were/ are sold under the prerogative of the women but the cotton was handed to the husband to weave before been returned to the women to sell. The money could be shared by both the man and the women who took absolute control of it. Therefore, the control the women had over the money realised from the sale of other crops other than the main crop (rice) inevitably gave her power and autonomy in society, although the possibility for men to reduce this control by women existed within the production process.

By and large, the economic status enjoyed by women, which was possible through their role in the production process, often brought with it some political rights, particularly in the communities that allowed them to gain wealth. For example Madam Yoko, after the death of her husband, was made Paramount Chief by the British colonial administration of Sierra Leone because of the wealth and immense influence she had at the time. In essence, women in Sierra Leone whether in patrilineal or matrilineal communities usually had: (a) some political control over some area of activity, whether it was in the production circle, marketing and trading or household and family affairs (b) had political institutions, which were usually councils where they decided how to manage their own affairs and how to influence the activities of men and (c)

were not subject to total control by men as much as they had some form of autonomy in spheres of their responsibility.

Although local women's civil society (LWCS) was not acting on equal terms with the local men's civil society (LMCS), yet the LWCS had well defined political roles and structures which allowed them some degree of power to exercise some control in society. Among the mende and Sherbro of Sierra Leone, it is very rare for women to become chiefs in their own right but the 'Queen Mother' or 'Mammy Queen' could play a significant role as kingmaker. In the national politics of Sierra Leone today, the Mammy Queens also play influential roles in determining who emerges as winner. Women could also bring sanctions to bear upon men to resolve individual or collective grievances, especially in provincial areas. For example "making war on" or "sitting on a man" – surrounding his hut and protesting at his behaviour was recognised by men as a legitimate and effective course of action for women to take, as was the strike – refusing to cook meals and provide other services for men"[456]were and are still common practices in a bid to control men's ill responsible behaviour by women in traditional Sierra Leone.

In conclusion, although one could argue that pre-colonial Sierra Lone was not characterised by equal gender relations and the absence of male dominance, yet it is apt to argue that women had some degree of autonomy, enjoyed some of their basic rights and control over certain affairs of their lives. Therefore it was very difficult, given these circumstances and the degree of privileges given to them, for the discriminatory practices to trigger or lead to violence/ revolt; contrary to what obtained after independence in Sierra Leone. Colonialism brought with it not only a different cultural construction of gender but also imposed on women a far lesser and degrading status that helped to widen the gender gap between men and women as we see it today.

4.3 Local Women and Civil Society during Colonial Rule in Sierra Leone (1896- 1961)

Foreign or European incursion into Sierra Leone started in 1787 with the establishment of Freetown (Capital city) by British abolitionists and philanthropists, members of the Sierra Leone Company – a private British organisation, for repatriated and rescued slaves after the remarkable

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[456] Van Allen, J. 1972. Sitting on a man: colonialism and the lost political institutions of Igbo women, Canadian Journal of African Studies, 6 (2): Pp.165-182

decision of Lord Mansfield in 1776 that outlawed slavery on British soil. In 1808 the Freetown settlement was taken over by the British government and it became a crown colony, under a British governor. In 1896 Britain extended its rule over the Freetown hinterland, which became known as the protectorate, following reports of the encroachment of the French into the north of Sierra Leone in pursuance of Samouri Toure - a local warrior of Guinea who challenged their 'illegal' occupation of his land. There is large available literature on issues relating to colonialism in Africa, which lay emphasis on political economy and cultural history but this chapter focuses on the ways in which colonial processes were tailored to control the involvement of civil society in general in Sierra Leone, and especially women's civil society and the impacts it had on them.

Publications by conflict analysts, commentators, writers and academics reveal that colonialism was mainly viewed as a masculine project of the white men, often referred to as "colonial masters", whose aim was to subjugate and civilise "natives" of the colonised states that were also male.[457] However, the reality was different and paradoxical as European women were an "inferior sex" within the "superior race" and native women of the colonised states played a role in the entire project.[458] In essence the racial dimension was a very crucial factor in colonialism as issues relating to race and difference became a topic of heated debate since the different roles played by women located in different positions within the colonial hierarchy, were determined not only by their class positions but also the race to which they belonged. The European women had a totally different and a better experience of colonialism than that of women of the colonised states.

A system of indirect rule was employed by the British in all their colonial territories as they didn't have the manpower sufficient to institute a total British control over these vast lands they acquired. In Sierra Leone, two distinct groups of people existed under British rule - those that lived in the colony - Freetown (mainly free slaves) were known as "British subjects" and those outside it were known as "British protected persons."[459] These two groups received different

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[457] Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics. Open University Press, Celtic Court, 22 Ballmoor, Buckingham. MK18 1XW…p.46
[458] Ibid.
[459] See Alie, Joe A.D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Africa Future Publishers, Accra, Ghana

treatments - the "British subjects" had right to go to England without permit but the "protected persons" did not have that right.

Politics during the colonial period was not based on any liberal democratic model as colonies were administered bureaucratically with no functioning competitive electoral politics.[460] In other words conventional politics, under the colonial context, had a very narrow meaning. Colonial administration was basically bureaucratic, highly hierarchical and authoritarian. Higher positions in the administration were held by few British officials, usually men - although women were later employed at the junior levels (either because of shortage of labour during and after World War II or in the colonial welfare service),[461] from the home country Britain and headed by a governor who was responsible to the colonial office at home. In Sierra Leone, like in many other British West African colonies, the British colonial setup adopted the indirect rule system, combining their structure with pre-existing local administrative structures at the lower levels as this provided for a cheap means of maintaining their colonial rule.

Different courts were established under the newly "Native Administration (NA)" system; some of which were presided over single handedly by the governor of the district and others with the help of local chiefs to deal with issues involving traditions. The NA Act of the late 1930s that guided the chiefdom governance had no place for women to participate in governance.[462] Colonial taxes were levied on protectorate houses of indigenous people that were to be collected by local chiefs in their respective jurisdictions. This led to a war known as "The House Tax War" in 1898 in which the Temne and Mende people of Sierra Leone refused to pay, attacking and looting trading stations, and killing policemen, missionaries, and all those suspected of assisting the colonial government.[463] The British administration completely ignored the dual sex political system that existed before their arrival, which they (British) abolished; an action that reduced, if not destroyed, the political influence of women. For example the Paramount Chief, who was formerly known as 'King,' became a salaried official, while the position of 'Queen' was not only abolished but not replaced at all. This act made the male administrators stronger and totally free, with no check on their powers by women as was the case during the pre-colonial period, to take

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[460] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.52
[461] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World politics…p.53
[462] Op. Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone
[463] Op.Cit. see generally: Allie, Joe A.D. (1990). A New History of Sierra Leone…p.3

any decision that was seen right from their perspective. As Grier argues, "the policy of indirect rule reinforced the legal and coercive powers of chiefs and male elders over their historic dependents and of males over females."[464] In other words, "as colonialism and the state system spread around the world, women often lost their traditional roles in leading and building peace in their communities."[465]

The clear line of demarcation between the natives and Europeans, which was often designated as "colonised" and the "colonial master;" "white" and "native" or "British subject" and "British protected person" as was the case in Sierra Leone with well-maintained mechanisms, was an indication of a skewed treatment to different kinds of civil society. Stoler argues that "colonialism was based on two important but false premises. Firstly, the Europeans formed "an easily identifiable and discrete biological and social entity: a "natural" community of common class interest, racial attributes, political affinities and superior culture." Secondly, and related to this, the boundaries separating coloniser from the colonised were thus self-evident and easily drawn."[466] Apart from the spatial boundaries as the British lived in secluded areas known as the "District Commissioner Quarters" in Sierra Leone that segregated the two groups, the British colonial system also required "regulating the sexual", conjugal and domestic life of both Europeans and the colonised subjects"[467]

The British colonial system had as part of its project, the control of sexual morality, as the initially policy that forbade European women from going to the colonies, also denied their presence and participation in the early phase of the administration. However, prior to the allowed arrival of a few European women towards the end of the 19th Century, concubinage or liaison between British officials and native women was widely encouraged and tolerated,[468] especially so when married British men were not given jobs at the lower levels but bachelors. "This practice

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[464] Grier, B. 1992. Pawns, potters and petty traders: women in the transition to cash crop agriculture in colonial Ghana, signs, 17 (2): 304-328

[465] Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika Sewak. Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict: An integrated programme of research, discussion and network -building issue paper on The Role of women in Peacebuilding. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). 2005.p.1 (Available at: http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf) Sourced: 27/7/2010

[466] Stoler, A. 1989. Making empire respectable: the politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures, American Ethnologist, 16 (4): 634-660

[467] Ibid

[468] Hyam, R. 1990. Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience. Manchester. Manchester University Press, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics….p.54

was seen not only as having a stabilising effect on political order but good for the health of the official,"[469] which implied that he was free to use the concubinage system to his advantage. However, this practice was frowned upon and finally abolished in 1909 in all British colonies as resulting children from these relationships led to the blurring of the boundaries between the colonised and the coloniser, which was a potential problem for the administration.[470]

The arrival of European women in the colony helped to sharpen or heighten the gender boundaries or relations that had existed before. For example the need to protect the 'white woman' especially from the colonised men was often used to justify the creation of a strict racial line between the colonised and the coloniser. According to Stoler, "white women were seen to require different and superior amenities leading to the embourgeoisification of many colonial communities and women became responsible for maintaining standards, for example ensuring that the rituals associated with middle and upper class life at home were carried out."[471] Sexual assault of black women by white men was not seen as a crime but on the contrary, a similar attempt by the colonised man (black man) was met with stiff and stringent measures. For example the sexual abuse of a black woman by a white man was not considered as rape, but the fear of the "black peril" (the suppose danger of sexual assault of white women by black men due to their uncontrolled lust for white women) swept through Papua New Guinea, Rhodesia, and Kenya in the 1920s and 1930s, resulted in the imposition of a death penalty for any black man that raped a white woman in Kenya in 1926.[472]

But more interestingly, even though European women did not have specific or official duties to perform other than been house wives and were certainly neither paid or meant to undertake paid employment, they were responsible for the management of the home, for fulfilling some responsibilities for their husbands such as supervising servants (very often males), entertaining, carrying out "good works" and the nebulous function of maintaining standards. [473] Life for European women was very much circumscribed as it did not go beyond tea parties, bridge and the club, with very little contact with colonised people. Wives of colonial officials had an

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[469] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics…..p.54

[470] Strobel, M. 1991. European Women and the Second British Empire. Bloomington, IN, Indiana university Press…p.4

[471] Op.Cit. Stoler, A. 1989. Making empire respectable: the politics of race and sexual morality in 20th-century colonial cultures….p.640

[472] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics….p.54

[473] Ibid

incorporated status and identity as their positions were derived basically from their husband's rank, which was clearly visible by their sitting positions at social functions such as dinner parties. [474] Though they were basically invisible, yet they played important roles in the administration whereas the local women had no part at all. Nonetheless, although European women were considered as the most reactionary and racist part of the imperial project, yet it is interesting to know that there were tensions between different agents of colonialism – the officials, traders, and missionaries who should not be seen as pursuing the same goal. Recent feminist research has found out that some European women in their "mother country" campaigned on behalf of Empire, the British feminists made frantic efforts to save the "downtrodden" colonised women from "barbarism", who shared and bolstered the imperial assumptions common at the time. Despite this, some other European women went to and worked in the colonies as nurses and missionaries, often in an attempt to escape some of the restrictions on single women in their home country. However, Karen Tranberg Hansen in her study of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) after WWII argues that "the incorporated status of all wives assumes too great a class homogeneity between European women, and that certain opportunities for women to create an identity for themselves through voluntary work and paid employment did exist."[475]

The colonial administration, besides all of its discriminatory gender relations that have been explained above, devised and put in place strategic measures to control every activity – be it local mining activities, local cooperative societies, politics, trade unionism and other sectors; including any attempt at civil society's challenge to their discriminative policies. The measures of control ranged from violent crackdown on protestors, offering of concessions; to dismissal of radical leaders of civil society groups and their replacement by moderate/ loyal ones. The participation and experiences gained by Africans, especially Sierra Leoneans as colonial soldiers in WW II led to trade union movements pressing hard for better working conditions after the war, which worried the British that led to the creation of a Labour Department in 1941, headed by a trade union adviser Edger Perry to regulate their activities in Sierra Leone in various ways. For example firstly, he set up the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress, identified, encouraged and

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[474] Ibid

[475] Hansen, K. T. 1992. White women in a changing world: employment, voluntary work and sex in post-World War Two Northern Rhodesia, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics…p.55

sponsored the studies of moderate trade union leaders and ensured their appointment in imnportant government positions. Secondly, he cut down on the number of trade unions in the country and instituted two institutions of bargaining, which were heavily controlled by government officials. Added to these, the British created a powerful colonial police force known as the 'Frontier Police' that was always on ready alert, and could be mobilised from one colony to the other to put down any challenge, violent demonstrations or opposition to British rule such as the November 1955 Maforki disturbances that was as a result of the amalgamation process and 'The House Tax War' of 1898 to mention a few in Sierra Leone.

In summary of the overall control strategies of the British in their colonial administration of Sierra Leone to keep every opposition, people and groups under control, Joe A.D. Alie in his book titled "Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State," states:

> *....First it would be planned in such a way that the traditional authorities (chiefs) would play a dominant role in the new political dispensation. Second, if the previous arrangements did not work, the British would ensure that radical politicians did not take over the reins of power, thereby assuring a strong and continued connection between the new political elites and their former colonial country. Third, the trade unions, which had been a thorn in the flesh of British administration, would effectively control."[476]*

All of these strategies were very effective at controlling the activities, and preventing violent challenges and oppositions to British colonial rule in Sierra Leone until independence in 1961.

4.3.1 Impacts of Colonial Policies on LWCS in Sierra Leone

Colonialism instituted profound changes in the social, political and economic lives of the colonised people and altered civil society relations in very crucial ways that affected both men and women differently. As stated earlier, the British colonial administration pursued two conflicting objectives: ensuring capital accumulation and the maintenance of social control. This section examines both the methods of capital accumulation and the strategies of social control and their impacts, especially on LWCS.

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[476] Op. Cit. Alie, Joe A.D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State….p.1

The introduction of cash crop production in Sierra Leone, following the rapid development in industry in 1750 Britain led to the spread of capitalist social relations. This new phenomena altered both production and the balance between production and reproduction. According to Lovett, this process led to the "reshaping and reorientating a variety of divergent pre-capitalist systems of production and social organisation inorder to generate both cash crops for export and labour for mines, plantations and settler estates."[477] Taxation on households, which was one of the many colonial policies that necessitated a cash income, was instituted to facilitate the creation of a male, often migrant, wage labour force and encouraged the production of agricultural products such as cocoa, peanuts, cotton and coffee for sale. These changes had a huge impact on the civil relations among the colonised. Firstly, the export oriented economy contributed to a reduction in the status of women as there was a dramatic reduction in their access to resources such as land and labour power and also increased the work load on them.[478]Secondly, there was a breakdown in economic interdependence that existed between men and women in the pre-colonial period. Since the transition to cash crop agriculture targeted and favoured men, especially men at the top of the social hierarchy, it reconstituted the powers of traditional patriarchs and chiefs as it attempted to strengthen the power of those households and chiefs that produced what the British colonialists wanted. All of these drastic changes left women even poorer and in bad shape, been unable to send their children to school, take care of their families, and give them a better living standard; than they were before the white man arrived.

Access to agricultural extension services such as training in new technologies and credits were all directed to LMCS. Meetings between the colonial officials and chiefs were to encourage and urge the locals to adopt the cash crop production and since seeds of cash crops were most times provided free of charge, majority of the men abandoned their subsistence farming which resulted to increased workload for women involved in food production. Unfortunately as it seemed, women came under immense pressure to help in the cash crop production but had no right to

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[477] Lovett, M. 1990. Gender relations, class formation and the colonial state in Africa, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics….p.56

[478] Henn, J. 1984. Women in the rural economy: past, present and future, and Parpart, J. 1988. Women and the state, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics…p.56

share in the proceeds generated.[479] Grier argues that women's labour played an important role in all aspects of cocoa production and added that there was a high intensification in the exploitation of women's labour power in the last decade of the 19th Century.[480]

Thirdly, in a newer version of the pre-colonial practice of pawning (using women as collateral for debts), women were now used as security for loans by their male relations who needed capital to repay debts obtained or to buy land, porters to carry cocoa and as family labour on cocoa and food farms. Very few women were cocoa farmers and traders in their own right, but even here there was collaboration between the chiefs and the colonial officials, through the courts to increase pressure on and control women's labour power through marriage laws.

Fourthly, colonial policies favoured individualisation of property rights that led to changes in the land tenure system. There was limited access to property, especially land by women as colonial policy favoured men who gained land titles, while women lost their rights to customary law. As the value of land increased by the 1930s due to the expansion in cash crop production coupled with developing land shortages, women's access to land became more fragile after World War II. The issue of complete control of land by men came to a head when in the 1950s state-initiated land reform programmes invested land titles in men.[481]

Fifthly, the establishment of European firms like Patterson Zachonis (P.Z), plantations; DELCO mines; the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), as well as large construction works and other enterprises which required a huge labour force, young men from the rural areas poured out into these centers to look for jobs.[482] The labour vacuum created by the migration of men to look for jobs, whose low wages could not even support their households back home, was subsidised by women's unpaid labour in the rural areas, caring for the children, supporting the household etc. But the increasing pressure of taxes inorder to protect the men's right to the land they left behind, decline in soil fertility, the need to maintain a certain level of production and the fragmentation

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[479] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics ….p.56

[480] Op.Cit. Grier, B. 1992. Pawns, potters and petty traders: women in the transition to cash crop agriculture in colonial Ghana, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics ….p.56

[481] Okeyo, A. 1980. Daughters of the lakes and rivers: colonization and the land rights of Luo women, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics ….p.56

[482] Op.Cit. See generally: Allie, Joe A.D. (1990). A New History of Sierra Leone

of landholdings through economic innovation – especially interms of agricultural crops and techniques, forced women to concentrate more on trading activities. The resultant increase in burden on the women that stayed behind resulted to a vast decline in rural family welfare, a situation that forced women to also migrate to these mining centers and urban towns either to join their husbands or to look for something to engage in. But even here, residential rights were only granted to those that had wage employment in the urban areas and the mines, which was restricted only to men. Women were expected to stay back in the rural areas as wage work that was only meant for men, was considered by the colonial administration as temporary rather than a permanent feature. This was because by all intents and purposes Africans were to remain tied to the rural economy as it was envisaged that the continent would not become industrialised or urbanised.[483] Although not welcomed, yet the demand for a stable labour force and the realisation that the presence of women brought greater stability and increased productivity, led to the British reluctant and undeclared acceptance of women in mine compounds on condition that the local employees produced marriage certificates. This condition allowed women to contract marriages with whom they wished, for the sole purpose of staying in the marriage compounds that had land for gardening purposes. Unsatisfactory arrangements were the outcome. Therefore, living conditions for women who made it to the urban or mines centers, especially single ones was miserable, as there was no available wage work and access to economic resources (for the married women) via their husband's wages was very uncertain because men controlled their earnings. Nonetheless, Parpart argues that this movement by women to urban or mine centers was a major source of upward mobility for them.[484] For example, many women got engaged in economic activities such as beer brewing that was initially legal but subsequently outlawed, grew food in gardens they planted and sold them for cash; and some who were often single engaged in prostitution, which, though illegal was encouraged as it was seen to provide useful service and for the safeguard of white women. Under the harsh and difficult circumstances, some women combined selling sexual services with domestic ones. Even here, the unmarried women were constrained as they could not live comfortably without being controlled by men. As Lovett

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[483] Op.Cit. Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics ….p.56

[484] Parpart, J.1986. Class and gender on the Copper belt: women in Northern Rhodesian copper mining communities, 1926-1964, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics…p.56

claims, one way in which "steady relationships were promoted was to deny access to single women to company land for gardening."[485]

Quite apart from the attempt to control women and gender relations by regulating marriage, women's sexuality and mobility, other state policies prevented women from benefiting equally like men from the welfare provision instituted by the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. Prior to the passing of this act, health and educational services were provided mainly by missionaries, which had separate goals for both boys and girls. For girls, it mainly focused on the domestic, intended to make them good mothers and wives of emerging African male elites and it emphasised morality and Christian values. The education for boys was meant to offer them the necessary skills for employment and to gain more adequate instruction on technical and agricultural issues. The limitation placed on the girl education consequently had a negative repercussion on their employment on the wage labour market in the formal economy. Most disheartening was the fact that even where a woman had gained the required Western education and qualified for a similar position that was giving to her male counterpart, the only main occupation that was open to them was teaching, a situation that led to a fight by Nigerian women for employment in the civil service.

The limitations on LWCS by the British colonial policies did not only have negative repercussions on their social statuses, employment, and the wage labour market in the formal economy and their development, but helped to widen the narrow gender gap that existed before their arrival, thus weakening women's ability to contribute meaningfully to their societies. Worst still, even where a woman had gained the required Western education and qualified for a similar position that was giving to her male counterpart, the only main occupation that was open to her was teaching. All of these discriminatory practices did not only lead to separation in families, impoverished women, low leaving family standards but increased poverty, which made money completely incapable of contributing meaningfully to the development and social wellbeing of their children. These conditions worsened even further during the post-independence period that produced a massive youth unemployment and breakdown in the family system, all of which

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[485] Op. Cit. Lovett, M. 1990. Gender relations, class formation and the colonial state in Africa, in Waylen, Georgiana. 1996. Gender in Third World Politics….p.56

added up to trigger the war. These instituted and imbibed in negative gender policies, which gave local men's civil society (LMCS) sweeping powers and control, continued even after independence in 1961. However, the war situation brought about some form of gender awareness and consciousness that has seen some changes in the gender relations and roles that are bound to foster a positive turn around for women if maintained and improved upon by all stakeholders involved in the post-war peacebuilding project in Sierra Leone.

4.4 Local Women and Civil Society in Post-independence Sierra Leone (1961- early 1990s)

At independence in 1961, the history of Sierra Leone had a bright and blooming genesis and was recognised as having one of the representative and accountable political systems in Africa as the literature reveals. However, this bright beginning suddenly began to grow deem with the death of the first Prime Minister Sir Milton Margai, who headed the SLPP government from 1961-1964; and the assumption to power of his younger brother, Sir Albert Margai who ruled from 1964-1967and during whose reign, the young democracy began to record some setbacks. At this time, political interference and manipulations of civil and political liberties through executive intrusions began, that later got worsened during the first leg of the APC party's rule under Siaka Stevens from 1968-1985,[486] to render all active activities of opposition parties redundant and to suffocate civil society. There was no attempt to change the policies which the colonial administration had in place to control and rule the colonised; rather it was reinforced through constitutional manipulations and total control over every aspect of the people's lives. Commenting on the 'Ten Year Plan of Economic and Social Development for Sierra Leone - 1962-1971/72 that was laid out after independence, the Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) policy and the 'Open Door Policy,' instituted under the rule of Sir Milton and Albert Margai; which were meant to encourage the growth of local entrepreneurship that was discouraged by the British and to create a positive impact on development, especially the agricultural sector but failed, Gershon Collier noted that the government's plans were not designed to achieve economic and social equality as one would have expected in a country with an average per capita income of less than $70 in which the elite groups easily had an average per capita income of at least $1500. Instead emphasis was placed "on the perpetuation of a free enterprise system which

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[486] See: Sesay, M. G., Hughes, C. (2005) Go beyond first aid: democracy assistance and the challenges of institution building in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations. 34.

allowed, if not encouraged, the well-off and privilege to become richer, and the poor and under-privileged to struggle as best as they could with little incentive to improve their condition."[487] In like manner, Joe A.D. Alie submits that "the goods produced were selective, as the industrialists catered more to the needs of urban population, thereby reinforcing the existing class regional differences. The mass of the population still tied to the land remained poor."[488] Interestingly, those that were tied to the land were basically women since their roles in the traditional farming system and in taking care of children, logically required them to stay on the land.

Women remained in the same subservient position as conditioned by the British colonial regime; and under Siaka Steven's regime they were merely required to sing his praises and were used as tools to carry out his wishes and policies if they were to receive any favours.

Siaka Stevens regime was not only characterised by repression, corruption, clientelism, ethnicity, co-optation, constitutional manipulations, intimidation or disposal of traditional chiefs and political killings leading to a closure of the political space and predatory politics, the offering of lucrative appointments to influential civil society leaders inorder to keep them quiet but also harassment, thuggery and imprisonment of those leaders, including his own party cronies that refused to be co-opted into submission to his regime or opposed his policies and staged managed coups and treason trails to eliminate opposition such as that in 1974. From 1968 when Steven's came to power, there was room for political opposition or alternative views on national issues and in the words of Joe A.D. Alie"…loyalty to the APC gradually replaced loyalty to the country…. In 1978 all semblance of competitive party politics was eliminated with the introduction of a one party state."[489] However, this did not completely prevent opposition from rearing its head as the 1982 elections, which was marred by violence and intimidation resulted in a guerilla movement, the '*Ndorgborwusui*', by people from Pujehun District in retaliation of what they referred to as "state-sponsored terrorism"[490], but even this also was crushed by the security forces.

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[487] Collier, G. Sierra Leone: *Experiment in Democracy is an African Nation* in Alie, Joe. A.D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Africa Future Publishers, Accra, Ghana.Pp.38-39

[488] Op. Cit. Alie, Joe. A. D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence…p.38

[489] Ibid. p.98

[490] See notes (324) on Ndorgborwusui on page 74

To be able to succeed in having unlimited power in order to effectively execute his dictatorial rule, Siaka Stevens made random changes in the military and police hierarchies at will, but not being satisfied with these changes, he created a special para-military force the 'Internal Security Unit (ISU)' with the assistance of Cuba. The unit was not only better equipped than all the other security apparatus in Sierra Leone but its leadership, the rank and file personnel were all from the north of Sierra Leone, which was his political power base. This force, aided by the APC Youth League, was the most powerful weapon at the disposal of Siaka Stevens that could put down any civil unrest. The ruthless nature of these groups did not only instill fear into the minds of civil society but prevented any opposition or uprising rearing its head against the APC regime. Commenting on how determined Siaka Stevens was to consolidate power and rule with impunity, Joe A.D. Alie, one of Sierra Leone's renowned historian remarked that Siaka Steven's primary goal upon assumption to power in 1968, was to consolidate power, ensure his unlimited grip on power by investing considerable resources in order to assure his regime's survival, not the survival of the state; and in the process, become a typical African "strongman."[491]In the words of Richard Sandbrook, a strongman:

> *Occupies the centre of political life. Front and centre stage, he is the centrifugal force around which all else revolves. Not only the ceremonial head of state, the president is also the chief political, military and cultural figure: head of government, commander-in-chief of the armed forces, head of the governing party (if there is one) and even chancellor of the local university. His aim is typically to identify his person with the "nation."*
> *His is present everywhere: his picture is hung on public walls, billboards, government offices, and even private homes. His portrait also embellishes stamps, coins, paper currency…schools. Hospitals and stadiums are named after him. The state controlled media herald his every word and action, no matter how misguided.[492]*

Siaka Stevens rule which was from 1968-85 left a profound legacy on the country's political landscape and was important if for negative reasons. Alfred Zack Williams referred to it as "the decline of politics and the politics of decline"[493] and in the words of an economist, Victor A.B.

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[491]Alie, Joe. A. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Sierra Leonean Writers Series. African Future Publishers, Binty International Ltd., P.O.Box KA 60125, Accra, Ghana.p.93

[492]Sandbrook, Richard. (1993). The Politics of Africa's Strongman, New York: Cambridge University Press in Alie, Joe. A. 2007. Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Sierra Leonean Writers Series. African Future Publishers, Binty International Ltd., P.O.Box KA 60125, Accra, Ghana.p.93

[493]Zack-Williams, A.B. (1985). "Sierra Leone 1868-85: The Decline of Politics and The Politics of Decline", in A. Jones and P.K. Mitchel (eds). *Sierra Leone Studies: Birmingham*. Pp.202-208

Davies "Siaka Stevens' ethos and survival strategy from 1968-85 damaged growth, entrenched poverty, induced state collapse and civil war, and finally the demise of the APC itself."[494]

Siaka Stevens made extensive use of legislation as a very strong tool to curb the power and influence of the trade unions. Siaka Stevens succeeded in silencing every visible opposition by the 1970s. However, the increasing impacts of his 'discriminatory-exclusionist' rule, coupled with the oil and economic shocks and its accompanied negative consequences of the 1970s, adversely affected every facet of society, especially in and out of school youths; whose parents, most of whom were single mothers, poor and unemployed women, who could not afford to feed, cloth, pay medical or hospital bills, fees and school charges. This worsening state of affairs turned these students, especially those in the University, into a rebellious group who eventually staged the 1977 nation-wide student strike, which was the last potential challenge to Siaka Steven's rule. The muzzling up of everything that was deemed inimical to the aims and aspirations of the Steven's APC hegemonic, autocratic and dictatorial regime, including the 1977 strike, which led to mass killings of innocent civilians by the ISU and the incaseration of many, especially University students, while some of the ring leaders fled abroad specifically to Libya; all produced negative and destructive consequences for the entire nation, which formed the root causes of the civil war that broke-out in 1991[495] that lasted for eleven years.

In 1985, there was a dramatic change, which was regarded as a 'watershed' in the political development of Sierra Leone as power changed hands from the aging Siaka Stevens to his chosen successor, Joseph Saidu Momoh who was by then a career soldier, commander of the military and a nominated Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister.[496]The 'New Order' government of President Momoh did not only inherit a state with serious problems but one that was moribund and incapable of supporting itself as problems left behind by the dictatorial regime of his predecessor were huge. These problems which included huge foreign debt, short supply in foreign exchange and inflation, unemployment, budget deficits, currency devaluation, grand corruption, declining exports, and many more needed urgent attention, a strong and capable

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[494] Davies, Victor. A.B. "War, Poverty and Growth in Sierra Leone", Paper prepared for Centre for the Study of African Economics (CSAE) 5th Annual Conference *Understanding Poverty and Growth in Africa*. St. Catherine's College. Oxford University. March 18-19, 2002. Pp. 1-22

[495] See: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Other-Conflict/TRCVolume1.pdf

[496] Fashole-Luke, David. "Continuity in Sierra Leone from Stevens to Momoh." *Third World Quarterly,* 10, 1.January 1988. pp.67-88

leader with draconian measures to solve. Attempts by the new administration to salvage the country from descending into insolvency, which ranged from the Green Revolution Programme, aimed at improving the agricultural sector; the structural adjustment programme of the World bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); to shady deals such as that involving the rice saga between Seyle Yorfendeh Development Company, the Minister of Finance and Trade and the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB) on one hand and the British company Philip Brothers Limited (PBL). All of these efforts proved futile, due mainly to the inability of the President to firmly control the governance machinery of state. Expressing the ineptness of the President to sail the governance boat successfully, Joe A.D. Alie remarked:

> *[M]omoh was notoriously lax on policy matters and this gave his ministers and public servants a free hand to do as they pleased, with little censorship. The end result was the near-collapse of the state machinery, with its debilitating effects on the people.*[497]

The President, as Joe A.D. Alie opined further, even went a step further to openly curse all those, including his ministers and civil servants who were incapacitating his programmes and making life very difficult for the common people of Sierra Leone,[498] which in itself was a clear demonstration of weakness and lack of control over matters of state. From visible evidence, it was very clear as people believed that it was the Inspector General of Police Bambay Kamara then that was running the country since Momoh took power as president. The bizarre internal situations in Sierra Leone were further worsened by the ripple effects of the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, which were felt all over Africa. There emerged a wave of extensive mobilisation of civil society groups (students and youths, academics and intellectuals, religious leaders, market women, and other professionals) across the African continent calling for democratic change, which saw the demise of dictatorial regimes in most countries. Pressure from the Sierra Leone civil society for the liberalisation of the political system, coupled, *inter alia*, with the inept ability of the President to control affairs, resulted in the setting up of a Constitutional Review Commission in August 1990 that reactivated party politics and paved the way for active opposition groups to take advantage of this power vacuum. Added to these crumbling internal woes for the outbreak of the Sierra Leone rebel war were: the

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[497] Op. Cit. Alie, Joe A.D. (2007). Sierra Leone Since Independence: History of a Post-Colonial State. Sierra Leonean Writers Series…pp.114 – 134
[498] Ibid.p.120

role played by the Libyan leader Colonel Moumah Gadhafi in training Foday and some of the students that were expelled during the 1977 Student Strike and the establishment of the ECOMOG base in Sierra Leone in 1990 to launch an offensive on Liberia in order to oust Charles Taylor from power, a situation that warranted Charles Taylor to vow to teach Sierra Leone the bitterness of war. It therefore came by no surprise that he (Charles Taylor) was the sole supporter of Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) onslaught on Sierra Leone, a man with whom he had had the military training in Gadhafi's Libya. The question though that one would be tempted to ask is why 23rd March 1991 and not earlier or later? Three main reasons were responsible for this as Joe A.D. Alie explains. Firstly, March 23rd was a symbolic day for Foday Sankoh, who as an army corporal, was implicated in a coup in 1967 including many others, tried and jailed. Secondly, as Joe Alie adds, it was probably that Sankoh decided to act because he might have had the fear that the slatted 1992 multi-party elections might be rigged by the APC party as opposition parties had already started crying foul. Lastly, that Sankoh relied heavily on Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Forces of Liberia (NPFL) for their support and therefore could not have chosen any other date before Taylor's onslaught, capture and firm control over Liberia,[499] from whose borders the RUF launched their attack on the Sierra Leonean town of Bomaru.

Different groups of civil society in Sierra Leone are discernible, with substantive records of their activities under the various regimes that have been in power since independence in 1961. But the major focus of this session is whether there was any political will towards encouraging and enhancing the development and participation of civil society, especially women's civil society in the affairs of the state after independence by the various regimes that followed. In addition to those already mentioned, civil society discussion in the nut-shell covers the following regimes that have ruled Sierra Leone at one point or the other: 1961- 1967 SLPP regime under Sir Milton and Albert Margai; the National Redemption Council (NRC) (1967-1968); APC dictatorship under Siaka Stevens (1968-1985), APC democratic rule under Joseph Saidu Momoh (1985-1992); NPRC military regime under Captain Valentine Strasser (1992-1995);SLPP democratic rule under Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (1995 - May 25 1997);AFRC military regime under Johnny Paul Koroma (May1997-1998 February); SLPP democratic rule under Alhaji Ahmed

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[499] Ibid.pp.133-134

Tejan Kabbah (1998 – 2007); and APC democratic rule under Earnest Bai Koroma (2007 to date).

Sierra Leone has in the recent past witnessed immense developments towards a vibrant civil society movement, a process that is often regarded as a rapid transformation from oppression and fear to activism. Civil society movements and their meaningful activities and contributions in the public sphere have long been underway even before the 1990s as earlier mentioned but unfortunately however, both their existence and activities as noted in the CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2006 report on civil society in Sierra Leone; were not coordinated.[500] CSOs such as the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC), the National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUSS), and the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) are among the earliest forms, all of which have at one time or the other played a significant role in the political history of Sierra Leone – i.e. in defense of the interests of its membership. But the most notable among these three for its committed and sustained defense of civil society rights is the NUSS, which remained critical and vocal of the coercive, despotic and maladministration of the APC party from 1968 – 1985 and 1985 – 1992 respectively. Nonetheless, this is not an indictment or gains say that the other two - SLLC and the SLTU, were political.

Available literature on the political history of Sierra Leone from independence to 1990 shows that the "public space necessary for civil society to develop was not only lacking, but also far more restricted."[501] There are allegations of collusion between CSOs and government as some were accused of easily yielding to the demands and dictates of the government of the day and sometimes even compromisingly worked in their favour. Worst still, some CSOs were seen as creatures of certain political regimes that were not only tied to the apron strings of their creator but resultantly lacked the stature, autonomy, credibility, and neutrality required of them. It was ironical to say the least as CSOs who were supposed to protect the interests of their membership and hold public officials accountable, failed to remain resistant; rigid and faithful to the course for which they were created simply because of their individual selfish interests. Judging from

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[500] Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone: "A Critical Time for Civil Society in Sierra Leone". An international action research report coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. p.20
[501] Ibid

these facts, one could therefore deduce that at some point in the socio-economic and political development of Sierra Leone, the contributions of CSOs to the democracy and the exercise of civic rights was minimal if not non-existential. As Chalmers puts it, "civil society movement did not always contribute to strengthening democracy;"[502] and Offe in support of some the above mentioned allegations leveled against the general CS notes that "civil society groups at times cultivate not civil virtues, but to the contrary, collective selfishness, particularism or a moral familism."[503]

The turning point in civil society's activism, especially women's civil society and development in Sierra Leone's political history since independence could be traced back to the early 1990s,when the April 29th 1991 NPRC coup against the APC led government of Joseph Saidu Momoh ushered in the enabling and conducive environment for CS to thrive. In other words, the bloodless coup, which was welcomed and greeted with jubilance by CS; served as an eye opener to civil society's as it accomplished their (CS) long ignored and overdue role to democratically change the despotic APC rule.

The 1992 coup could be seen as a two edged sword to the liberation of civil society. Firstly, it set civil society free from prison that it was since the adoption of the APC one party rule by Siaka P Stevens in 1978. Moore importantly, it deepened civil society's awareness of its roles that they boldly resisted the attempt by the very NPRC government to topple the democratic will of civil society to have elections before peace in 1995; during Bintumani I and II conferences that were presided over by woman - Shirley Gbujama. At this point, civil society, and especially LWCS held firm unto their democratic right and in unity won the day as the elections of 1996 were held amidst both military and rebel security threats; and the smooth transition from military to civilian and constitutional democratic rule was fore stalled. The surmounting of this test from the NPRC and the rebels that was championed by LWCSOs was not only an announcement of the civil society 'renaissance' but was also a clear demonstration of civil society's willingness and

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[502] Ibid.

[503] Jean Grugel, et al. Democracy without Borders. Reutledge: London, 1999 in Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone: "A Critical Time for Civil Society in Sierra Leone." An international action research report coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. p.20

determination never to relent again but to continually stand for the democratic values and rights of its members in Sierra Leone.

It is important though to mention at this point, that "civil society was not completely voiceless on the anti-democratic policies pursued by previous administrations in Sierra Leone. However, it lacked coordination, independence, credibility and neutrality and its activities did not affect significantly, the socio-economic and political spheres of the country, until comparatively recently."[504] Philosophically however, some scholars and commentators are of the opinion that the various activities of civil society; such as that of NUSS against the tyrannic rule of the APC from mid 1960s upwards served as foundation blocks for civil society's bravery and fearlessness that unfolded in the 1990s.

Secondly, civil society's challenge, resistance and triumph (supported by the international community) over the 1992 NPRC military regime that dismantled the powerful APC dictatorial and coercive machinery; and that of the AFRC military junta that overthrew the democratically elected SLPP led government of Ahmed Tejan Kabba in 1997 and attempted to remain in power, is evidence of civil society's resurgence to civic power. All sectors of CS - the students, the Inter-religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), the SLC including the SLTU, and the general populace vehemently and persistently rejected this move, which finally saw the restoration of constitutional and democratic rule of Ahmed Tejan Kabba in 1998. It is disheartening however, that between June-July 1999 when negotiations for the signing of the historic Lome Accord of 1999 that ended the war were going on; LWCSOs were only granted an informal or observer status although their presence was deeply felt as they relentlessly played a key role by vigorously campaigning the mediators at the corridors and behind the scenes for peace. Whether this proven determination will be maintained and sustained without compromise, is for posterity to judge with time.

Since the signing of the Lome Agreement, civil society and particularly LWCSOs have remained vigilant in ensuring its strict adherence by the conflict parties – Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. On May 6, 2000 LWCSOs manifested this renewed commitment by demonstrating

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[504] Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone: "A Critical Time for Civil Society in Sierra Leone". An international action research report coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. 2006. p.21

against a breach by the RUF rebel leader outside his residence; demanding the release of five hundred (500) UN Peacekeeping troops abducted by his RUF rebels in Kailahun. "This was followed by another demonstration two days later organised by civil society groups and members of Parliament, outside the residence of RUF Leader, making the same demands as the previous demonstration. While the first ended without an incidence, the latter on the 8th May ended in tragedy for the people and the nation as the rebels stationed at Foday Sankoh's (former rebel leader) house shot at the crowd of demonstrators killing about twenty of them."[505]

4.5 Contemporary Women's Civil Society During and After the Rebel War in Sierra Leone (1991 – 2011)

Women's involvement in peacebuilding is as old as their experience with violence.[506] The spread of colonialism and the state system around the world overshadowed inter alia, women's roles in leading and building peace in their communities.

As stated in the TRC report cited above, it is clear that women have been greatly marginalised in pre-war Sierra Leone. In a broader perspective, gender relations in Sierra Leone have always been skewed and still remain extremely unequal as majority of Sierra Leonean women face a high level of exclusion, violence and poverty.[507] The inequalities are mainly as a result of the prevailing patriarchal, cultural and religious values and practices in the country, especially in the north where it is particularly strong. These values dictate, baring women's participation in public life or speaking in public and "should always be at the back".[508] Although the rate of illiteracy, morbidity and mortality were and are still very high amongst women, but worse still was their exclusion from political life and economic empowerment leading to improvement in their standard of living. Nevertheless, in the midst of all the odds carefully orchestrated against these women folk, the nation of Sierra Leone has a long history of women's associations and activism, which was mainly fueled by the negative vices of the colonial administration as vividly discussed in the second and fourth chapters. These new movements (as mentioned above) that sprang up

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[505] Op. Cit. Campaign for Good Governance and Christian Aid-Sierra Leone. CIVICUS Civil Society Report for the Republic of Sierra Leone.. p.21

[506] Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women. WANEP-From the Field 3rd Edition. p. 1 (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/107/tp_women_in_peacebuilding.pdf. Sourced: 26/03/2011

[507] Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone. 83 Working Paper, June 2009. FRIDE, Madrid-SPAIN.p.3 (Available at: http://www.fride.org)

[508] Ibid.

were particularly aimed at changing this unfavourable landscape and to make life better for the women. Among the earlier forms of the country wide women's association was: the Sierra Leone Women's Movement formed in 1951. Some of the notable women activists during the 1940s, 50s and 60s were: Constance Cummings John, Ella Koblo Gulama and Nancy Steele.[509] Unfortunately as it seemed, the relentless efforts of these associations did not have much impact as there was not much improvement in the statuses of the women in general. These conditions were further worsened by the civil war of the 1990s.

However, as early as the mid-1990s, some women began to recognise this loss, which gingered the organisation of women's networks inorder to rekindle their dreams and or reinstitute their work for peace and "for changing the patterns of relationships between men and women that marginalised/ excluded women from leadership roles in their communities."[510]

The emergence of newer forms of women's civil society associations (discussed below) and activism in Sierra Leone therefore coincided with the eruption of the eleven year rebel war[511]that posed many governance and development challenges that women faced, which they were poised to address. The United Nation's Fourth World Conference of 1995 held in Beijing, China on women created the impetus and a new insight, leading to conversations among women engaged in civil society around the world. According to Lisa and Manjrika (2005) "women who attended the conference were said to be "Beijinged"[512] – meaning their perspectives changed as they returned home with a new sense of empowerment and began to articulate the numerous challenges women face around the world in a bid to advocate for women's rights in the global and national policies and legislations. The new associations that sprang up at this time in Sierra Leone, which are discussed in detail below, were the major players in bringing an end to the war, and returning the country to democratic civilian governance. Since their formation, these associations of women have also been active in efforts at improving women's access to basic

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[509] Africa Region External Affairs Unit-AFREX, 2007: 10. p.13

[510] Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women. WANEP-From the Field 3rd Edition. p. 1 (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/attachments/article/107/tp_women_in_peacebuilding.pdf. Sourced: 26/03/2011

[511] Op. Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone…p.16

[512] Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika, Sewak. The Role of Women in Peacebuilding. European Centre for Conflict Prevention. January, 2005.p.1 (Available at: http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Resources/GPPAC%20Issue%20papers/The%20Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peacebuilding.pdf)

services and advocating for greater participation in the country's political and economic governance.[513] These associations whose works are geared towards gender equity, political inclusion and the empowerment of women in the country include the 50/50 Group, the Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE); and the Sierra Leone Women's Forum and many more.

The end of the war therefore, ushered in some positive changes in the dogmatic social attitudes on women's engagement in public and civic roles following the growing awareness raising activities and campaigns for women's participation in all governance and development processes as is part of their rights. This huge and positive shift was made possible largely by the relentless "sensitisation" efforts of LWCSOs at national and local levels,[514] which were positively gingered up by the irresistible wind from the international arena. Nevertheless, the extent of this change is debatable, with some people nurturing the view that it is just rhetoric but that in practice male leaders still continue to exclude women, while others claim that indeed attitudes and practices are changing even in most of the provincial areas of society where tradition was of paramount importance. Women claim they can now speak out in a relatively freer way than they could before, even though pockets of resistance and harassment still exists from customary authorities against their involvement in more public roles, who sees it all as against the traditions of practice.[515]

A number of land mark incidences were key to the dramatic change in the history of women's public participation around the world at large and particularly in Sierra Leone – i.e. The UN sponsored 1995 Beijing Conference on women and the adverse effects of the eleven year war on women. In the 1990s some women began to recognise the remarkable loss of their traditional roles of "leading and building peace in their communities"[516] that the colonial administration had caused them and therefore began to organize networks of women to work for changing these

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[513] Op. Cit. AFREX, 2007: 10. p.13

[514] Ibid – In Sierra Leone "Sensitisation" is generally used to refer to a range of activities carried out by CSOs in communities which are aimed at changing attitudes and practices, including training, advocacy, information provision, awareness raising and advocating on behalf of individual citizens.

[515] Interview with some civil society women in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone. December 28, 2009. 4:30pm.

[516] Op.Cit. Schirch, Lisa and Manjrika Sewak. Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict: An integrated programme of research, discussion and network -building issue paper on The Role of women in Peacebuilding. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). 2005.p.1

skewed patterns of relationships between them and men. The United Nations Fourth World Conference on women held in Beijing - China in became an eye opener to the public arena for majority of women around the world. In the early years following Beijing therefore, "a powerful and expanding network of women began to strategize and articulate a global agenda for including women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding."[517]

Secondly, women's encounter and experience of conflict, coupled with their roles in various peacebuilding ventures mobilised them for a firm grip on public life that helped shape the post-conflict agenda for the women's movement. There was a very high level of violence and violent crimes committed against women during the conflict, which positively pricked and influenced their thoughts into demanding for greater rights following the end of conflict. More importantly also, the displacement and social upheaval caused by the conflict created new roles for women, many of whom assumed the painstaking role of household heads; while others became practically involved in local governance in the absence of men.[518] This is not in any way suggesting that women were not initially involved in governance or public life but that it was on a small scale as the conducive or the enabling environment that existed before the war was minimal. For the Rural women, their displacement to Freetown offered them the opportunity to witness, on first hand, the relative autonomy and power of women in the capital, which was an inspiration that made them aware of the possibility of more equal gender relations.

4.6 Conclusion

The peace activism discussed above marks the first time that Sierra Leonean women had come together"...as such a large political force to take such a prominent role in public life, and this experience gave women the empowerment, capacity and influence to carve out more political space for themselves in politics following the end of the war."[519] In other words, the effects of war on the general populace however, ignited the desire and determination of local women civil society that never again will they be quiet about issues that affects their lives. Hence, the genesis of active civil society involvement in helping to bring the war to an end. Implicitly therefore, it was women's experience of conflict and role in peacebuilding that mobilised them into political

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[517] Op.Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone.p.3
[518] Ibid.p.4
[519] Op.Cit. Castillejo, Clare. Women's political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone.p.4

action on an unprecedented scale, opened space for women to have a greater role in public life, and shaped the post conflict agenda for the women's movement.[520] Although still not very strong, nonetheless Castillejo (2009) reiterates their importance and potential to reach the unreachable by saying:

> *Sierra Leone has a weak but growing civil society which has developed significantly following the war. This includes a wide variety of organisations that work on gender equality issues as part of a broader mandate, as well as a range of women's civil society organisations at national and local level. Civil society organisations play an important role in public life in Sierra Leone and often have more capacity, profile and impact than formal state institutions, especially at local level where state penetration and capacity is limited.*[521]

However, ten years after the end of war, some commentators are of the opinion that following the immediate post-conflict phase, gender issues are no longer at the top of the national agenda as they have now dropped off significantly and that women have not gained the political space that they had hoped for, which has consequently stalled the momentum of activism of LWCSOs in Sierra Leone.[522] Although this is debatable depending on which angle one examines it, this study strongly believes, based on developments and evidence, that LWCSOs, particularly the case study groups are ever more enthusiastic and determined to consolidate their gains and to continue their quest and contribution to making Sierra Leone a better and peaceful country.

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[520] Ibid.p.3

[521] Ibid.

[522] Abdullah, Hussainatu. *Challenges for women's citizenship in fragile states*, in Castillejo, Clare. Seminar: Strengthening Women's Citizenship in the Context of State building. 07 Conference Report, January 2009. FRIDE, Madrid-SPAIN.p.2 (Available at: http://www.fride.org).

CHAPTER FIVE
THE LEGAL SYSTEM, LWCS AND THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SIERRA LEONE:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE STATUSES OF WOMEN

Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with a clear picture of the reasons that led to the sharp rise of LWCSOs activism in the new Sierra Leone and the wave of current issues relating to the rule of law, and more especially to highlight some of the obstacles that LWCSOs face in the different sectors of society that may directly or otherwise hamper their current engagement in the peacebuilding process.

The legal system in Sierra Leone consists of three distinct sets of laws, meant to guarantee and uphold the rights of its citizens. These include: The general law, customary law and Islamic law. The Judiciary sector is headed by the Chief Justice (appointed by the President) and is comprised of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court and the Magistrate Court.[523] But for the purpose of this study, we focused on the direct relationship between these laws and the rights of local women in Sierra Leone. The 1991 Constitution provides for the respect and protection of the basic human rights and freedoms of individuals and its citizens as clearly stated in chapter three. Section 15 clearly addresses issues of rights, liberty and security of person, the enjoyment of property and the protection of the law as well as protection from deprivation of property without compensation regardless of sex (male or female).[524] However, this provision is weakened by the exceptions contained in section 27 (4) regarding issues of marriage, burial, sharing and distribution of property upon death, local traditions and adoption is supportive of discrimination practices against women in these said areas.[525]

5.1 The General Law

The general law comprises of the statutory (codified) and the common law (based on case law), which are all based on and rooted in the United Kingdom's common law. The High Court of

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[523] Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.6

[524] The Constitution of Sierra Leone. (1991). Chapter 111 – The recognition and Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedom of the Individual Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Extraordinary. Act No. 6 of 1991. Vol. CXX11, No.59. 25th September, 1991.Pp.7-29 Available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf

[525] Op.Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.9

Sierra Leone listens to high profile cases whilst the Magistrate Courts listen to lesser cases. There is also the Appeal and Supreme Courts (in the capital Freetown) that mainly deal with appeal cases relating to constitutional interpretation. The High Courts and Magistrate Courts also exist in the provincial towns such as Bo, Kenema and Port Loko. But access to these courts in the provinces especially by women is not only limited by their minimal numbers but also the lack of money (by women) to pay the lawyer's fee or even transport fare to these provincial towns where the courts sit for redress. More importantly also the protection it provides for women is very minimal since the laws are outdated colonial laws.[526]

5.2 Customary Law

Customary law is clearly defined by the 1991 constitution as "the rules of law by which customs are applicable to particular communities in Sierra Leone".[527] The Constitution is justified in its general treatment of the customary law, as there are many fundamental similarities between the customary laws of the sixteen tribes. Customary law is unwritten and therefore only applies to local courts in the provinces, presided over by a Court Chairmen assisted by chiefdom councilors who are very knowledgeable in customary law. Customary law governs sixty-five percent of the country's total population in relation to issues not reserved by statute to the magistrate's courts or High Court. Although customary law is not applicable in the formal court system, yet there exists the right of appeal to the District Appeal Court where a Magistrate sits with two knowledgeable councilors in customary law from their respective areas as advisers, but the Magistrate decides. The same process goes on when a case is appealed to the High court.[528]

5.3 Islamic Law

Sierra Leone does not practice Sharia law as seen in other countries. However, Islamic law is recognised by statute and applied in relation to marriage, divorce, and inheritance among Muslims. In this context therefore, Islamic law is treated as customary law except when referring

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[526] Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/en/node/12376/section/6) Sourced: 7/4/2011.

[527] The Constitution of Sierra Leone (1991). Chapter X11 – The Laws of Sierra Leone. Section 170 (3).p.108. (Available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf) Sourced: 24/3/2011

[528] Section 31 (1) of the 1963 Local Courts Acts.

to specific issues dealt with by the Mohammedan Marriage Act.[529]Islamic law grants more rights to men than women when it comes to issues dealing with the above three mentioned categories. These issues are further discussed in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. Cases involving Islamic law are also heard by the local courts but criminal Sharia law is not applicable in Sierra Leone.

5.4 Contemporary Statuses of Women in Sierra Leone

In theory, the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone grants equal rights to both men and women, which is one of the "fundamental principle of state policy", which states that the state "[s]hall discourage discrimination on the grounds of origin, circumstances of birth, sex, religion…"[530] The equal rights of women are also underscored in the chapter on human rights in the constitution.[531] But unfortunately however, although Sierra Leone has signed and ratified CEDAW, yet section 27 of the constitution, permits discrimination against women in relation to issues dealing with "adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, and devolution of property upon death of husband or other interests of personal law,"[532] which have direct bearing on the rights of women as well as customary law. This contradiction has not only contributed immensely to the low status and limited rights of women in Sierra Leone but also legitimises the application of discriminatory attitudes under customary law. For example a woman can only refuse to have sexual intercourse with her husband if she is on her menses, physically ill or suckling a young child or during daytime, in the bush or during Ramadan. Worst still, customary and Islamic laws continue to be widely applied, notwithstanding the provision in the constitution that the general

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[529] The Mohammedan marriage Act (Cap. 96 of the revised laws of Sierra Leone, 1960) deals with marriage, divorce and intestate succession. Joko Smart. *Sierra Leone Customary law*.p.20. Intestate succession occurs when deceased did leave a will.

[530] The Constitution of Sierra Leone (1961). Chapter 11- Fundamental Principles of State Policy. Section 6. See: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf Under Section 8 (2) (a), "… [e] very citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law…." and specific safeguards of equality before the law in terms of health care, employment and education are provided under Section 8 (3) (d); Section 8 (3) (a), (c), (e) and Section 9 (1) (a), (b) and (2) respectively.

[531] Ibid. Chapter 111 – The Recognition and Protection of Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms of the Individual. Section 15.p.7 See :http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf.

[532] Ibid. Section 27. Subsection 27 (1) provides that "Subject to the provisions of subsections (4), (5), and (7), no law shall make provision which is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect." Under Subsection4,however, the protection provided under Subsection 1 does not apply "… (d) with respect to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other interests of personal law, or (e) for the application in the case of members of a particular race or tribe or customary law with respect to any matter to the exclusion of any law with respect to that matter which is applicable in the case of other persons." Discrimination is also permitted against persons who are not citizens of Sierra Leone or naturalized Sierra Leoneans. According to Dr. Tucker, former Chairperson of President's Kabbah's Advisory Committee, the original intent of Section 27 was "to preserve certain areas of segregation which are embedded in traditional practices and are generally acceptable to both sexes, such as the segregation between male and female secret societies. What was taken up in the constitution was more extensive than what was intended." Human Rights Watch interview with Dr. Tucker (Consultant on the Law Development Program funded by the U.K.'s Department for International Development (DFID), Freetown, April 25, 2002. (See footnote: "We will Kill You"…p.24)

law should take precedence over the customary law when the customary law is "repugnant to the statute or natural justice, equality and good conscience."[533]

5.4.1 Domestic and Sexual Violence against Women

Domestic violence is a big problem in Sierra Leone. But more surprisingly, the general attitude towards domestic violence is a clear indication of the low status of women. Physical violence against women and children is commonplace in Sierra Leone. According to reports by the Lawyers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA), 67 percent of the urban women interviewed about SGBV violence admitted to have been beaten and 50 percent reported being forced to have sexual intercourse.[534] Customary law, which also includes Islamic law, allows the husband to "reasonably chastise his wife by physical force"[535] if and when it becomes necessary. It only becomes unaccepted if done persistently cruel or beats her to an extent that bodily harm is afflicted. This gives her the right to divorce the husband if she opted. Although the police have in the recent past, created a Family Support Unit (FSU) to deal with such issues, yet the provincial and remote areas do not only have these facilities but are also far removed from urban centers where these facilities exist.

A survey conducted by Physicians for Human Rights into the war related sexual-violence revealed that although 80 percent of the women interviewed believed that there should be legal protection for women's rights, yet 60 percent said that a husband had the right to beat his wife.[536] In a separate report prepared by Amr Abdalla et al in March 2002 for the Talking Drum Studio (TDS), a local NGO working on human rights and HIV/Aids in Sierra Leone, it was noted that although 94.9 percent of the respondents perceived violence against women to be a violation of their human rights, 92.0 percent perceived it to be a violation under the law, yet a fewer number 29.6 percent considered it to be a violation of the tradition, hence its prevalence in the Sierra Leone society.[537]

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[533] Section 2 of the 1963 Local Courts Act and section 76 of the 1965 courts Act.

[534] Op. Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights….p.7

[535] Op. Cit. Smart, Joko, Sierra Leone Family Customary Law. p. 152

[536] Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. p.26 (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/en/node/12376/section/6) Sourced: 7/3/2011.

[537] Abdalla, Amr et al. (March 2002). *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone.* Talking Drum Studio - Search for Common Ground. Freetown. Sierra Leone. p. 17

The incidence of rape and other sexual abuse is also on the increase after the war. This increase is as result of the prevalence of poverty among the victims and their families that most often leads to an out court settlement, i.e. payment of an agreed amount of money by the perpetrator.[538] Other such problems that may hamper the investigation of this crime include, social stigma and negative effects – the fear of rejection by society; and also the lack of medical evidence, especially in very remote parts required for the prosecution of such offenses.[539]

5.4.2 Women, Marriage/ Divorce and Death of Husbands

The 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone contains series of discriminatory laws relating to the above mentioned issues. Section 7 of the Christian Marriage Act states that if a party to a marriage is under 21 years the consent of the father must be obtained and only if the father is dead can the consent of the mother be obtained. This section prevents women from enjoying equal authority and guardianship over their children.

In another vein, customary/ Islamic law in theory allows a woman or a man to bring divorce proceedings either extra judicially or judicially before a court of law. In practice however, women are not as free as men to do so.[540] In other words men can sue for repudiation on unilateral grounds where as women married under customary/ Islamic law may file for dissolution of marriage, for example only on grounds of impotence of the husband. In the same light Customary law demands a refund of the husband's dowry paid during the marriage upon divorce by the family of the bride. At the death of the husband, the general law requires the wife to go through a period of mourning accompanied by rituals. This process declares a widow purified to remarry but the children born to this marriage are placed in the hands of the head of the deceased family. However, Islamic law allows the mother to care for a male child on to age nine and the girl child until she becomes of age.[541] Under matrimonial property law, a woman is only allowed to keep her own possessions and those acquired with her own money in the event

See also: Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.8

[538] Op.Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA)….p.8

[539] Ibid.

[540] Op. Cit. Joko Smart, *Sierra Leone Customary Family Law*, pp. 106-7. Full maintenance of his wife is only the responsibility of the husband during the rainy season (approximately between the months of May and November) or when his wife is sick or nursing a baby. -

[541] Op Cit. Human Rights Watch (Jan. 2003). "We will kill You if…" p. 24

of a divorce or death of husband but not property jointly acquired. In most cases, it is either the eldest son of the deceased, his elder brother or the male administrator of the family that inherits the property. But under the general law, one third of the property is giving to the wife if he does not leave a will. These harmful practices have become a serious menace, as more and more war widows who lost everything in the war and have returned to their villages do not have access to land.[542]

5.4.3 Traditional Practices and Abuse of Women's Human Rights

Defining Tradition

A tradition in general is a memorised and preserved story, custom or practice that is handed down orally as legacy from generation to generation, which originally needed no documentation. Some examples of traditions are: use of the Christmas tree to celebrate Christmas, celebrating the birth of Christ by Christians, the Muslim Hajj to Mecca, the Royal Family tradition in England, the institution of Paramount Chieftaincy (called traditional rulers) in Sierra Leone, the Messianic Lodge and many others.

Some traditions are often deliberately invented for one reason or the other whilst others undergo changes in order to suit the needs of the day and these changes are immediately accepted as part the ancient or original version. Some traditions contribute to development of society - for example Music, paintings, Artistry, use of proverbs and folk tales whilst some produce negatively results (e.g. FGM, forced marriages, early pregnancy, dowry price, female infanticide etc. according to human right standards.

Interestingly however, although bad traditions are prevalent in provincial settings in Sierra Leone, yet as people move to urban centers or become more knowledgeable about their rights, they tend to ignore these harmful traditions. But despite their harmful nature and their violation of international human rights and laws, these practices persist because they are not questioned and

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[542] Physicians for Human Rights, *War-related Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone: A Population-based Assessment* (Boston: Physicians for Human rights, 2002). p. 55

therefore take on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them.[543]Below are some of the harmful traditions practiced in Sierra Leone that violates the rights of women.

5.4.4 Early/ Forced Marriage

One important traditional practice that often contributes to the abuse of women's and girl's right is early/forced marriage. This practice is a common phenomenon especially in the provinces of Sierra Leone where a man sponsors a girl from her childhood (paying school fees, buying clothes, etc.), allowing her time enough to be of age for the traditional right of initiation. The initiation process in general signals her maturity, which automatically qualifies her for marriage no matter the age (usually below age eighteen which is the age of maturity), thus bringing her schooling to an abrupt halt. According to the 2009 UN Country Team Report on Sierra Leone titled "Supporting Sierra Leone: A Joint Vision of the United Nation's Family," 62 percent of girls are married before age 18.[544]Early/forced marriages have resulted to 2,100 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births,[545] making Sierra Leone's maternal death rate one of the highest in the world. The main reason for high death rate is the lack of access to antenatal care caused by the destruction of health care centers during the war. As LAWCLA puts it "only 68 percent of pregnant women receive antenatal care from skilled personnel and 42 percent deliver under the care of trained nurses and doctors."[546] Although this practice is seen as inimical to the health of women as expressed by the figures below, yet it is still practiced in the provincial suburbs of Sierra Leone. For example reports of a research conducted by Amr Abdalla et al for the Talking Drums Studio-Sierra Leone, 94.6 percent of the respondents said that early forced marriage was a violation of their human rights and 87.6 percent said it was a violation according to law, 60.1 percent of respondents said it was a violation according to tradition and a small number 38.3 percent said it was not. However, it is prevalent as it is 67 percent in the traditional settings as the report shows. This further explains and strengthens the view mentioned earlier that parents do this merely because of poverty.

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[543] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "*Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children".* Fact sheet No. 23. (Available at: *http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs23.htm).* Sourced: 23/3/2011

[544] United Nation Integrated Peacebuilding Office – United Nations Country Team. Joint vision for Sierra Leone of the United Nations' Family. Freetown. 30 May, 2009. p.5 (Available at: http://mdtf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SL100). Sourced: 11/12/2009

[545] UNDP .(2010). Explanation Notes on 2010 HDR Composite Indices: Sierra Leone. p.6 (Available at: http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SLE.pdf

[546] Op.Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.7

5.4.5 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Traditional initiation into secret societies as a rite of passage for both boys and girls from adolescence to adulthood is common in Sierra Leone especially in the provinces. This initiation rites take place in a secret location known as the bondo bush, where these young girls are circumcised and taught various traditional practices such as dancing, singing, use of local herbs, how to respect elders, and also being a good wife (cooking, cleaning, child care, fishing, hygiene etc.) by the older folks. However, FGM has and continues to cause serious pain and health care problems (injury to the urethra tissues, hemorrhage, shock, acute urine retention, and infection) for many of the ninety percent of the Sierra Leonean women that have undergone it.[547] The 2009 UN Country Team Report on Sierra Leone mentioned above estimates show that 94 percent of women aged 15-49 have undergone female genital cutting.[548] In a research report by Amr Abdalla et al that was prepared for the TDS-Sierra Leone, few respondents (38.5 percent) said FGM was a violation of their human rights and 55.6 percent said it was not.[549] Only 14.3 percent of the respondents admitted that it was a violation of traditions and 40.9 percent perceived it to be a violation of the law. The greater majority (81.1 percent) clearly admitted that it was not a violation of tradition, which clearly shows that this practice is widely accepted especially in the traditional settings of Sierra Leone as was mentioned earlier.

5.5 Women and Contemporary Issues in Sierra Leone

Quite apart from the structural discrimination against women in terms of laws and the low status accorded them in general by customs and traditions (e.g. mandating them to be respectful to their older male folks etc.), there is also substantial practical discrimination against them in various sectors of society. Below are discussed some of these.

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[547] Bah, Khadija A. *Rural Women and Girls in the war in Sierra Leone.* Conciliation Resources. United Kingdom. p.1 (Available at: http://www.c-r.org/pubs/occ_papers/khadija.shtml). Sourced: 15/5/2010).

[548] Op.Cit. United Nation Integrated Peacebuilding Office – United Nations Country Team. Joint vision for Sierra Leone….p.5 (Available at: http://mdtf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SL100). Sourced: 11/12/2009

[549] Op. Cit. Abdalla, Amr et al. (March 2002). *Human Rights and HIV/AIDS in Sierra Leone.* Talking Drum Studio - Search for Common Ground. Freetown. Sierra Leone. p. 17

5.5.1 In the Field of Education

Discrimination against girls begins at the very young age when parents with limited resources would have to determine who goes to school among their children (both boys and girls). Normally it is the boy child that is given the opportunity. According to reports by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Gender Related Index, women and girls in Sierra Leone account for 21 percent of the combined gross enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions as against 32 percent of males.[550] This is complimented in a report on the literacy rate of persons above the age fifteen, which is 20 percent for females as against 40 percent for males.[551] Siaka Koroma in his study to determine the factors that affect women's enrolment and attendance of schools in rural communities in Sierra Leone in 1993, reported that national enrolment ratio (ER) is 39.7 percent for all persons aged five and over, but only 24.6 percent for rural areas. For girls, the national ER is 36.5 percent, but only 20.6 percent for girls in rural areas.[552]The UN's Country Team Report of 2009 on Sierra Leone states that over 65 percent of women have no-education.[553] There is therefore a high level of illiteracy among women, which could be explained by the needed labour of the girl child at an early age in assisting the mother in the home since the mother is required to take care of the household and children and to do farm work. Early/ forced marriage could also be another contributing factor to high illiteracy rate among women in Sierra Leone. In recent years, this trend has significantly changed as the government of Sierra Leone took a transformative action in 2002 by offering free education to the girl child at the primary school level. However, major barriers still remain such as:

i) Poverty, which still forces girls to work and raise some money to supplement for the family income and also take care of younger siblings, especially during deaths or abandonment by parents such as was very evident during the civil war.

ii) A low level of family literacy.

iii) Cultural practices, such as child marriage, and girls' perceived role as a good wife and mother as mentioned earlier.

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[550] UNDP *Human Development Report 2001*.p. 213.

[551] Government of Sierra Leone. (2000). *The Status of women in Sierra Leone: Household Survey Report   (MICS-2).* Freetown. p. 30.

[552] Op. Cit. Bah, Khadija A. *Rural Women and Girls in the war in Sierra Leone.* Conciliation Resources... p.1

[553] Op.Cit. United Nation Integrated Peacebuilding Office – United Nations Country Team. Joint vision for Sierra Leone….p.5
(Available at: http://mdtf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/SL100). Sourced: 11/12/2009

iv)Costs of education to parents, both actual fees and opportunity costs.

Although there has been a significant leap in the primary education of the girl child that has narrowed the gender education gap, yet there are remaining gender gaps in the basic, secondary and tertiary education. It is no doubt that the Government of Sierra Leone has shown a considerable amount of commitment to gender equality by creating the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA). However, there is need for more efforts to increase the enrolment and retention of girls and to influence positive attitudes on the importance of education for women.

5.5.2 In the Offices and Places of Work

Although Sierra Leone is signatory to many labor conventions and has also eliminated some discriminatory practices such as granting maternity leave only to married women, a norm that was observed in the 1970s; yet some sections of the employment ordinance and the poor working conditions are still a menace to the majority of workers, especially women. The employers and employed ordinance of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, in its attempt to protect women from working in the mines (section 47) and not to work at night (section 48); denies women the access to employment opportunities that are available to men.[554] Equally so women who work for or with men on the same jobs face tremendous sexual harassment and discrimination, which is against the laid down 'policy of the government.' Article 11 of CEDAW addresses the issue of employment and therefore requests states parties to the convention to take all measures to do away with bias against women in employment circles inorder that equality between men and women is ensured.[555] This means that the Labor Congress and the Trade Union Federation, especially in the provinces where 80 percent of the labor force involved in the subsistence production of 70 percent of the nation's staple food rice,[556] is provided by women; needs to live up to their responsibility to protect the interest of their workers. The labor provided by these women in the agricultural sector is never remunerated in cash, which leaves them hopeless. Worst still, women do not have equal access to agricultural technology as their male counterparts

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[554] Op.Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.16

[555] CEDAW (1979) (Available at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article11 Sourced: 24/3/2011

[556] Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. (2000). *National Policy on the Advancement of Women.* Freetown. Government of Sierra Leone. p. 7

and are denied private ownership of the land since land is a communal or family property.[557] These unfair conditions, coupled also with the takeover of what was earlier regarded in Sierra Leone as "feminine" jobs (e.g. secretarial duties, cleaning, nursing and many more) by men have forced women's reliance on the traditional source of income - small loans from rotated savings (locally known as Osusu) to operate petty businesses. Because of the small number of well-educated women, very few of them are in professional and managerial jobs. In the formal employment sector, women constitute only 40 percent of the clerical staff and 8 percent of the administrative and managerial staff.[558]

According to the UNDP Human Development Index Report (HDR) for 2005, the estimated female earned income in US dollars for Sierra Leone is three hundred and twenty five (325), ranked 154 in the world.[559] These factors coupled with traditional practices and the breakdown of values in the society caused by the war has left women more vulnerable and prone to sexual violence and exploitation (prostitution) in Sierra Leone. There has been a tremendous improvement though, based on the UNDP Human Development Report (2010), where female participation in the labour market has risen to 67 percent compared to 68 per cent for men.[560] This increase has had no significant impact on the income levels as women remain at the bottom of the poverty ladder in Sierra Leone - being the poorest of the poor.

5.5.3 In National Politics

During the pre-colonial and colonial times, women were not active participants in the local politics of Sierra Leone until independence in 1961.[561] They did not contest or vote in elections. However, after independence, women were accorded the political decision making right to vote and to be voted for. But considering their dependence on men economically makes the situation very awkward for them to sponsor campaigns. In traditional governance, majority of the officials

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[557] Op. Cit. Human Rights Watch (Jan. 2003). "We will kill You if…" p. 28

[558] Human Rights Watch (Jan. 2003). "We will kill You if…" p. 28

[559] UNDP Program. (2005). Sierra Leone Human Development Index. (http://www.sl.undp.org/hd_index.html). Sourced: 15/3/2010.

[560] UNDP (2010). Explanation Notes on 2010 HDR Composite Indices: Sierra Leone.p.6 (Available at: http://hdrstats.undp.org/images/explanations/SLE.pdf

[561] Op.Cit. Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone. p.29 (Available at: http://www.hrw.org/en/node/12376/section/6)Sourced: 7/3/2011.

in structures such as community development committees, Paramount Chiefs and District Officers, are in most cases males[562] - except for the position of Mammy Queens.[563]

Sierra Leone has a three layer governance mechanism or divisions: the formal national government in the form of elected parliament and president, formal local government, which is made up of district councils located at district headquarters and ward committees at community level; and chiefdom structures that operate at the local level and are semi-regulated through national legislation. National politics in Sierra Leone is dominated by two parties (SLPP and APC) with strong regional basis, with both of then heavily relying on the support of the populations in these stronghold – although not entirely as some traditional members of one party can switch support to the other as we saw it happen in 1996 and 2007 elections.

In the 2002 general elections (the first post war) that used a proportional representation system, taking into account the fact that people were displaced as a result of the war, 18 women were elected to parliament out of a total of 124 members of parliament (MPs). But in the 2007 elections, the number of women parliamentarians dropped because the country returned to its traditional majoritarian system. This caused the selection of few women candidates, as the political party leadership was concerned that the electorates would not vote for them.[564]

At the local government level (re-established in 2004), women won 56 out of the 456 seats in the district council elections across the country. The 2008 local elections produced 86 women councilors, which was a significant improvement on the 2004 elections. However, women's representation at the district council level varies significantly across the country – in some, the representation is very high whereas in others the proportion of women is just minimal. But at ward committee levels, the 50 percent representation of women is mandatory, making this the only gender balanced level of governance although these committees have very little power and handle or cover limited governance issues.[565]

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[562] Op. Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA). Unique Rights: *Discriminatory Laws Against Women in Sierra Leone.* Kissy L.C. Freetown.p.6

[563] Women political heads of communities or sections who are elected by popular vote to deal with women's issues in their jurisdictions. These positions are more important for the mobilization of the women folk for political support during general and local council elections.

[564] Op. Cit. Castillejo, Clare. (2009). Women's Political Participation and Influence in Sierra Leone..p.83

[565] Ibid.

At the customary level, every Chiefdom (149 in all) in Sierra Leone is headed by a Paramount Chief and assisted by section, divisional and village chiefs. This system, which was instituted during the colonial rule in Sierra Leone, has to a large extent reified and standardised previous diverse traditions, although differences in the nature and rules of customary governance still exist between the various localities. Regulated by the Native Administrative Act of the late 1930s, the customary governance system largely excludes women from political participation, although there are notable variations. For example, while women can become Paramount Chiefs in the southern province, in the north women are not still allowed although they allegedly hold several chiefdom councilor positions. Among the 149 paramount chiefs in Sierra Leone, only three of them (all from the south) are women. In the most recent general elections of 2007, only sixteen (16) women won parliamentary seats out of a total of 124 as against 18 in 2002. However, there was a significant improvement in the 2008 local council elections as 86 women won as councilors as against 56 in 2004; but with significant variations in the various district councils across the country.[566] Only at the Ward Committee level is there a mandatory 50 percent membership for women.

At the government/ national level, an insignificant number of women are in ministerial and deputy ministerial positions at the time of completion of this study (March 2012). Confirming the abysmal percentage representation of women in the Parliament of Sierra Leone, the UN Country Team report of 2009 shows that only 14 percent out of a total of 124 Parliamentary seats are occupied by women.[567] But even though women are not holding many prominent positions in formal politics, yet they "constitute active and courageous defenders of democratic movements in Sierra Leone. For example local women were very instrumental in local and municipal governments in the 1950s and urban women were active participants in the struggle for independence. They played a central role in opposing the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military junta's determination to disrupt the 1996 general elections and the Johnny Paul Koroma's led coup of 1997.[568] But more significantly, they were hailed for presiding over the

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[566] Ibid. p.2
[567] Op.Cit. United Nation Integrated Peacebuilding Office – United Nations Country Team. Joint vision for Sierra Leone….p.5
[568] Op. Cit. Lawyers Center for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA)…..p.6

Bintumani I and II conferences that overwhelming voted for elections before peace in 1996 as against the threatening rebel and NPRC's military Junta's position of peace before elections.

5.6 Civil Society's/ LWCS's Renewed Activism in the New Sierra Leone

Civil society in the Sierra Leone context has sometimes been distinctly categorised into two – CSOs and NGOs, where the CSOs are seen to be groups that are engaged in advocacy and lobbying activities with policy makers. This assumption has sometimes led to government associating them (CSOs) with political opposition. On the other hand, NGOs are viewed from a more neutral position as service providers.

Placing the emergence of CSOs in general into their historical perspective in Sierra Leone, it is important to note here that CSOs only became prominent stakeholders in the political discourse in the new Sierra Leone by the late 1990s after more than thirty years of the dictatorial rule of the APC party; plus another eleven years of the civil conflict. The CSO landscape in Sierra Leone as a whole is fragmented and uncoordinated, leading to major difficulties faced by them in their work on the ground, which according to the ENCISS report (2011) "…prevents them from developing a clear area of expertise and medium to long-term strategy for engaging in social change processes. This has lent credence to the widely-held proposition that CSOs exist for the sake of a livelihood, particularly as many work across a wide range of thematic sectors, and this lack of strategic focus in turn has limited the extent of their impact on development policies in Sierra Leone."[569] This study, being aware of these assertions, selected two regional and one national case study groups that were not only independent and non-partisan, non-dependent on government funds for their activities but are also both locally and internationally recognised and acclaimed for their unbiased activities in the countries they operate.

Cognisant of the inherent but varying distinctive views about CSOs and NGOs as mentioned above, with which the author is very much conversant, this study adopted a broad concept of civil society as defined by the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union (AU),[570] which includes all groups that seek to foster either their own personal, group, community, regional, and or national welfare. These amongst many others in Sierra

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[569] ENCISS. Coping Strategy 2011 Report. Freetown, Sierra Leone. April, 2011. p.9
[570] See ECOSOCC: www.africa-union.org/ECOSOC/home.htm

Leone include: voluntary associations, bike riders associations, tribal/ethnic/regional groupings, fishermen's unions, religious groups, market women/petty traders' associations, teachers' union, student unions, drivers' union and so on; including the more 'professionalised' associations and NGOs. This definition is the most concise, since the members of LWCSOs cut across all of the above mentioned different associations.

All of these interest groups have been broadly divided into three main categories namely: traditional, neo-traditional and formal for the purpose of identifying the case study groups with their right grouping. Below are discussed the three main categories of civil society in Sierra Leone.

5.6.1 Types/ Categories of CS in Sierra Leone

Civil Society in Sierra Leone can be broadly divided into three: traditional, neo-traditional and the formal western type groups.[571]Figure 2 below shows these different categorisations including the examples of the various groups that fall under the different categories.

Figure 5.2: *Categories of Civil Society Organisations in Sierra Leone*.
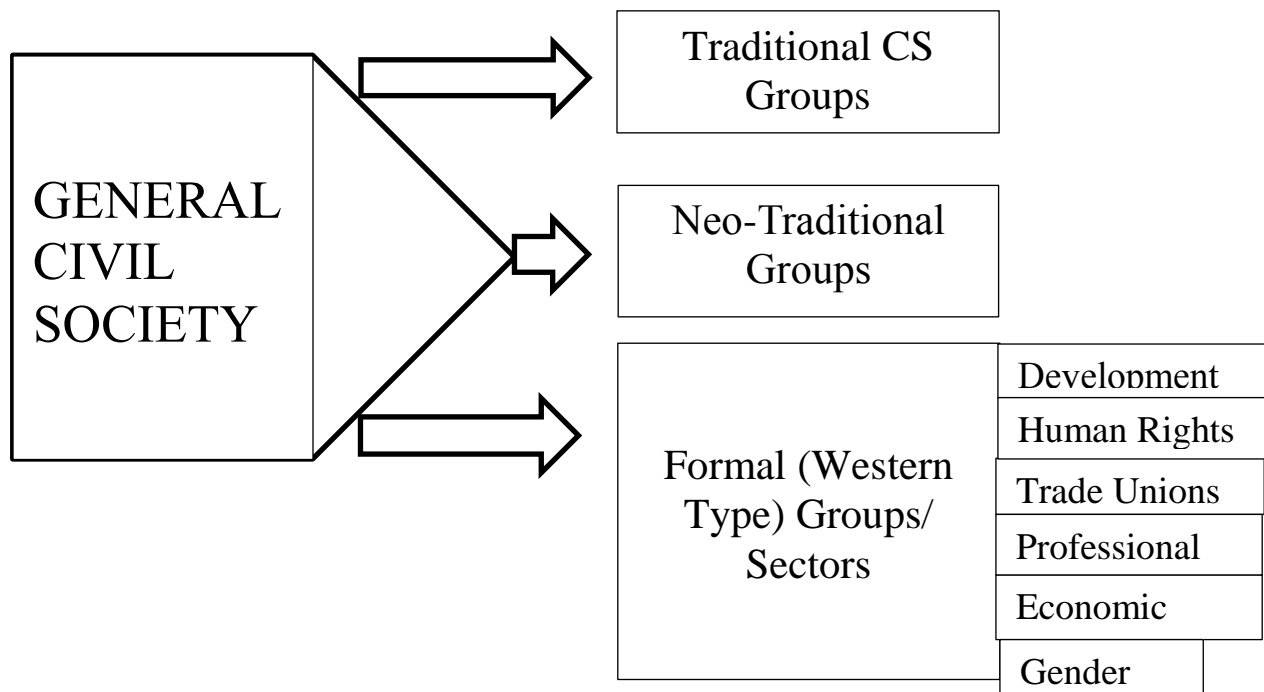
Source: Author

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[571] Op. Cit. Africa Region External affairs Unit-AFREX, 2007: 10

Traditional Civil Society

This group comprises of the majority of Sierra Leoneans living in rural areas, and whose daily lives are broadly governed by indigenous traditions and customs. Ruled by chiefs, they are basically organised into patrilineages, solidarities, labour gangs and Osusu associations, which are structures that serve both as basis for interaction and inter-mediation between the ordinary people and chiefs in the wake of addressing local political, economic and other challenges. Although these structures may be different from western forms of civil society, nonetheless they form the social capital and moral pacts necessary for influencing, countervailing or participating in the political, social and economic governance of local societies. Common amongst most of the groups are secrete society solidarities such as the poro (for men) and the sande (for women) societies. Membership of these societies is open to all adults and they do not only grant their members rights of local citizenship but they also increase their voices in community affairs. These societies do not only have the power to make laws, adjudicate disputes, and enforce customs and traditions; but they can also be used to check the countervailing actions of persons, including chiefs whose actions are perceived as violations of the values and precepts of the local community. The societies have laws and taboos that govern the behaviour of members and non-members alike in the community and violations of these laws can be dealt with through fines that can be openly communicated to the defaulter or handled in the sodalities 'sacred grove' known also as the 'society bush.'[572] Enjoying the backing of both local and national authorities, these solidarities adjudicate cases, which can either be done openly - by family/community elders, religious leaders and the chief of local courts or in the sacred grove/society bush. Other forms of traditional civil society groups are: the Osusu – a traditional saving scheme, labour gangs (bembei)[573] – a voluntary association(s) by community members to help one another in various cultivation tasks 'by turn'.

Neo - Traditional Civil Society

These mainly consist of groups that have formal organisational structures and most often than not, have an eligibility criteria for its membership based on ascriptive identities (mainly ethnic

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[572] The sacred grove or the societal bush is a secluded place at out skirts of town (for women) and in the far away forests (for men) where the initiation ceremonies are carried out and where defaulters of the society's laws are dealt with. For non-initiate defaulters, their cases may be handle separately as deemed necessary by the head of the society

[573] A Mende (one of the largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone) name for a labour gang /workers. The plural is bembeisia.

and locative). The social capital that is derived from ascriptive identities is utilised by these groups mainly to organise and make political and other claims on behalf of an ethnic group or descendants of a particular area. They also offer assistance, financial or otherwise to members in times of bereavement, wedding, and naming ceremonies. The reasons for forming these kinds of associations hinge from the view that without such entities, the identity in question may not be able to access and benefit from certain resources inorder to better themselves or their localities. For example some of such groups existing in Sierra Leone are: Ekutay, Tegloma[574], and the Fullah Progressive Union and descendants associations like the Biriwa Descendants Union.

Formal Civil Society

These ones uphold the western oriented notions of civil society, different from those mentioned above, and they can be distinguished according to the various sectors under which they operate such as - the professionals, trade union, human rights, gender, development, and economic sectors.[575]Each of these sectors can further be divided into national ones (those led by Freetown based elites) and those that are localised ones. The most recent form of civil society to emerge that transcends the visible line that divides the country, is one by state actors such as parliamentarians and councilors forming parliamentary and local council associations to pursue issues of mutual interests and those that "countervail the actions of the executive arm of the central government."[576] These are basically referred to as the hybrid civil society organisations, which are mentioned and discussed below.

The professional/trade unions are the oldest forms of civil society existing in the country up to date, and they seek to promote the interests of specific professions, occupation or trade. In the discharge of their duties, these associations make collective demands on government or external parties on pertinent issues relating to the improvement of their duties. Members of this group include: the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), The Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA), the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Association (SLMDA) and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress (SLLC).

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[574] Meaning 'progress' in the mende dialect, Tegloma was initially founded in the United States of America in 1957 by people from the Mende ethnic living there, with the aim of uniting all that belong to this ethnic group inorder to aid one another and those back home – Sierra Leone. Today many versions of it exist in Sierra Leone, United Kingdom and Canada. (See: http://www.tegloma.org/front/index.aspx?p=HOME)
[575] Op. Cit. AFREX.p.12
[576] Ibid.p.13

In the recent past, another sector that has gained prominence is the gender sector. As earlier mentioned, the premier country wide gender association was the Sierra Leone Women's Movement formed in 1951 by key and prominent women like Nancy Steel, Ella Koblo Gulama, and Constance Cummings John among others. Their motive was to help improve the living conditions of women nationwide by acting as a pressure group. Today many others have sprang up such as the 50/50 group, WIPNET, MARWOPNET, SLAUW, FAWE (Sierra Leone Chapter) etc. with activities geared towards achieving gender equality, empowerment, and improvement in the lives of the women folk for sustainability of the peace that is being built.

Many associations in Sierra Leone today fall under the development sector, filling in the gaps as essential service providers in devastated and depressed areas where the national government is unable or unwilling to intervene. For example, they were very instrumental in providing services during the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR) programme by UN and the international community for ex-combatants in Sierra Leone.

Under the religious sector, two major religions are very prominent in Sierra Leone – Islam and Christianity. These two have their faith based associations such as: the National Council of Imams, the Supreme Islamic Council, the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress and the Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Sierra Leone (Muslims) and Council of Churches in Sierra Leone and the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (Christians). Although these two religious groups basically put premium on the interest of their members, yet they have in many occasions been involved in reconciliation, democracy advocacy, peacebuilding, development and service provision in different parts of the country. During the war, both faith groups formed in 1997 an umbrella organisation known as: the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) as a chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) to promote the culture of peace and human rights. They also became a voice for the restoration of democracy during the 1997 military coup that overthrew the democratically elected government of Tejan Kabba.

5.7 Conclusion

As explained in the marginalisation context of women above, coupled with the experiences, positions and responsibilities women had assumed during the turbulent war period and their

determination not to return to their old passive status; it is essential to note that the extent to which women could be influential in either politics or development depends primarily not only on the level of office/ decision making positions they occupy, but also the authority they are able to command within the community.

The genesis and growth of civil society organisations, especially women's groups and human right organisations is closely linked with the negative effects of women's marginalisation, the heinous human right abuses and crimes mainly against women and the desire and determination by Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans alike to put an end to its continuity and to also bring to justice those that were their perpetrators or those that bore the greatest responsible. This was a major impetus to the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the subsequent establishment of the Human Right Commission to continue this course.

CHAPTER SIX
LWSCOs CASE STUDY GROUPS AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
OF SIERRA LEONE (HRCSL), POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND SUPPORT
TO LWCSOs PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES: PROFILES AND ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

The three researched women's civil society organisations, among others, are actively involved in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process that began in 2002, when the war was formally declared over. Though founded at different times and individuals, the aims and objectives of their various organisations that are implemented through diverse programmes, all of their individual activities put together generally have the grass root women as their target population. Similarly so, although their peacebuilding activities take various and divergent forms, yet they all perfectly fit into the aims and aspirations of both the citizens of Sierra Leone and the international community to build of a sustainable peace that had eluded the country during a decade long civil war. The formation, composition and programme activities of these three renowned women's civil society organisations (WIPNET, MARWOPNET and the 50/50 Group) that are under review in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding programme are briefly discussed below.

6.1 Women In Peace Network – (WIPNET): A Programme of the West African
**   Network for Peace Building (WANEP)**

General Background

The West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP) is a non-profit and civil society organization that is working in collaborative peacebuilding across the West African sub-region with its Headquartered in Accra, Ghana. It was founded in 1998 as a conflict response mechanism to the raging wars that engulfed the Mano River (MRU) in West Africa in the late 1980s[577] with huge cross-borders implications - e.g. the Senegal - Casamance conflict which affects Gambia and Guinea Bissau, the crisis in Togo which affects Benin, Ghana and to some extent Nigeria, and the war in Liberia which mutated across the Mano River basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea Conakry and Cote D'Ivoire affecting neighboring Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali interms of an amazing influx of refugees and cross border rebel movements, including the rising numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the conflict countries themselves.

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[577] See: WANEP – Home Page (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/about-us-our-story/about-us.html) Sourced: December 11, 2010

The impacts of these conflicts on local populations are huge and especially worse for women and children, who the violence conundrum. Women are not only affected in the different ways like men but that they are often targets of violence because they are female. In addition to mutilation, displacement, deaths, loss of property, HIV/AIDS, trafficking etc. women are targets of specific engendered forms of violations such as rape, domestic violence and forced pregnancies, inadequate judicial infrastructure means that often perpetrators of these crimes are not punished. But more importantly, this type of sub-regional organisation or kind of its nature, can only be sustained if men and women are included and actively involved in the entire peace process as the negative impacts of conflict are felt by both. But more remarkably though in juxtaposing these negative impacts especially on women is the positive roles women play. For example women serve as a strong force in community harmonisation, mobilisation and rehabilitation during violent conflicts. But judging from the available facts and has been mentioned earlier in this study, although the wars particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone revealed women as credible peace actors; yet women were largely left out of the formal peace and peacebuilding initiatives in the region.[578]Women became conscious of this anomaly and began to voice out their political concerns calling for their participation in the processes of restoring peace in the sub-region. Additionally, the socio-economic dislocations caused by the civil wars that engulfed the sub-region spurred and sustained the persistent call in protest and demand by women for the cessation of hostilities and to restore the dignity and sanity of the women folk. Something therefore needed to be done inorder to achieve the desired goal of WANEP, which is peace for the sub-region.

The negative impacts of these conflicts, especially the cross border implications of these conflicts as mentioned earlier required an integrated and cohesive sub-regional intervention process that could ensure the security of people.[579] WANEP therefore established and has National Networks in twelve of the fifteen countries in West Africa and with plans to extend to Cape Verde, Mali and Niger.[580] It has a functional network in Sierra Leone (WANEP-SL). In a bid to fill this existing vacuum in the West African sub-region, WANEP began developing a sustained capacity building programme that targeted women in West Africa in 2001 by forming

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[578] WANEP. *Building Relationships for Peace:* A Proposal submitted to Oxfam Great Britain. June 23, 2003. p.3
[579] Ibid
[580] Ibid

national women's coalitions of over 160 women's groups in various countries including Sierra Leone and Liberia in the Mano River Union basin.[581] In order to fulfil one of the goals of WANEP – i.e. to build of women's capacity inorder for them to actively participate and to remain relevant in peace processes, so that the gains made will be sustainable and consolidated, WANEP established the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) wing to "enhance the participation of women in all WANEP's initiatives at national level; strengthen the capacity of women to participate in peacebuilding at all levels"[582] through community and FM radio stations, other media outlets, and other innovative platforms inorder to give women at grassroots to amplify their voices and participate in peacebuilding in their respective communities. More importantly also, mainstreaming gender into national and regional mechanisms on peace and security is one of the cross-cutting issues in all of WANEP's programmes. All of these are geared towards "promoting social justice in West Africa where patriarchy has kept women marginalised and excluded from all spheres of decision making,"[583] and this activism by women as mentioned above is not only about advocating for the cessation of physical violence during conflicts and wars but also includes the deconstruction of the structural forms of violence in societies, an ideology that is based on the belief that the "systematic and targeted engendered forms of violence against women such as rape, forced prostitution, mutilation etc. are expression of deeper systemic disregard for women which exists in west African societies. Women's involvement in peacebuilding has become a constructive platform for them to address these systemic issues."[584] But furthermore, an additional contributing factors that gingered up the established of WIPNET are the changes to the traditional male-dominated society brought about by the ravages of war, an increased in the number of educated women, and the rise of women's movements in other countries, exposure to western influence, resilience of grass root women/local women, the democratic transitions in other countries and participation in an international movement on the status of women were all significant factors that led to the formation of WIPNET.

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[581] Op. Cit. WANEP-Home Page

[582] Op. Cit. WANEP - Home Page. WIPNET: Objectives (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/programs-our-programs/wipnet/8-women-in-peacebuilding-wipnet.html) Sourced: December 14th , 2010

[583] Op. Cit WANEP. *Building Relationships for Peace*: A Proposal submitted to Oxfam Great Britain. June 23, 2003. p.3

[584] Ibid. p.4

6.1.1 Aims and Objectives

WIPNET program was therefore founded on an ideology called Women's Peace Activism in November 2001. The aim of this activism is to address the specific concerns and interests of women as it related to peace and security and to ensure their participation and involvement in peace processes. Strategically, WIPNET's peace activism aims at strengthening national and regional coalitions of women in peace building organisations, mobilise them to act collectively and mutually, support one another on issues of peace and security, capacity building to ensure women's participation in formal peace processes, peacebuilding initiatives, policy analysis and advocacy, improving local rural women's access to basic skills and knowledge of community peacebuilding by translating existing training methodology into indigenous African languages, formation of a region-wide community radio program for women that would ensure women's right to be heard at the grass roots level on human security issues, mainstreaming gender into national and regional mechanisms on peace and security e.g. ECOWAS, and AU, UN mechanisms, and designing a participatory lessons learned process through consultation and annual conferences to design initiatives, assess progress of the program, guide future initiatives and inform partners and policy makers. In order to help promote women's participation in formal peace processes, WANEP is determined to continue to liaise and partner with duty bearing institutions such as the Gender and Children's Affairs Ministries in West Africa, National Parliaments, ECOWAS gender department and all other relevant bodies and institutions.[585]

Since its establishment in 2001 in West Africa, wherever the parent organisation WANEP exists, WIPNET has been effectively involved both in the building of capacities of women's groups and by incorporating gender perspectives in their activities of the broad base membership constituencies of WANEP not only by playing meaningful but active and visible roles through their assiduous works to promote peace and security in the sub-region. This programme has eventually grown into a formidable platform that provides a safe space for women to speak up and also engage in initiatives that are devoted to localising issues of peace and security, as well as encourage women's participation in the formation of frameworks of policies in peace and security in West Africa. Worthy of note is the fact that the activities of WIPNET, wherever it

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[585] Op. Cit. WANEP – Home Page

exists, are not only limited to women's issues locally but regionally with sister counterparts across West Africa.

6.1.2 WIPNET – Sierra Leone: A Programme of WANEP-SL

WANEP-SL within which Women In Peace Network (WIPNET-SL) is located "started as a Coalition of Collaborative Peacebuilding Programme (CCP) in 1998 when the country was in the process of resolving its own civil conflict that started in 1991. Comprising of agencies like Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Action Aid, Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), ABC-Development, Democracy and Development Associates (DA-DA SL) and Centre for Development and Human Rights (CDHR), it was established to add citizens' voice through civil society to the peace process" with the support of WANEP Regional Secretariat in Ghana.[586] In 2002, when the demand for popular participation with representation from all over the country became unanimous, the CPP was transformed into the Network on Collaborative Peacebuilding-Sierra Leone (NCP-SL), but "being one of the national peacebuilding networks in the region, but with a name distinct from other national networks, it was encouraged to carry the name WANEP-SL like its counterparts in Ghana, Liberia, Guinea, Nigeria and other countries in the West African sub-region."[587] Today, WANEP-SL is a national network of fifty-eight (58) peacebuilding civil society organizations nationwide that includes women's groups, religious institutions and individuals that are committed to encouraging, facilitating and mobilising local initiatives for peace building, promotion of gender justice and conflict resolution and transformation through advocacy.[588]

6.1.3 Vision

The vision of WANEP-SL, which is the parent body for WIPNET, is to see "an enlightened Sierra Leonean society free from injustice that could lead to violent conflict; and enabling all to participate in good governance for sustainable peace, security and national development" well capacitated and functional network in safer Sierra Leone, with an overall goal of "a sustainable peaceful co-existence of all the various sectors and groups of the Sierra Leonean society; thereby

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[586] WANEP-SL and Its Development. p.1 (Available at:http://www.wanep.org/wanep/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=49&Itemid=66)
Sourced: December 13, 2010
[587] Ibid
[588] Ibid. Pp.2-3

creating an enabling environment for peace, security and national development."[589] The peace crusade of WANEP-SL covers four main thematic programme areas that include: "Enhancing Capacity for Change, Engage Women and Youth in Peacebuilding, Participatory Governance and Inclusion, Peaceful boarder communities (*Early Warning and Response*), which encompasses training communication, information sharing, education, advocacy and support national peace and development discourse."[590]

The establishment of WIPNET-SL, which is a programme of WANEP-SL, was therefore a practical operationalisation of both the overall aim of WANEP to fill the vacuum in the sub-region and one of the thematic programmes of WANEP-SL as mentioned above. Similarly so, its establishment was premised on WANEP's ideology called Women Peace Activism as mentioned earlier and to ensure their participation and involvement in peace building processes. But more significantly, WIPNET-SL also aims to improving local rural women's access to basic skills and knowledge of community peace building by translating existing training methodology into indigenous Sierra Leonean languages. From the time of inception up to date, WIPNET -SL comprises of fifty women civil society coalition nationwide. All of these coalitions were touched by the gruesome violation of human rights and wanted national as well as international support to address their grievances, change the social conditions, and bring about lasting peace.

6.1.4 Plan of Action and Sources of Funding

In its peace work, WIPNET-SL outlined the following programme agendas from the outset in the drive to achieving its aims and objectives, which is to promote peace and development through the effective participation of women. These include:

- Develop policy recommendation - mainstreaming women's issues in peace and security
- Strengthen the nexus between policy makers, technocrats and women's groups
- Sustain women's participation in formal peacebuilding in West Africa
- Strengthen capacity of rural/grass roots women in peacebuilding at both community and national levels
- Build strategic partnerships with women's networks in other regions

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[589] WANEP-SL. "Background".p.1

[590] WANEP-SL. Our Programs. p.6 (Available at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/networks-our-networks/sierra-leone.html?start=5) Sourced: 14/12/2010

As mentioned earlier, the implementations of WIPNET-SL's programme follow the operational trails of its parent body WANEP, as shown in its organogram or communication chain in Figure 3 below. Membership in the various categories, management and financial structures and the decision making processes of WIPNET all follow that of WANEP as shown in figure. As a programme of WANEP, WIPNET gets funds and financial support from various donors through its parent body. These include: OXFAM USA, Women Peacemakers Program of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (WPP – IFOR), Global Fund for Women (GFW). WIPNET also generates funds locally from registration fees, monthly membership dues, donations from individuals and groups, non-governmental organizations and enjoys donor support to WANEP-SL such as Cordaid Netherlands, UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF), Open Society Institute (OSI), WANEP/IBIS West Africa, Newfield Foundation, OXFAM Great Britain, Japan Platform/Peacebuilders, UNDP and other contributions, donations, and grants.[591]

Figure 6.3: *WANEP/ WIPNET's Organisational, Management and Membership Structure*
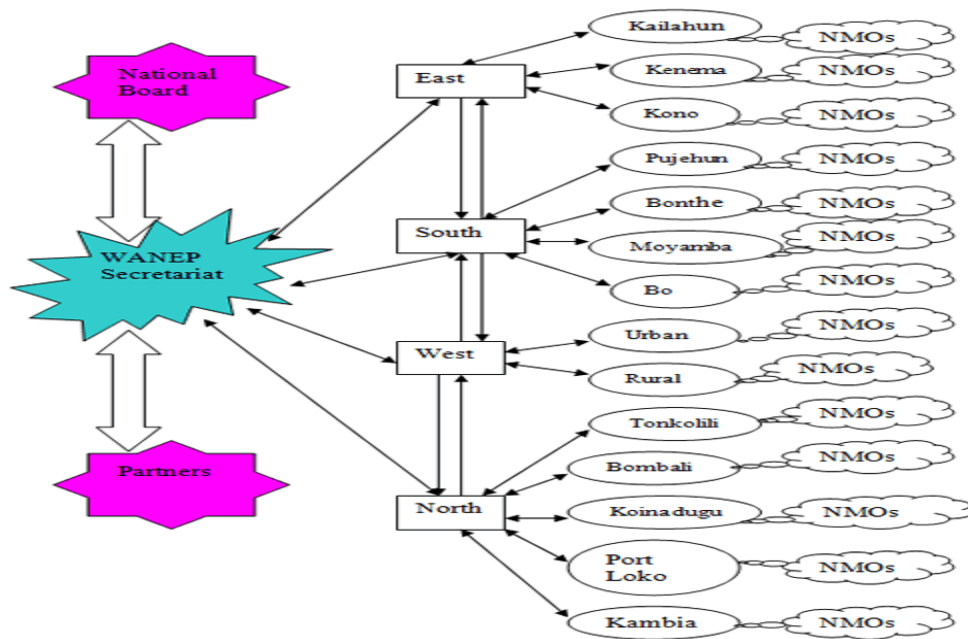
Key: NMOs – Network Member Organizations
Source: WANEP –SL Home Page: (See: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/networks-our-networks/sierra-leone.html?start=8) Sourced: 20/12/2010

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[591] Ibid.p.8 (See: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/networks-our-networks/sierra-leone.html?start=7) Sourced: 02/26/2011

6.2 Mano River Women's Peace Network – Sierra Leone (MARWOPNET- SL)
Background

The worsening security situation in the Mano River Union basin in the 1990s as a result the civil wars mainly in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which were inextricably linked for reasons of geo-political design ably aided by the physical and human geography of the Mano River Union countries, coupled with the negative impacts these wars have had on women and their children in the sub-region; served as the main impetus for the women coming together in May 2000, under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) inorder to promote their effective participation in the process of prevention, management and restoration of peace in Africa. As victims of conflict wherever it occurs, they thought it was imperative that "they should have a say in the decisions about these conflicts."[592] Supported by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), UNDP and other UN agencies, the Economic Committee of Africa (ECA), and the Government of Nigeria; this historic meeting was organised by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) and the African Women Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD), held a historic initial consultative strategy meeting with the theme: "Promoting women's participation in the peace process in West Africa particularly in the Mano River Basin."[593]

Established mainly for women in the Mano River countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea), and recently Cote d'Ivoire (though not a member of the Mano River Basin); this meeting is a sub-regional programme meant to complement, through its country chapters, the activities of women at their respective national levels with a goal to consolidate peace, prevent future conflicts and restore trust, which is a necessary criteria for establishing lasting peace in the sub-region. In summary, MARWOPNET was born by women entirely out of the need to mainstream women's voices in the search for and the consolidation of peace and security in West Africa as expressed above. Its first General Assembly was held in Monrovia (Liberia) on June 8, 2001, which was subsequently followed by its board of directors meeting on23rd –28th July 2001 in Conakry (Guinea).

Its highest policy and decision making body is the General Assembly that meets biennially. This network is managed by a Governing Board, presided over by the President assisted by two Vice

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[592] MARWOPNET. *History*. Home Page 1. (Available at: http://www.marwopnet.org/historique.htm) Sourced: 21/12/2010.
[593] Ibid.

Presidents. Composed of the Board are five (5) conveners of the Technical Committee and three (3) National Chapter Focal Points. At present, the Presidency is held by Sierra Leone's Mrs. Yasmin Fofanah, first Vice President – Haja Tiguidanke Diakhaby (Guinea) and second Vice President – Amelia Ward (Liberia).[594]

6.2.1 Mission Statement

MARWOPNET's mission is "to advocate for and promote at all decision –making levels the involvement of women and youth in the prevention, management and resolution of conflict in the Mano River sub-region, throughout Africa and the world, to serve as a catalyst through which sustainable peace, human security and justice can be attained by ensuring gender responsive policies and building women's/ girls' capacity for socio-economic, political empowerment and human development for all"[595] The beauty of this arrangement is that the position of President changes/ rotates within a given period of time from country to country, ensuring democratic ideals.

6.2.2 Objectives

The following are the main objectives of MARWOPNET- SL viz:[596]

i) Promote durable peace by integrating a gender perspective into peace, conflict resolution processes and into security and development mechanisms at all levels in the Mano River Basin.

ii) Build a culture of peace in West Africa and spread its model of an integrated, coordinated sub-regional approach.

iii) Accelerate the socio-economic reintegrated, coordinated sub-regional approach.

iv) Accelerate the socio-economic reintegration of displaced people, refugees and ex-combatants.

v) Help elevate the role of civil society, particularly of women, in peace, security and development at all levels.

vi) Research, document and publish the best practices of women in peace and conflict resolution.

vii) Ensure full and equal participation of women in the democratic process, particularly in decision-making structures for peace and development and facilitate the design and implementation of programs and policies in gender awareness;

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[594] MARWOPNET. Brochure: A Network of women's organisation working for durable peace within the Mano River sub-region and beyond. Delco House, 12 Lightfoot Boston Street, Freetown. Sierra Leone. p.3
[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid.

viii) Mobilise groups and women's organisations and strengthen their capacity in prevention, management and conflict resolution, reconciliation, leadership and civic education;

ix) Raise awareness among women's groups and organisations on various issues critical to achieving lasting peace, including respect for human rights, democracy, gender equality and development;

x) Develop greater unity among the women of the Mano River region facing a common project for peace and create to networks of solidarity and partnership with women's organisations working for peace and other similar initiatives. These include the FAS (Femmes Africa Solidarité), the AWCPD (African Women Committee for Peace and Development) (AWCPO) of the OAU and the FERFAP;

xi) Consider MARWOPNET as the driving force in the peace process and reconciliation;

xii) Search, document and create databases on the best experiences of women in peace building and conflict resolution;

xiii) Establish a roster of qualified women and experts in the countries of the Mano River Union in the various sectors of society whose expertise will serve the national and international institutions.

Having a vision of a peaceful and prosperous region, inhabited by citizens that are healthy, educated, and enjoy all their human rights, MARWOPNET seeks to see women in West Africa playing an effective role in the process of peace and sustainable development in the sub-region, Africa and the world.

In a more broader sense, MARWOPNET's mission is to promote and provide advocacy at all levels, involve women and youth in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in the Mano River basin, Africa and the world that will serve as catalysts through which human security, justice and lasting peace can be obtained by the integration of gender issues and sustainable development into country policies and capacity building in the acquisition of political and economic power.

The network is composed of various organisations ranging from women leaders, rural women, women communicators, Women politicians and parliamentarians, women's rights activists, women union members to religious women and business women. It has a managing council that is elected for two years, which directs the network; this council has at its helm an executive board of 12 members (three for Sierra Leone, the country housing the network's headquarters, five for Guinea, including the outgoing President, and four for Liberia).

The network is headquartered in Freetown (Sierra Leone) with national branches in each of the three member countries. Each branch is headed by a national coordinator and supported by a National Cell whose composition is determined specifically by each country according to its national context. The presidency of the network rotates from one country to the other and for each rotation, the two other countries assured of the vice presidencies. MARWOPNET-SL has an executive board that is comprised of a president, first vice-president, second vice-president, the outgoing president; presidents of five technical commissions (fund-raising, mobilisation of resources, program, finance, and communication) and three national focal points.

In the fulfilment of its vision, MARWOPNET-SL works hand in glove with the UN system, embassies of some countries such as USA, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Russia, France, Morocco, those of ECOWAS and other African countries; including civil society – trade unions, community organisations, religious organisations defending human rights, non-governmental organisations in the north and those at national levels. It also receives a significant support from the Government of Guinea not only financial but by also opening and allowing ease of movement and access to information.

Like all other branches, MARWOPNET –SL continues to work on programme activities that are geared towards achieving the overall objectives of the sub-regional Network. "The direction of activities falls within the framework of MARWOPNET's overall vision, its Abuja plan of action, and processes for the way forward as adopted and continuously reviewed at Board meetings including institutional capacity building workshops that have been held since the Network's inception."

6.2.3 Plan of Action

The Sierra Leone chapter of MARWOPNET has as its focus, five crucial areas of concern. These include:

1. Peace process − involving conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation through the establishment of dialogue on peace issues with stakeholders at all levels.
2. Peace mechanisms − working to see an increased participation of women in the MRU, ECOWAS and AU peace mechanism including the establishment of effective early warning systems within border regions.
3. Socio-economic empowerment − of women for peace consolidation, stabilisation and reconstruction.
4. Human Security − reinforcing the ECOWAS moratorium on small arms and light weapons.
5. Communication and integration.

In other to accomplish their plan of action nationwide, MARWOPNET − SL for example had as its focus the following undertakings for the year 2010:

- The establishment of branches in Kono, Koinadugu and Bombali districts
- Launching of a border community radio station in Kambia
- Undertaking a film documentation project on women in post conflict reconstruction
- Advocating for the domestication/ harmonization of regional/ UN gender equality instruments (e.g. Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), AU Women's Protocol, UN Resolution 1325, CEDAW) in the national constitution, policies and programmes.

For their commitment and determination to achieve peace not only for the West African sub-region but indeed for Africa as a whole, MARWOPNET achieved an observer status with ECOWAS and MRU organisations and is also a fill member of the UN PBF National Steering Committee in Sierra Leone.

MARWOPNET- SL's financial support for their extensive undertakings comes from its numerous partners and sources [597] − ranging from friendly national governments, UN Agencies, to International Non-governmental Organisations. Some of these include: United States, Great

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[597] See: http://www.marwopnet.org/partenaires.htm Sourced: 29/7/2011

Britain; Japan; Germany, Russia; Morocco; France; Guinea; UN; Femmes Africa Solidarité; Open Society Initiatives for West Africa; Women, Peace and Security Resources in Liberia; Women, Peace and Security Resources in Sierra Leone; AU, ECOWAS; International Rescue Committee (IRC); Women's Commission for Refugees and Children; CEDAW; UNDP, UNIFEM, UNESCO, USAID, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Activities (OCHA) and many others.

6.3 The 50/50 Group

Background

This initiative was garnered by the sufferings that women endured during the rebel war that ignited their heroine activism - risking their own lives to save others, defend the dignity and survival of society and to bring about reconciliation and peaceful resolution of the eleven yearlong rebel war in Sierra Leone. In other words, the achievement of peace through the blood, sweat and tears of women, gave them the impetus never again to be complacent in the affairs and decision making processes in governance as they were grossly under-represented in the overall political life in the country before and during the war. For example, women's representation was only 13.5 percent of the one hundred and twelve (112) members of parliament, 7 percent of City Mayors/ Council Chairs; 11 percent of the national executive committees of political parties and 18 percent of the 2008 local election candidates.[598]

The 50/50 Group was formally started in November 2000, following the end of the war with help from the British Council in Sierra Leone, which was formally and symbolically inaugurated on 30th November, 2001 in the Sierra Leone House of Representatives (Parliament) by the then SLPP President Ahmed Tejan Kabba; barely six months running up the 2002 general elections.

The launching process was immediately followed by the first mock female Parliament, with a Mock Female President followed by a Mock Female Parliamentary debate, all on the floor of the national Parliament building at Tower Hill, Freetown. The essence of this process was to ginger up the determination by women to get themselves into politics and to let them know how it feels, means and entails to sit in the well of parliament and take decisions on matters of national interest. Consequently, the 50/50 has from that moment on wards, continued to train women and

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[598] A Handbook. The 50/50 Phenomena in SIERRA LEONE. p.1

to advocate for gender equality in politics and in public life.

The activities of the 50/50 Group are focused on mainly but not limited to: training of women political aspirants, awareness raising of the public on the importance of gender equality/ issues and violence against women; sensitisation of CSOs, religious and traditional leaders on women's rights, and participation; advocacy campaign; voter education of the public and sensitisation of first time voters, especially female university students, secondary/ high school students and the marginalised i.e. the disabled.

Interestingly, membership of this group is not only open to all interested and concerned women but also to supportive men.[599] As an advocate for fairness in participation and the practice of democratic principles, the 50/50 has an established hierarchical but elective positions for a given time frame, which range from President, Vice President, Secretary General, Assistant Secretary General; Financial Secretary; Social Secretary; Assistant Social Secretary; Treasurer; Auditor and Legal Adviser.

6.3.1 Mission Statement

The 50/50 Group Sierra Leone is a non-partisan campaign for more women in politics and public life through training and advocacy.[600] In other words, it is to increase the level of female participation in representative government, to ensure parity.

6.3.2 Vision and Goal

The 50/50 is keen to ensuring an equal share of political power between men and women in public life within a traditionally male-dominated political system. In a bid to uphold their vision, the 50/50 group is determined to become the lead organisation in promoting effective participation of women in parliament, local government and other leadership positions in all 12 districts in Sierra Leone within the next three years of the launch – by helping women (and sympathetic men) become productive leaders and examples at local and national levels of society. This aim has already been accomplished as they now champion the preparation and or coaching of women going into politics at all levels.

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[599] See: http://www.marwopnet.org/partenaires.htm Sourced: 29/7/2011

[600] The 50/50 Group. Mission Statement: A woman's place in the House of Parliament. (Available at: http://www.fiftyfiftysl.com/index.html)

6.3.3 Objectives

The 50/50 Group being an organisation set up mainly to identify issues of inequality and strive it's address through advocacy, lobby, awareness raising and training, set as its objectives the following:

a) To encourage and empower women through training and advocacy to seek and achieve public office and participate in politics and public life.

b) To change public's perception of women in politics.

c) To advocate the removal of barriers against women going into politics

d) To increase women's participation in democratic politics and other decision making bodies.

e) To lobby for the zipper system representation in politics – one man one woman.

f) To make women candidature attractive to political parties.

g) To sensitise women about the importance of standing for parliament and local council positions and make a difference in the lives of Sierra Leoneans.

h) To reduce the marginalisation of women by giving them training in skills that would enable them to enter the political arena and other decision-making positions with confidence.

i) To empower women through training in skills that would enable them to enter the political arena and other decision-making positions with confidence.

j) To provide advice and encouragement that will enable women to participate in politics without fear.

k) To develop and maintain a database of women professionals and the publication of a monthly newsletter, publish a book(s) on women's experiences during elections and a documentary film.

In the fulfillment of its duties, the 50/50 Group collaborates with both local and international stakeholders.

6.3.4 Programme Implementation Strategies

In a bid to achieving their aims and objectives as outlined above, the group employed the following strategies in order to reach its organisational potential.

1. Providing training and mentoring in skills on various election related topics/ issues for potential

women aspirants that would enable them to enter the political arena and other decision making positions with confidence.

2. Publication of training manuals, leaflets and reports to and training of female aspirants and candidates entering political life.

3. Lobbying of political decision makers on the need to select women candidates and support the equal representation of women and men – advocating for the use of gender lenses.

4. Sensitisation of voters on the importance of equal representation of women in politics through popular campaigning and the media. In doing this, a 30-minutes radio talk show programme to sensitise and educate the general public on leadership, women's affairs and local government on as many radio stations as possible is undertaken at least twice monthly all over the country. At the end of every talk show ten to fifteen minutes of the time is used for phone-in participation of the public concerning the issue. Additionally, interviews of successful women and youths in society are also conducted during the radio talk shows. The radio responses, by phone and mail, are used to build up a contact list/data base of people interested in 50/50.

5. Use of the membership list and workshop participants to raise funds through dues, sale of small items such as badges, pins, caps, t-shirts, 50/50 info pack and so on.

6. Foster healthy links with all women's organisations in Sierra Leone, projecting 50/50 as the key facilitator in leadership and politics.

7. Organise training on the rule of law to ensure access to justice for all.

8. Working with leadership figures in all political parties to encourage them to promote women into leadership positions.

6.4 Policies Towards Gender Equality for LWCS: Examination of the Activities of Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), UN and the HRCSL

6.4.1 Background: GoSL

Subsequent governments of Sierra Leone since independence in 1961 have come and gone without legislating policies that would alleviate the burdens and the inequalities against women even though the national constitution clearly talks about equality of all citizens before the law. However, credit should be given to the NPRC junta (1991-1996) that began to acknowledge the potentials of women, mainly because of their immense positive contributions to the peace efforts, as earlier mentioned, which was climaxed by their sole handling of the Bintumani I and II

conferences that ushered in a democratically elected government. Before this time there were no such things as clear cut gender policy and or programme designed to deal with inequalities, and to empower women for their onward contribution to peace and development. But the 1991 revised constitution of Sierra Leone is very clear on the maintenance of equality for all sexes.[601] For example chapter 2 - 6(3b) clearly states:

For the purposes of promoting national integration and unity, the State shall secure full rights of residence for every citizen in all parts of the State.

7(1b) …manage and control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare and freedom of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of opportunity.

8(3) The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that:

1. every citizen, without discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, shall have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment; the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused, and in particular that special provisions be made for working women with children, having due regard to the resources of the State;

5. there is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, and that adequate and satisfactory remuneration is paid to all persons in employment.

9(1b) The Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal rights and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens at all levels by… safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children, women and the disabled in security educational facilities.

Since the end of the war however, various steps have been taken by the democratically elected governments to put in place practical measures that would lay the foundation for the enhancement of gender equality through policies and programmes. In an effort to alleviate the sufferings of IDPs and returning refugees, with funding from the international community the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) and the National Commission for the Reconstruction, Resettlement, and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) were created. The Special for Sierra Leone (SCSL) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) were all instituted to provide gender justice and resolution for victims of the war, especially women and children. Additionally, a new

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[601]See: The Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991. (Available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/constitution1991.pdf). Sourced: 21/9/2011

ministry, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) with ministerial resources to be a voice for women and children was created. In 2007 the government also instituted the National Health Action Plan (NHAP), developed an action plan on HIV/Aids with the help of the NGO Christian Extension Services, the first Poverty reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP- I & II) within which gender issues are mainstreamed, signed CEDAW (2000), passed National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2004), the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), the Child Rights Act (2007), the three Gender justice Laws (GJL) of 2007 – the Devolution of Estate Act, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, and the Domestic Violence Act; the National Policy on the Advancement of Women (2009), the Gender Strategic Plan (2009), and the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UN Security Resolution 1325 and 1820 (2009),granting of the 30 percent quota to women to hold positions both in the political and public sphere. As a focal ministry of government for gender equality, the MSWGCA developed and launched the National Gender Strategic Plan for 2010-2013.[602] The Ministry also convenes and chairs various donor meetings and the National Committee for GBV. The Sexual Offense Bill, it is hoped if passed will also set the age for sexual consent and will define better the crime of rape against women including the penalties. All of these acts and undertakings are meant to address the numerous gender inequality issues, some of which are extensively discussed in chapter four of this study.

Irrespective of all of these new and remarkable developments and the demonstration of willingness and accountability on the part of government to make effective use of the rule of law mechanism, yet there still remains a poor if not minimal application and or enforcement of these laws, which is one of the key components responsible for the lack of gender justice in Sierra Leone. Constitutions and laws of countries in the world, including Sierra Leone, will remain meaningless without the required resources and the national government's will to enforce them. Rights of women are clearly and thoroughly defined in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. For example in Chapter 2, Section 8(2a) it clearly states: "In furtherance of the Social Order…every citizen shell have equality of rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law, and the State shall ensure that every citizen has an equal right and access to all opportunities and benefits based

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[602] The 'National Gender Strategic Plan' (2010-2013) is based on two policies: 'National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming' 2000, and the 'National Policy on the Advancement of Women' 2000. These two policies provide a legal framework and mandate for every stakeholder to address gender imbalances within all sectors – social, economic, political, civic and cultural.

on merit;"[603] but these notions are rarely enforced as women still continue to be victims on GBV, rape, FGM and so on.

6.4.2 *General Background: UN*

United Nations involvement in the making and building of peace in Sierra Leone goes as far back as July 1999, when they acted as moral guarantors during the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement between the rebel RUF group and government of Sierra Leone. This signing was subsequently followed by the establishment of a peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL), to replace ECOMOG in Sierra Leone as was agreed upon in the Lome accord. The force comprised initially of six thousand (6,000) troops in October 1999. This peacekeeping force was later increased to seventeen thousand five hundred (17,500) troops, including 260 military observers by March 2001; making it the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world at that time.[604] With the magnitude of atrocities committed against women and children during the war, UNAMSIL had no option but to post a gender adviser, who was originally situated within the human rights section. As a consequence gender has, and continues to play a significant role in all work that the human rights section and indeed the entire UN mission undertook and continues to undertake[605] even with the transition from UNAMSIL to UNIOSIL and now UNIPSIL – the peacebuilding phase on UN. Although there seized to be a specific gender adviser as the mission transitioned, yet the human rights section even though without a gender mandate, took over all gender issues and effectively mainstreamed it in all of its work. It continued to do all its human right trainings with a gender component, continued working with UNIFEM on the ground to provide guidance and advice and help build capacity, working with both the GoSL and the TRC to ensure that a gender component is included in its work; and training and working with the police, especially the Family Support Units (FSU) that was established to address problems of rape and domestic violence. The section has also continued to train civil society organisations to work on gender concerns, including the creation of human rights committees specifically focusing on gender. Although women's political participation is comparatively still low, yet UN's timely and sustainable intervention and

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[603] The Constitution of Sierra Leone. 1991. Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette Extraordinary Vol. CXX11, No.59. 25th September, 1991. p.3

[604] Human Right Watch. (January 2003). "We will kill you if you cry": Sexual violence in Sierra Leone.350 Fifth Ave 34th Floor New York, N.Y.
10118-3299. Vol. 15, No. 1 (A) p.20. Available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/sierleon0103.pdf Sourced: 7/4/2010

[605] Multi Donor Review of Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security by the United Nations Missions in Liberia (UNMIL) and Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) 2 - 10 April 2006

promotion of gender equality issues has led to the passing of numerous laws including that on the trafficking of women,[606] as highlighted above and to address the provisions of CEDAW.

In 2006, the UN in its bid to further help countries return to normalcy by addressing the root causes of their conflicts, establish the rule of law and functioning democratic institutions, support peacebuilding programmes and projects and so; the UN put together a peacebuilding architecture known as the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC was born out of the UN reform summit of 2005 that resulted further in the creation of support structures such as the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) – to assist and support the PBC administer the PBF, and to serve the UN Secretary General (UNSG) in coordinating UN agencies in their peacebuilding efforts; all of which form the UN peacebuilding architecture. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) was established through General Assembly Resolution A/60/180 and the Security Council Resolution S/RES/1645-2005.[607] But of great importance is the fact that all three bodies have the single most aim of addressing the shortfalls of the international community in post-conflict situations or environments through continuous interaction and collaboration. As Jenkins put it, the PBC in its strictest sense, is an inter-governmental body but nevertheless its nomenclature applies to all three elements, the PBC, the PBF and the PBSO.[608]

The PBC is headed by a Chair person who is elected annually,[609] and through the PBF money is allocated for peacebuilding in post-conflict countries through two funding facilities – the Immediate Response Facility (IRF) and the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility (PRF). The PBF has funded projects in many countries under the IRF and PRF facilities, with Burundi and Sierra Leone being part of its priority plan. Both of these facilities fund initiatives that respond to one or more of the following four criteria:[610]

  i) Respond to imminent threats to the peace and initiatives that support peace agreements and political dialogue.

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[606] Act was passed in August 2005. For the first time trafficking was defined as an offence. Trafficking remains a serious problem, however.

[607] UN Peacebuilding Fund: Preventing a Relapse Into Violent Conflict – Home Page. Available at: http://www.unpbf.org/index.shtml Sourced: 5/8/2011

[608] Jenkins, R. (2008) 'The UN Peacebuilding Commission and the Dissemination of International Norms', Crises States Working Papers Series No. 2, Working Paper 38 (London, Crises States Research Centre).p.3. Available at: http://www.crisisstates.com/download/wp/wpSeries2/wp38.2.pdf (Sourced: 2 April, 2010

[609] See UN PBC (Available at: http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/) Sourced: 8/8/2011

[610] UN Peacebuilding Fund: Preventing a Relapse Into Violent Conflict – Home Page. Available at: http://www.unpbf.org/index.shtmlSourced: 8/8/2011

ii) Build or strengthen national capacities to promote co-existence and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

iii) Stimulate economic revitalisation to general peace dividends.

iv) Re-establish essential administrative services

The PBF is managed on behalf of the UN Secretary General by the Assistant Secretary General, supported by the PBSO; with the UNDP Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF Office) as the administrator of the fund. Currently, the PBF is supporting more than a hundred projects in fifteen countries including Sierra Leone by delivering fast, flexible and relevant funding.

In Sierra Leone, the PBF budget for all peacebuilding activities/ projects, which are divided into five priority areas amounts to 35 million US Dollars; of which according to records 34.8 million has already been spent. Below are the five priority areas and their budget allocations.

Table 6.1: Priority Plan for Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for Sierra Leone – Revised July 2008

	Priority Areas	Allocation requested from the PBF (in US $m)
1	Youth empowerment and employment	4.0
2	Justice and security	15.0
3	Democratic governance	5.0
4	Support to increased energy	9.0
5	Capacity building of public administration	2.0
	Total	35.0

Source: UN PBF (Available at: http://www.unpbf.org/docs/Sierra_Leone_PBF_Revised_Priority_Plan_3July2008.pdf) Sourced: 10/08/2011

UN's Gender Equality Policy Framework for Sustainable Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

Gender equality, whose pursuit and achievement is the major focus of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Security and Peace, was the rationale behind the creation of the PBC.[611] Jennifer Klot submits that gender equality speaks directly to the PBC's aim "focusing attention and consolidating good practice on vital cross-cutting issues…for which effective programmes must draw on the capacities and plans of actors across the full range of political – security – humanitarian - development activities."[612] The fulfillment of this gender equality perspective into peacebuilding by the PBC through mainstreaming, is enshrined in three principal strategies:[613]

1) Addressing the particular impact of conflict on women's recovery – especially sexual and gender based violence;

2) Supporting women's full participation in and ownership of peacebuilding and recovery process; and

3) Ensuring that national priorities for recovery – political, social and economic – redress inequalities of the past and positively influence gender relations and contribute to gender equality.

The PBC's determination to involve women at all levels of its peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone led to the convening of a National Consultation for Enhancing Women's Engagement in collaboration with UNIFEM in January 2007[614], for the purpose of informing women leaders and CSOs about the PBC; and for helping establish a national peacebuilding agenda for women.

This move, premised on the strong belief by UN that sustainable peacebuilding cannot be achieved without the recognition of equal rights of girls and women and ensuring their full participation in all political, social and economic aspects of life in the country, was clearly reflected in the policy framework adopted by the UN's Country Team Sierra Leone titled "Joint UN Approach to Gender Equality" as at 17 May 2011. It states "[T]he Joint UN Vision 2009 – 2012 has recognised the importance of gender equality and women empowerment for peacebuilding and the long-time stability in Sierra Leone. In addition to Programme 17

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[611] Klot, Jennifer F. Women and Peacebuilding. Independent Expert Paper Commissioned by UNIFEM and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO). 29th January, 2007. p.1 (Available at:
http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/Working%20Group%20on%20Lessons%20Learned/WGLLbackgroundpaper%2029.01.08.pdf)
Sourced: 13/08/2011

[612] Ibid. p.2

[613] Ibid. p.3

[614] Report, National Consultation for Enhancing Women's Engagement with the UN Peacebuilding Commission in Sierra Leone (January 2007), Freetown, Sierra Leone. (Unpublished).

"Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights", it has made this a cross-cutting issue for all UN support programmes."[615]

The UNCT under the leadership of the Executive Representative (ER) developed a UN Joint Vision (UNJV) aligned with the PRSP II, which seem to present strategic objectives for the country as well as a general cooperation framework. Among the 21 programmes of the UNJV, programme 17 focuses on "Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Rights," programme 2 deals with "Access to Justice and Human Rights;" programme 7 on "Reproductive and Child Health and Nutrition;" programme 9 on "Child Protection;" and programme 18 on "Community Empowerment," all of which are explicitly geared towards addressing gender equality and or issues of GBV.[616]

In collaboration with donors such as European Union, World bank; DFID, INGOs, CBOs; UN agencies and the Government of Sierra Leone have engaged in a wide range of strategic activities towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment through the development of an evidenced –informed policy and programmes targeting important areas such as education, health, nutrition, GBV, justice, and political decision-making. With UN support the MSWGCA is working towards meeting the international commitments including the preparation of reports on CEDAW, Resolution 1325 and the CRC.

The UNCT has promoted an integrated approach towards improving the reproductive health of women and addressing GBV – by funding the establishment of seventy-four (74) advocacy and mobilisation groups, engaged in community sensitisation on maternal health issues and GBV; the involvement of more than five hundred (500) community stakeholders with an increased knowledge on management and maternal health and on GBV prevention; and the involvement of communities and commitment on the prevention of GBV including FGM.[617] With UN support, the judiciary has been able to extend Magistrate courts circuits/ sittings to some remote areas in the Southern province such as Mongere and Zimi for the very first time in February 2010. There are

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[615] UN Country Team SIERRA LEONE. Joint UN Approach to Peacebuilding and Gender Equality. 17 March, 2011. p.1 (Available at: http://www.betterpeace.org/files/CSC_SL_Joint%20Approach%20to%20Peacebuilidng%20and%20Gender%20Equality.pdf) Sourced: 9/8/2011
[616] Ibid. p.11
[617] Ibid. p.21

now Saturday court sittings specifically to deal with matters related to the three Gender Acts and sexual violence. Similarly so, the UN supported the development and implementation in five districts of a referral protocol for child victims of sexual abuse, and the provision of free medical examination and services for these victims, which according to the UNCT, has led to more cases being tried through the justice system rather than compromised for an out-of-court settlement. In a another engagement, UN and its agencies have in the past undertaken a nationwide dialogue on GBV and FGM in all twelve districts in Sierra Leone including the two Western Rural Areas (WRAs), that was attended by 266 Sowies[618] including Mammy Queens and female councilors.[619] This dialogue served as a platform to understand the Sowies, traditional and religious leaders, in a bid to working with them promote positive cultural values and benefits and to increase their knowledge of inequality issues for girls and the harmful effects of FGM. It is hoped that with proper information, these traditional leaders would be drivers of positive change for the girls and women.

UNCT supports the access to education for girls and women for an increase in the primary school enrolment, retention and completion through some of the following strategies: the development of a National Strategy to accelerate girls' education at all levels; strengthening the capacity of the media to effectively advocate and disseminate the need for the girl child education; development of a code of conduct for Teacher's and Education Personnel; child-friendly standards for schools to create child-friendly learning environment to promote girls' retention; and the revision of primary school curriculum and core text books to incorporate emerging issues and make the books gender appropriate. In its drive to promote education in Sierra Leone, the UN launched in July 2005 the Sierra Leone Girls' Education Network (SLeGEN) with partners such as Action Aid, CAUSE Canada, Christian Children's Fund, Education Reporters Association, Freetown City Council, National Reformation Council, Sierra Leone Association of University Women, Student Movement for Girls' Education, UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNIFEM, World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision and Zonta Club led by the Gender Desk Officer in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, with the

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[618] Sowies are both the spiritual and patron heads of the Bondo Society, who have the legal rights under customary law to perform the initiation rites (cutting of the genetalia) on girls and women.

[619] Op. Cit. UN Country Team SIERRA LEONE. Joint UN Approach to Peacebuilding and Gender Equality.... p.51

FAWE as co-chair.[620]

UNCT and UNIPSIL supported/ encouraged the GoSL to achieve/ grant the 30 percent of women's political participation and decision making through for the 2012 general elections and to transform the momentum for its interventions into concrete gains in the 2012 elections, UNCT plans to conduct training programmes for potential women candidates, increase advocacy with traditional chiefs and other political gate keepers, and to enhance the capacity of existing traditional women's institutions to promote popular support for women candidates in the elections.

6.4.3 The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL): Introducing the Context

The nation of Sierra Leone adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 even before she gained independence from the British in April 1961, and further became a member state of the UN Human Rights on 27th September of the same year. The UDHR confers on all citizens of member states that are signatory to it, all rights and the freedoms that go with it without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.[621] Among some of these rights and freedoms are: right to life, liberty and security, right to choose nationality, property; freedom of religion, association, speech, opinion, movement, freedom from slavery or servitude, equality before the law, freedom from forceful marriage and so much more.

Sierra Leone has ratified other UN Human Rights instruments and their additional protocols including other international human rights instruments. It's also a member of the African Union (AU) formerly Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was founded partly to promote cooperation among independent African nations.

But irrespective of all these of commitments to uphold and maintain the rights of its citizens, the subsequent governments of Sierra Leone for many decades since independence relented in their responsibilities by failing to provide adequate basic services to the citizens – food, sanitation, clean pipe- borne water, electricity, and equal educational opportunity for all. There was a gross

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[620] United Nations Girl Education Initiative (UNGEI). Sierra Leone: Background. p.1. (Available at: http://www.ungei.org/infobycountry/sierraleone.html). Sourced: 2/9/ 2011

[621] UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.pp.1-12 (Available at: http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml) Sourced: 05/04/2011

violation of human rights even before the commencement of the1991 rebel war such that there was no equality before the law, unequal access to and use of public goods; abuse or violation of rights was rife, especially of women and children was and still is common place as its embedded in the culture; citizens were deprived of their right to justice and fair trial; there was no freedom of expression, especially contrary political opinion; there was a dearth of educational opportunities for the youth; and corruption and embezzlement of state resources was endemic. The rule of law was therefore elusive, which contributed to fanning the flames of the unprecedented brutality of the eleven year rebel war. These and other ills that had its attendant consequences provided a perfect recipe for serious conflict – which culminated in the rebel onslaught of 1991 as discussed earlier. The gruesome brutality that accompanied the war was a clear manifestation of the denial of the rights and dignity of Sierra Leoneans; which was therefore a clear justification of the dial need to rebuild the human rights culture in the country. In recognition of the failure by the state (Sierra Leone) to adhere to its obligations in upholding and protecting the human rights and freedoms of its citizens, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that was set to investigate the causes of the war and make recommendations, strongly endorsed among other things, the creation of a Human Rights Commission for Sierra Leone in its 2004 report; which had already been provided for in the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999.[622]

Background and Mandate

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, established by an Act of Parliament (Act. No. 9) in 2004; is the sole national institution charged with the mandate and responsibility to promote and protect human rights in Sierra Leone and to provide for other related matters without prejudice. It is a five member commission appointed through a transparent and participatory process of application and interview that commenced in 2005 by a selection panel of six, comprising of (6) representatives of civil society interest groups and one (1) from the government. These names of the five selected nominees were gazetted for public scrutiny and review and in October 2005, the nominees were approved by Parliament who thereafter took the oath of office before the President on 11th December, 2006 to commence work.[623]

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[622] Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) Report. The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone 2008. p.13
[623] Ibid p.14

Headed by a Chairman and assisted by a Vice Chairman and three other members, all five members were selected by the President from a list of seven (7) candidates submitted by the selection panel, were subject to the approval of Parliament after their selection in accordance with the criteria and procedures as prescribed in the Commissions Act for their employment; including the Executive Secretary and other employees.[624] The five commissioners adopted an innovative approach by electing both the Chair and the Vice-Chair to serve for a minimum rotational period of two years. The commission's main task is to examine, observe and document violations of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens both in the country and those contained/ enshrined in the constitution and submit an annual report titled "The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone" to the President, Parliament of Sierra Leone and other International and Regional Agreements to which Sierra Leone is a party. This report should also contain the necessary steps taken by the HRCSL to respect, promote, protect and fulfill human rights in addition to results of investigated individual complaints, interventions and recommendations made by HRCSL.

However, due to the financial problems faced in the setting up of the Commission's Headquarters in Freetown and its regional offices, which were only alleviated by the payment of subventions from UNDP, Government of Sierra Leone, and the UN PBF; the commission became fully operational in 2008.

The key functions of the commission among others include:[625]

(a) To investigate or inquire into on its own or on complaint by any person any allegations of human rights violations and to report thereon in writing;

(b) Promote respect for human rights, through public awareness and education programmes aimed at creating a culture of human rights in Sierra Leone;

i) providing human rights information, including locating within the Commission a national human rights resource and documentation centre;

ii) publishing guidelines, manuals and other materials explaining the obligations of public officials in the protection of human rights;

iii) effective co-operation with non - governmental organisations and other public - interest bodies engaged in the field of human rights;

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[624] The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act, 2004.Pp.2- 6. (Available at: http://www2.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127616.pdf) Sourced: 05/04/2011

[625] Ibid.Pp.6-8.

(c) Review existing legislation and advise the Government concerning compliance by such legislation with the obligations of Sierra Leone under international treaties or agreements;

(d) Advise the Government concerning draft legislation, which may affect human rights;

(e) Advise Government concerning preparation of periodic reports required by international human rights treaties or agreements to which Sierra Leone is a party;

(f) Monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone;

(g) Publish an annual report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone.

Sections 1 and 7 of the Act gives the commission the mandate to address all rights guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in all international agreements to which Sierra Leone belong and its independence is guaranteed by section 14 of the Act. However, section 16 of the Act prevents the commission from investigating any pending matter or already decided by a court of competent jurisdiction and human rights violations that occurred before 26th August 2004. The commission is not a substitute for the courts and therefore has to refer to the High Court for contempt of any person that refuses, without any justifiable cause, to comply with its decision, direction or order within a specified time. Similarly, persons that are aggrieved by any decision of the commission have the right of appeal to the Supreme Courts. However, the commission reserves the power to intervene in legal proceedings that involve any human rights issues by issuing "curiae briefs."[626] The commission also has power as is vested in the High Court of Sierra Leone, under section 8 of its Act, to make rules of procedure for the conduct of its investigations to: enforce the attendance of witnesses and examining them on oath, compel the production of documents; and issue a commission or request to examine witnesses abroad. In the same vein, it has powers to make orders or directions to enforce its decisions and measures meant to protect the life and safety of an individual(s) and free medical treatment where necessary - including payment of compensations to victims/ families of human rights violations, provide financial assistance including legal aid to citizen victims of human violation; and to release any person unlawfully detained or restricted.

Vision, Mission and Core Values of HRCSL

It is the vision of the commission to see: A Sierra Leone where a culture of human rights prevails and the people respect the rule of law and live in peace and dignity.

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[626] Ibid. p.16

To achieve this vision, the commission exists to take a lead role in building s culture of human rights (including respect for individual responsibilities) which maintains human dignity for all in Sierra Leone in full compliance with the Constitution, laws, international and regional instruments through effective partnership and collaboration.

As an independent body, "the HRCSL is committed to upholding these core values:

i) Professionalism encompassing discipline, competence, dependability, integrity, expertise, team spirit, tactfulness.

ii) Service with humility.

iii) Independence including fairness, objectivity, impartiality

iv) Inclusiveness ensuring diversity.

v) Accessibility covering empathy, tolerance, understanding

vi) Accountability embracing honesty; and

vii) Collaboration.

Financial / Funding Sources and Functions of the HRCSL

The HRCSL operates moneys appropriated by Parliament, including gifts, grants and or donations it receives from institutions, individual persons or authorities; but provided these donations or good will gestures are not likely to interfere and or compromise their independence.[627]

The HRCSL's functions, amongst many others, are: responding to complaints filed to it, capacity building through recruitment and training (both locally or internationally) of its staff/ employees and participation by Commissioners and staff in conferences; administration of human and finances resources; establishment of regional offices to enhance access to services by provincial communities; working with the Government of Sierra Leone on issues such as – review of National Commission for Social Action's (NaCSA's) led Reparation and pension programmes, alleged drug trafficking, women's safety issues, need to adopt human rights-based approaches to economic development; undertake strategic interactions such as engagement with Parliament and other commissions; collaboration with civil society,

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[627] Ibid. p.17

collaboration with other partners (E.g International Rescue Committee – IRC and MSWGCA); build effective partnerships and learning through experience sharing with e.g. National Human Rights Institution (NHRIs) in Kenya; maintain technical cooperation with UNPBC – E.g in a tripartite mechanism and Steering Committee for the implementation of the HRCSL/ UN PBF project , maintain good media relations; publish and disseminate "The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone annual Report; Celebrate International Human Rights Day; undertake regional training of traditional leaders on Human Rights; conduct workshops on the Child Rights Act and Gender Justice Laws and undertake their monitoring and implementation; support the implementation of the TRC recommendations – by archiving the TRC documents and materials, and continuous promotion of the TRC vision which represents the hopes and aspirations of Sierra Leonean; monitoring of local government elections; monitoring of prisons and detention places; reviewing of draft legislations; and the handling of complaints filled to it. Below is a summary of cases handled by HRCSL in 2008 in fulfillment of Section 7 (2) (a) of its Act No. 9 of 2004, which gives the commission the right to investigate complaints of human right violations and or refer them to the appropriate authorities.

Table 6.2: *Complaints by Regions in Sierra Leone*

No	Regions	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Western Area	190	93.1
2	Eastern Province	04	2.0
3	Southern Province	06	2.9
4	Northern Province	04	2.0
TOTAL		204	100%

Source: The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone (2008) Report.p.32

Table 6.3: *Complaints filed against sectors in Sierra Leone*

No	Different Sectors	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Private individuals	108	53.0

2	Sierra Leone Police	22	10.8
3	Other Government Institutions including Public Servants	35	17.2
4	Prisons	05	2.5
5	Private Security Agencies	12	5.9
6	Business, Shops, Companies etc	16	7.8
7	Intelligence Agency	00	0.0
8	Traditional Institutions	01	0.5
9	Religious Institutions	02	0.9
10	Local Government	02	0.9
11	Judiciary	01	0.5
TOTAL		204	100%

Source: The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone (2008) Report.p.32

6.5 Assessment of Policies, Frameworks and Support by GoSL, HRCSL and UN to LWCSOs for Gender Equality and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

There is no doubt among women's rights activists, groups and or CSOs interviewed about the role of the UN PBC/ PBF in facilitating gender-aware legal and judicial reforms and its much needed financial and political support to ensure the long overdue adoption of the legal frame work that outlaws the various kinds of human right abuses and discriminatory laws and practices discussed earlier, and its commitment to gender equality. There has also been high commendation for the progress made so far in this direction , starting with the signing of CEDAW in 2000, followed by the passing of subsequent and numerous legislations (mentioned above); all aimed at achieving equality for both sexes as the main pillar for the achievement of the rest of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A huge amount of inspiration can be derived from the Government of Sierra Leone's national policies and strategies, backed by the UN and the international community that reflects their genuine concerns for the achievement of gender equality. However, these concerns when weighed or tested against the realities on the ground in Sierra Leone, reveals major lapses/

flaws.

First and most importantly, a closer look at the PBF budget allocation to the various sectors or priority areas reveals gender as a cross cotton issue as clearly stated above and not given the priority it deserves as an underlying factor in the conflict. Energy, which was identified as the second most important sector under the PRSP II of the APC ruling government, as the financial allocation shows in the building of a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone; was never considered a major or frontline issue in the PRSP I document. This priority place giving to energy over other 'pressing' needs remains to be justified as the whole country wallows in darkness – and the electricity generated by the generator bought with this fund cannot even meet the power supply needs of the capital Freetown and its environs. But more intriguing is the fact that a sustainable peacebuilding process seeks to address the underlying causes of any conflict in a bid to prevent a reoccurrence or relapse into violence. Its clear from analysis of the Sierra Leone conflict that electricity was never an underlying or a contributing factor to the civil conflict although its importance for modern day development in unquestionable. Speaking on the basis of anonymity, some of the interviewees alleged that the making of electricity supply a priority over other important issues for example such as poverty alleviation and the pervasive youth unemployment was a ploy by the APC led government to fulfill their promise to the Western Area voters, who greatly contributed to their overall winning of the 2007 general elections. In the same vein, the financial support of US $700, 000 to the CSO capacity building project,[628] with over one hundred and fifty organisations, is considered as abysmal. The persistence of GBV with very few prosecutions and conviction of perpetrators all leave numerous questions on the lips of many Sierra Leoneans interview.

Secondly, from an insider-investigator point of view, and those of professionals/ practitioners in the field of gender; there still remains major obstacles despite the frantic efforts by government (MSWGCA) in fulfilling its mandate, especially under CEDAW as discriminatory laws and practices; which are discussed in the later part of this section, still remain effective. There is also an inadequate lack of funds and the human resources required by the MSWGCA to be effective,

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[628] UN/ GoSL Priority Plan For Peacebuilding Fund (PBC) Sierra Leone. Revised July 2008. p.7
(Available at: http://www.unpbf.org/docs/Sierra_Leone_PBF_Revised_Priority_Plan_3July2008.pdf) Sourced: 13/8/2011

coupled with the local tribal traditions that are often discriminatory against women; are major causes for serious concern if not alarm. Both international and national calls to stop GBV and FGM have not yielded much dividend as both inhuman practices still remain, especially in the provincial areas of the country where 'traditional patriarchy' through enforced Muslim and customary law is widely believed and practiced. In order to improve or alleviate these awful conditions women find themselves, 'transformation through conscientisation has to first happen at the local or chiefdom levels where these violations are still rife and most disputes are still settled by local/ regional chiefs that are mostly men.'

Thirdly, although the free health and medical care, with supplements and drugs for pregnant girls and women, lactating mothers and children under five years of age as mentioned earlier, has been praised as having increased access to medical care by the target group by 50 percent, yet the lack of monitoring[629] by government shows no guarantee that the actual target beneficiaries are getting free access without discrimination and even the effectiveness and sustainability of the project beyond the DFID sponsorship period is questionable. Many stakeholders interviewed are very concerned and even so skeptical about the continuity of this project once the donor funds stop flowing. Child and maternal mortality rates were very high by 2010,[630] which warranted the government to introduce a national wide free medical health care policy for pregnant women, lactating mothers and all children under age five in all government health care institutions. However, there are still other health issues that still gravely affect women and girls such as teenage pregnancy and sexual reproductive health. This is mainly caused by their lack of adequate and proper education and therefore their inability to negotiate safer sex with partners, thus leading to HIV/Aids; which has an immense impact of family and community life and indeed the nation. A control and prevention legislation on HIV/Aids is in place that was legislated in 2007 but this is yet to be engendered since it still has discriminatory clauses against persons living with the disease, and especially women. There is need to provide quality counseling and access to HIV testing, treatment, care and support services to HIV affected girls and women. Some of the most challenging issues are the prevention of transmission from mother- to- child, access to girls in the remotest areas; improving the capacity of health workers to deliver adolescent-friendly

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[629] Op. Cit. UN Country Team SIERRA LEONE. Joint UN Approach to Peacebuilding and Gender Equality…. p.2 1

[630] According to DFID (2009:5-6), statistics estimated under-five mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio of 267 per 1000 live-births and 2100 per 100,000 live-births respectively.

reproductive health services and the improvement in sanitation and other preventive measures. According to estimates, 1.7 percent of women are living with HIV in Sierra Leone, with a 3.2 percent affection rate among pregnant women attending ante-natal clinics and an 8.5 affection rate among commercial sex workers.[631]

Fourthly, although the GJLs, which include the three gender acts, are a significant and promising milestone in the right direction, yet it has serious contradictions if not omissions, which if not taken care of appears ominous if not fatal to the well-meaning efforts of government. For example, the Devolution Act provides for surviving spouses, children, parents, relatives and other dependants of testate and interstate persons and for other related matters. Although this Act gives wives and daughters inheritance rights alongside husbands and sons, however; the exclusion of family, chieftaincy and community property of the deceased person from been distributed as clearly written in Part 1 under Application 1 Sub Sections (3), which states: "This Act shall not apply to family property, chieftaincy property or community property held under customary law, and (4) [F]or the avoidance of doubt, this Act shall not apply to any claim that is statute-barred by virtue of the Limitation Act, 1961,"[632] is unfair. This denial of women the right to property sends them lagging behind men as far as issues of ownership of and access to land, which is a major source of livelihood and economic empowerment for more that 70 percent of the population is inimical to the improvement of the economic status of women. Although numerous efforts have been made by MSWGCA to enhance women's rights in the areas of education, protection from violence, health care, and even economic rights; yet few of its programmes have incorporated the need for women to have the right to own and inherit property. This has left some organisations weary of governments' determination to once and for all rid the nation of Sierra Leone of major inequalities. For example the African Development Bank's findings on Sierra Leone's Gender Profile, which reveals that the Government's reluctance/ refusal to expunge Section 27(d) from the Constitution or to ban FGM from traditional practices, is clear indication of the lack of commitment to the gender agenda/ process;[633] is a case in point.

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[631] Keegan, Marnie. SIERRA LEONEAN WOMEN: Post-Conflict Rights, Resources, and Voice. Advanced Gender and Development Monterey Institute of International Studies. November, 2002. p.1

[632] Government of Sierra Leone. Devolution of estate Act (2007). Parliament of Sierra Leone. 14 June, 2007 p.34

[633] ENCISS. Coping Strategy 2011 Report. Freetown, Sierra Leone. p.9

Fifthly, there is still a significant high percentage of GBV occurring in Sierra Leone amidst all efforts by organisations such UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNCHCR and the Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE), which was established in 1995 to help victims at their clinics through discrete, private, and free healthcare; formalised GBV data collection and advocacy efforts and has assumed a lead role in counseling with elders, police, lawyers, and the judiciary to develop GBV prevention and response protocols. The Marie Stopes Clinics in the country runs well respected GBV education and counseling for both male and female victims and perpetrators. Unfortunately though, compounding the situation for GBV survivors is the slow referral protocols, obstacles in accessing justice, simply because the judicial system requires substantive resources in the form of transport costs and time and tenacity (lengthy time cases might drag on in the courts), with no compensation for the victims. The alleged increase in the confidence of victims and a corresponding increase in reported cases of sexual violence because of the technical and financial support to the FSU need further clarification as payment requests for medical certification from poor victims, among others, continue to hinder or limit the prosecution rates of cases of sexual abuse. Due to all of these and other barriers, few cases end up in court, and often victims opt instead for an out of court settlement at the community of family level. Hence, very few male perpetrators have been convicted for rape and the fines levied are most often paid to the father or another male relative and not to the victim. Worsening situations happen in the provinces where Muslim and Customary law practices are prevalent. Under these circumstances, a woman who reports domestic violence/ abuse by either a husband or a family member to local authorities is often denied protection and are usually recommended to return home, where she might face additional violence for 'reporting' or 'causing a problem.' My close observation as a male growing up in the provincial setting, has always shown that many authorities and even the police, many of whom are males; have this same discriminatory tendencies towards women victims of GBV as the same family members who abuse them. Most often in traditional Sierra Leone women/ girls are blamed for 'enticing' the males, thus causing the act of rape. Similarly so, provincial girls are most often either forced or encourage into sexual or marriage relationships by their parents/ relatives under age 16, which clearly shows that 'local customary law and practice will be implemented where national laws are not enforced.' Another example is polygamy, which is acceptable under Mohamedan Customary Law and not outlawed by any national or constitutional law, is widely practiced in many parts of Sierra Leone including the capital

Freetown. More interestingly, most of the police officers in Sierra Leone are traditional males, and often reporting of these cases, especially in the provincial areas, does more harm than good to women.

However, the Chairperson of FAWE, Christiana Thorpe is hopeful about the development in the case of rape as she remarked "the good thing in all this bad is that there has been a breakthrough in the culture of silence on rape. We're now going to the schools, sensitising people and communities."[634] The Sexual Offenses Act and the Matrimonial Bill are yet to be passed into law by Parliament, which if passed might help, now that the traditional silence (for fear by the victim of being rejected/ ostracised) that formally surrounded the act has now been broken as mentioned by the Chair of FAWE.

As a result of these lapses still lingering in the gender equality drive, some international organisations are not very optimistic of a positive outcome if certain measures are not put in place by the government of Sierra Leone. A call from the African Development Bank advocating for the development of a policy framework for improving girl's enrolment, and retention and completion rates of their primary education is a case in point. This call could not be unconnected with the inability of poor Sierra Leonean parents, mainly women shouldering the burdens of their children, including those who are single parents/ heads of households, to pay the other school charges, transport fare and lunch, is and has been causing the high level of school drop outs among girls thus increasing the illiteracy rate among women irrespective of the government acclaimed 'free education policy' for the girl child at the primary school level since 2003.

Lastly, although the Disability Act has now been passed (2011), the condition under which these persons live, especially those that suffered amputations during the rebel massacre is precarious and appalling. Majority of them have become a kind of nuisance to and a spectacle of laughter to foreigners and or visitors as begging along the street corners of Freetown has become their legal occupation.

6.6 Conclusion

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[634] Op. Cit. Keegan, Marnie. SIERRA LEONEAN WOMEN: Post-Conflict Rights…... p.1

From the above analysed sources of funding to the case study groups, it is evident that quite apart from the UN that is forefront in the promotion and support to women's peacebuilding work and gender equality issues; most of the financial support to LWCSOs come from international non-governmental organisations, some countries from Europe and the United States since the start of the war and interestingly, these organisations are interested and committed to gender issues. However, it is rather unfortunate that there is no mention of financial support from the GoSL to these organisations, which also raises questions over the political will of the GoSL's and its commitment to gender equality and women's full inclusion in the governance mechanism. Perhaps more renowned amongst the sources of support to LWCSOs, is the notable contributions of the OSIWA organisation, not only because it's a sub-regional (West Africa) organisation that is why it is fully committed to promoting women but also its support is seen to be across board to all three LWCSOs, as respondents emphasised.

On the other hand, amidst all of the policy adoptions and the enactment of legislations to improve various sectors as outlined in the UNJV report, nonetheless it seems that there is more to be accomplished than has been done as women and girls still experience high levels of illiteracy, limited options for employment, and extensive discrimination in the political, economic, social, cultural and civic domains. Although the TRC recommendations are so clear on the abolishing of all statutory and customary laws that discriminate against women and the GoSL taking numerous steps to advance gender equality based on national and international frameworks,[635] they are yet to yield much dividend. For example among the 124 parliamentarians in Sierra Leone's unicameral legislature, on 14 percent are women; over 65 percent of women and girls have no formal education; 62 percent of them are married before the age 18-19; ninety-one (91) to ninety-four (94) percent of girls and women aged 15-49 have undergone FGM. In other words, despite the trials of some perpetrators of these gender crimes, women and children still continue to suffer

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[635] National and international frameworks include: 1) National Constitution which provides non-discriminatory on the basis of sex, however, claw-back provision limits the guarantee of equal rights for men and women especially in matters of personal and family law; 2) Local Government Act 2004 with provisions made therein on the advancement of gender equality at local government level; 3) 'Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II' 'An Agenda for Change' 2008 – 2012; 4) the three Gender Acts which need to be implemented; 5) Peace Building initiatives and UN Security Council 1325 and 1820, dealing with women peace and security; 6) Work Plans of the UN Gender Theme Group – UN Joint Vision; 7) The Protocol to the 'African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa' the African Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality; 8) Convention on the Elimination of ALL forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); 9) Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (2000); 10) International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); 11) International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and 12) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

physical, emotional, and psychological trauma as a result of the massive human rights abuses they suffered up to this day.

The one important commendation though, is that there is now at least an appreciable high level of awareness among the population on the need to protect women's rights in Sierra Leone. What remains is the issue of actualising this awareness through enforced legislation and attitudinal change, especially in traditional circles.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PRESENTATION OF THE GENERATED FIELD DATA, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

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Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study by analysing the data collected from the use/ administration of the various data collection methods discussed in chapter three. The collected data was analysed using simple statistical tables, cross tabulation, graphs, pie charts, and frequency / percentage counts. The findings of the study are substantiated and validated by the testimonies of the interviewees as proof of the impacts. In other words, this analysis, as earlier mentioned in the methodology section, is in the form of an exploratory description of the data collected through the use of semi-structured, unstructured and open ended questions administered. Additionally, qualitative analysis of data collected from focus group discussions, the three sample case analysed, photographs; consultations with GoSL; officials of UN agencies, representatives of donor countries, local authorities, civil servants; members of other civil society groups, NGOs, (local and international), CBOs and other stake holders; including experiences of gender experts and activists were all utilised to compile, analyse and explain the results and findings from the responses of interviewed beneficiaries and stakeholders. The total number of one hundred and eleven (111) respondents interviewed are divided into three broad categories based on their roles and responsibilities in the peacebuilding process as seen below– ten (10) top level officials of LWCSOs who are the implementers of programmes/ projects, ninety (90) beneficiaries of the implemented gender peacebuilding programmes/ projects; and eleven (11) officials of both local and international stake holders/ organisations involved in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process. All of the information/ data gathered from the processes mentioned above were used to arrive at the findings and conclusions in this study. The collected data was analysed, discussed and summarised under five broad categories in relation to the research questions, each analysed under a specific objective as listed below.

I. Personal/ organizational bio-data of all respondents, programme activities LWCSOs and their impacts on:
   a) Target beneficiaries (women)/ communities

b) Women's/ gender issues

c) Civil society development/ promotion and

d) Peacebuilding

II. General assessment of impacts of LWCSOs peacebuilding programmes by officials of LWCSOs, beneficiaries, UN, international and local partners/ stakeholders.

III. Assessment of the political will and support of GoSL to LWCSOs building peace in Sierra Leone

IV. Challenges faced by LWCSOs in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone

V. Suggestions/ possible measures to enhance and alleviate these constraints for the achievement of gender equality and political participation for sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

But more importantly a detailed analysis of the impacts of LWCSO's activities and contributions to peacebuilding, as indicated in sections I, II and III above, is found in table 11 (figure 23) below in conjunction with the developed gender analytical framework in chapter three in an attempt to clearly provide answers to the research questions this study was set to unravel viz:

a) How are the activities of local women's civil society organisations impacting and contributing to promoting gender and women's issues in Sierra Leone?

b) How are these activities of LWCSOs contributing to the growth, and enhancement of civil society's role in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process?

c) What are the challenges faced by these case study LWCSOs in their efforts to establish a more peaceful post-war Sierra Leone?

7.1 Personal and Organisational Bio-data of LWCSOs, Target Beneficiaries, Survey Respondents, Project Activities of LWCSOs, and their Contributions/ Impacts on Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding

7.1.1 Personal and Organizational Bio-data of Officials of LWCSO Case Study Groups

Objective 1(a): The objective of this section is to basically establish the composition, organisational affiliations, positions and personal bio data of all respondents belonging to the LWCSOs and members of the selected stakeholder groups that were interviewed.

Table 7.4: *Gender, age & educational distribution among LWCSO officials*

Education			Age			Total
			19-35 yrs	36-54 yrs	55-65 yrs	
Vocational Training	**Gender**	Female		1		1
	Total			1		1
Tertiary	**Gender**	Male	1	2	0	3
		Female	1	5	2	8
	Total		2	7	2	11

Figure 7.4*: Age composition of LWCSO officials*

Percentage distribution of gender among LWCSO officials

Male 25%
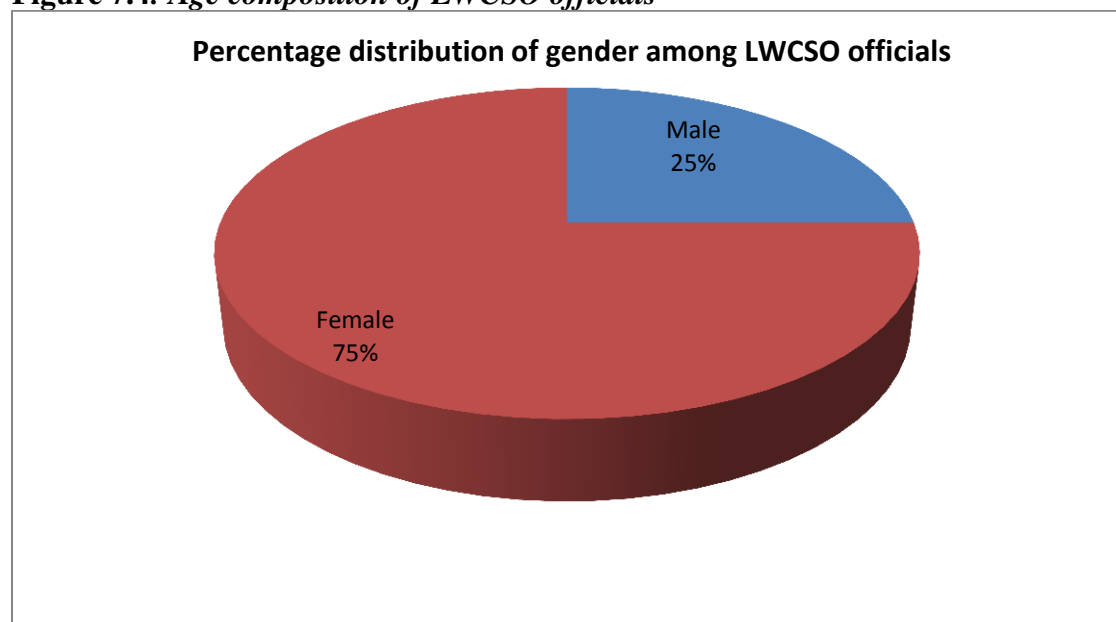
Female 75%

Figure 7.4 shows that among the ten officials of LWCSOs interviewed, 25 percent of them are males whilst 75 percent are females. These figures indicate that although this study is exclusively looking at LWCSOs involvement and contributions to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, yet they have male counterparts helping them with the implementation of specific projects, where they (women) are lacking in capacity and the required know how to successfully accomplish. This is a clear confirmation of one of the issues (i.e. lack of capacity), that is often sighted in the literature on women and peace, and which clearly stands out in the findings of this study as discussed at a later point.

Figure7.5: *Age composition of LWCSO officials*

Percentage distribution of age among LWCSO officials
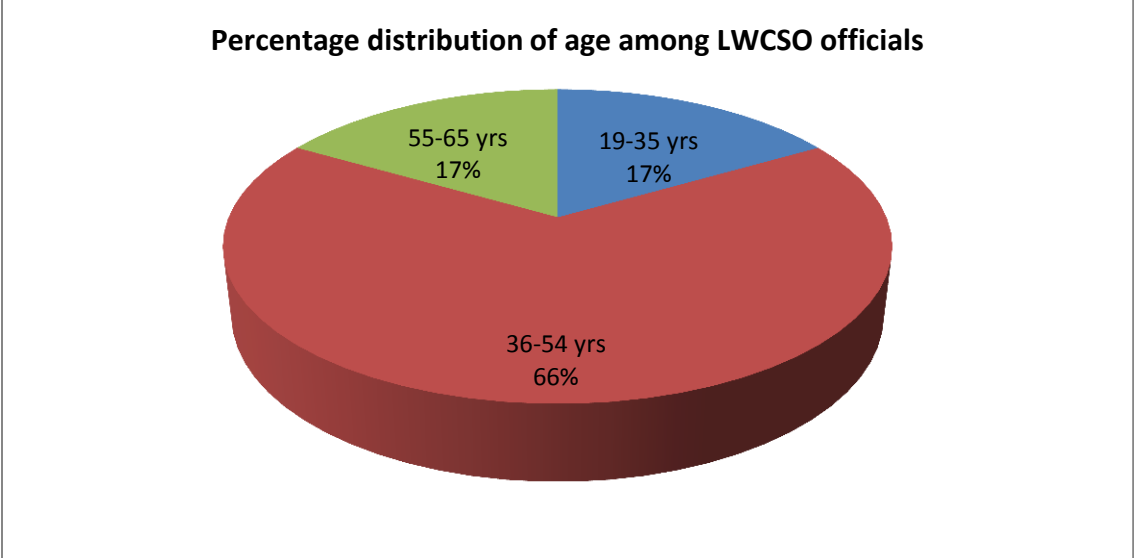
Figure 7.5 shows the age distribution among the LWCSO's officials interviewed. It shows that a sizeable number 17 percent of the respondents fall within the 19 – 35 years age bracket, and another 17 percent between the 55 – 65 age bracket. The significant percentage of 66 percent forms the bulk of the respondents. This finding also shows that all of the officials involved in the peacebuilding and development process had lived, experienced and being part of the conflict, and are now also part of the solution.

Figure 7.6: *Educational level of LWCSO officials*

Percentage distribution of education among LWCSO officials

Vocational Training 8%

Tertiary education 92%
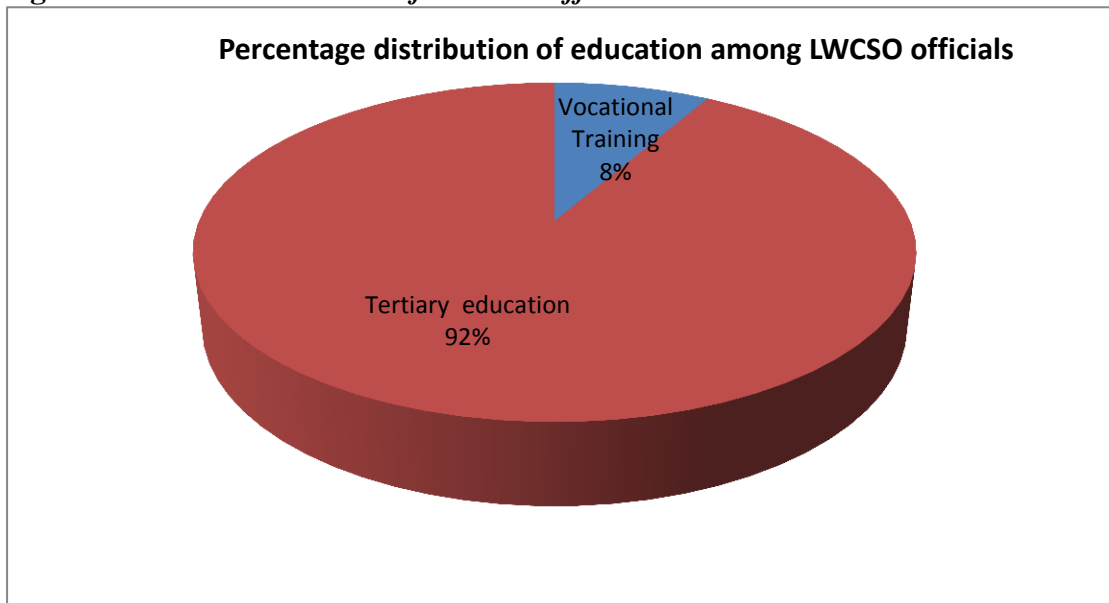
Figure 7.6 above reveals an analysis of the educational background of officials of LWCSOs. The figure indicates a high level of education among officials of LWCSOs and only a very small number (8 percent) has a low educational background (vocational training). This finding does firstly confirm that education is one important pre-requisite for holding higher leadership and decision making positions as clearly found out in the review of literature and emphasised by UN and the international community. Secondly, it shows that when women are educated they do not only help improve/ better the living standards of their family members, but that they are capable and willing to make meaningful contributions to peacebuilding and the development in their communities, and countries. It further demonstrates that although a high level of illiteracy exists among the women folk in Sierra Leone, nonetheless there is also quite a significant and highly educated number of women who are capable and ready to take on political and decision making positions inorder to keep alive the aspirations of the gender equality they are yearning for.

Table 7.5: *Marital status, organisational affiliation and positions of LWCSO officials*

Position in organisation			Organisation			
			MARWOPNET	50/50 Group	WIPNET	Total
President	**Marital status**	Married		1		1
	Total			1		1
Vice president	**Marital status**	Married		1		1
	Total			1		1
Focal point person	**Marital status**	Married	1		1	2
	Total		1		1	2
Project Director/ Manager	**Marital status**	Married	1		1	2
	Total		1		1	2
Secretary sub group/ Board member	**Marital status**	Widow/ widower			1	1
	Total				1	1
Programme Coordinator	**Marital status**	Married		1		1
	Total			1		1
Assistant Sec. General	**Marital status**	Widow/ widower	1			1
	Total		1			1
Project/ programme Officer	**Marital status**	Widow/ widower		1		1
	Total			1		1
Staff/ Programme producer	**Marital status**	Single	1			1
	Total		1			1
Volunteer worker	**Marital status**	Married			1	1
	Total				1	1

Table 7.5 above represents a summary of the background information on the marital status, organisational affiliations and the various positions held by officials of LWCSO in their respective organisations. The various information contained in this table are separately presented using various pie charts as seen below according to the different sectors.

Figure7.7: *Marital composition among officials of LWCSOs*

Percentage distribution of marital status among LWCSO officials

- Single 8%
- Widow/ widower 25%
- Married 67%
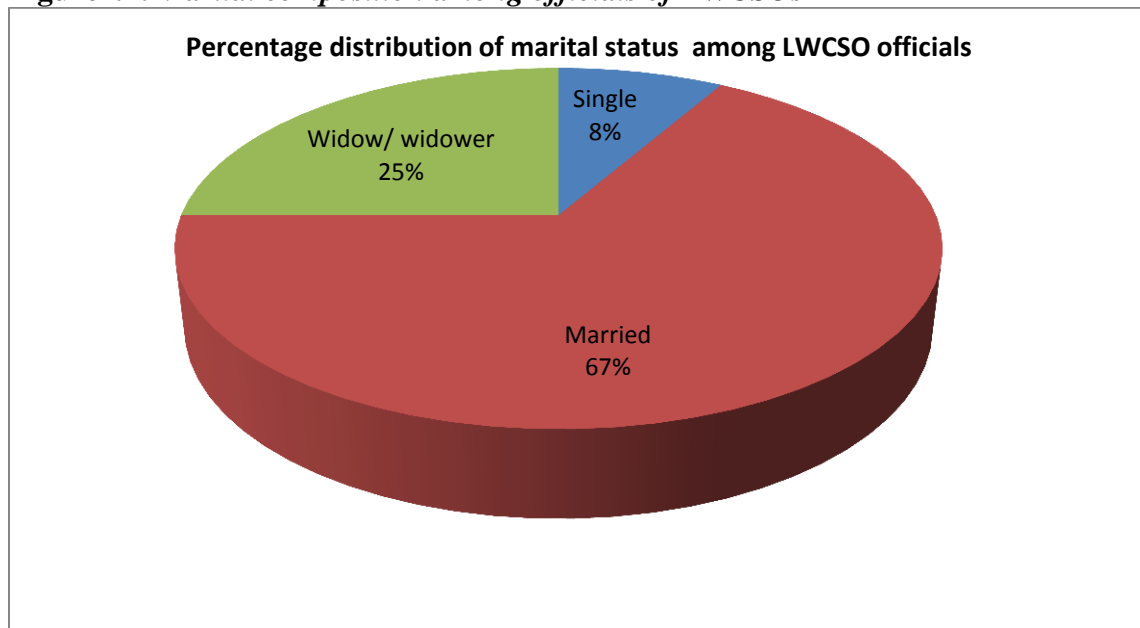
Figure 7.7 shows an analysis of the marital statuses of LWCSO officials interviewed. It clearly shows that 25 percent of the respondents are widows, and a small percentage (8 percent) are single. The data reveals that the greater majority of respondents (67 percent) are married. These percentage distributions are all significant, clearly showing that no matter what the different statuses of women; the bulk of them have always been involved in peace ventures even before the war with an upsurge in their numbers during and after the war. This might justify the findings that women are at the root of family, community and national peace in Sierra Leone. But more importantly, the increase in the number of married women clearly supports the findings in the literature about the importance of family the role of the women as mothers, caring for the other members in the family and acting as the unifying force within it. Despite the harsh GBV such as maiming, rape, amputations, and other immeasurable atrocities they experienced and survived during the rebel conflict, women generally refused to give up but to champion the pursuit of peace, not only for themselves but also for the perpetrators of crimes against them. This finding is a confirmation of the importance of Sierra Leone women and their long and historic association with peace making and peacebuilding in the performance of their traditional roles as mothers in both their families and community, an issue that is extensively discussed in exploring answers to the question 'why women in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone?'

Figure 7.8: *Organisational affiliation of LWCSO officials*

Percentage distribution of organisational affiliation of LWCSO officials
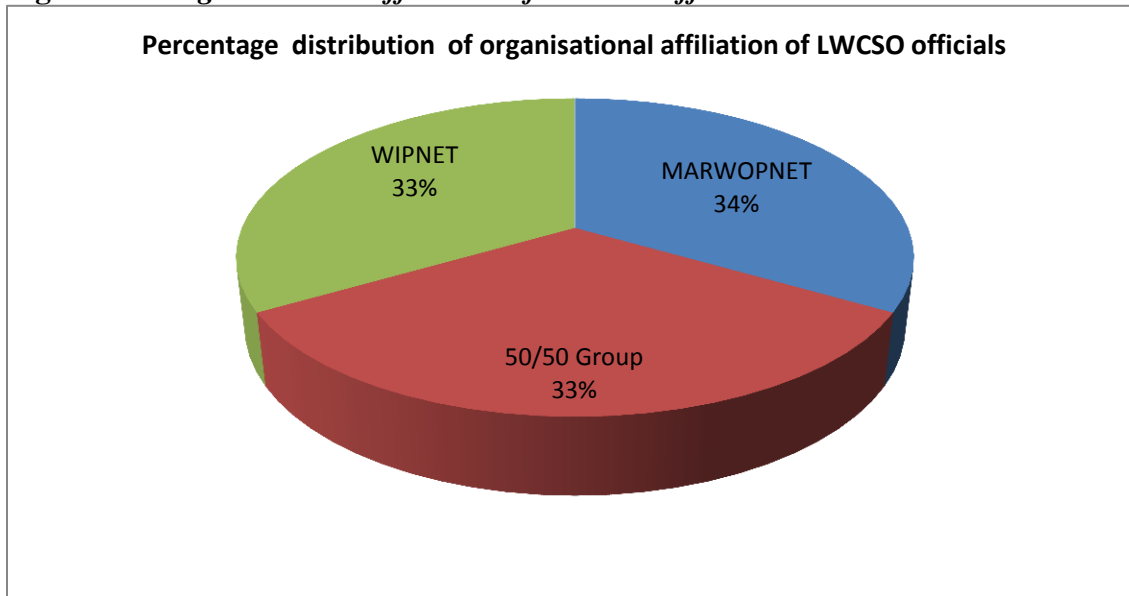
Figure 7.8 presents an analysis of the organisational affiliation of all case study LWCSO's officials that were interviewed. It shows an even distribution of the respondents from all three LWCSOs studied. The significance of this evenness is that in a way it justifies the findings that women's experiences with marginalisation and violence had sensitised them enough into banding together for collective action during and after the war, with the determination that never again will they sit idly by and allow a repeat of the mayhem of the eleven year civil war.

Figure 7.9: *Positions of officials of LWCSOs*

Percentage distribution of positions of LWCSO officials
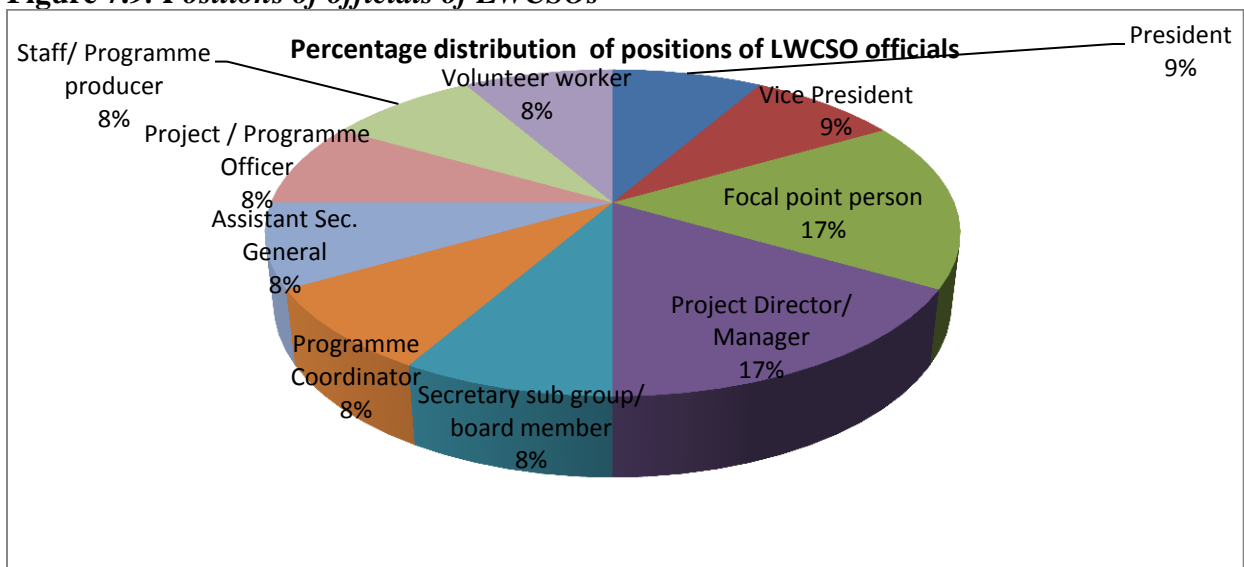
Figure 7.9 above represents the percentage distribution of the various positions held by officials of the three case study LWCSOs surveyed. The figure shows that 65 percent of the interviewees hold important and strategic grass root and middle level positions in their organisations, ranging from staff/ programme producer, focal point person to programme coordinator. The remaining 35 percent constitutes the senior top most positions ranging from project director, vice president to president. This result is in direct opposition to the isolationist practices against women from the public and political sphere in Sierra Leone on grounds of the old age traditional myth that women 'are not capable of amicably handling leadership and decision making positions without directives from men. This result further disproves that the cultural belief that 'women should be seen and not heard' is not only patriarchal but also unfounded as women are now not only effectively occupying top positions but have proven to be equally capable as men to amicably handle these positions; not only in their own organisations but indeed any position in Sierra Leone.

7.1.2 Personal/ Organisational Bio-data of Interviewed Target Beneficiaries

Table 7.6*: Gender, age & marital status distribution of beneficiaries*

Marital status			Age				Total
			Under 18 yrs	19-35 yrs	36-54 yrs	55-65	
Single	Gender	Male	0	2	0		2
		Female	3	9	6		18
	Total		3	11	6		20
Married	Gender	Male		2	5		7
		Female		12	11		23
	Total			14	16		30
Divorced	Gender	Male		1	4		5
		Female		2	4		6
	Total			3	8		11
Separated	Gender	Female		1	9	1	11
	Total			1	9	1	11
Widow	Gender	Female		1	2	5	8
	Total			1	2	5	8
Grand Total							80

Table7.6 presents an analytical background of gender, age, and marital statuses of targeted beneficiaries of the different programmes activities/ projects undertaken by LWCSOs. This table is translated into pie charts representing specific sectors as shown below.

Figure7.10*: Gender composition of respondent beneficiaries*
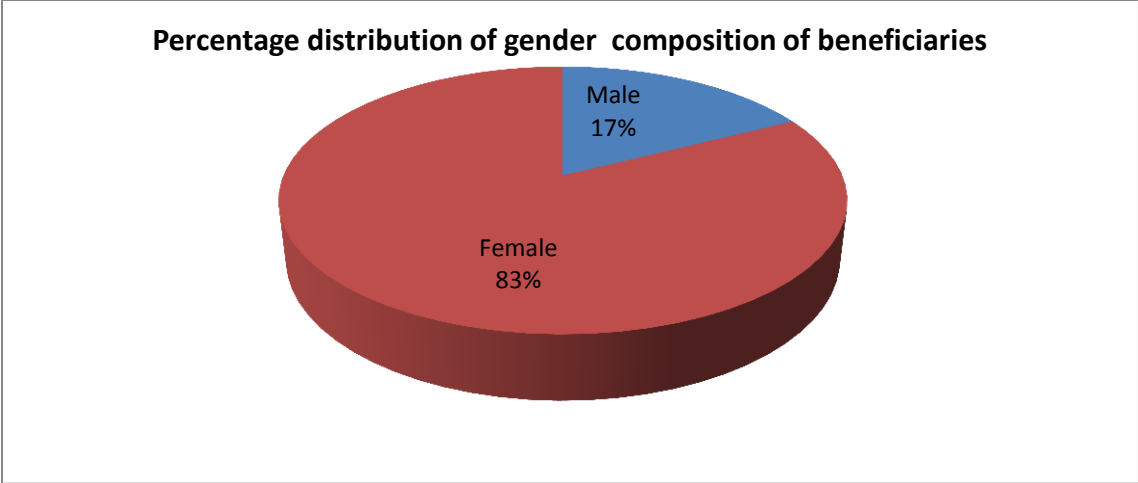
Figure 7.10 above shows the gender composition of the target beneficiaries of the peacebuilding programmes and projects undertaken by LWCSOs all over Sierra Leone. A small percentage (17 percent) accounts for the male beneficiaries compared to a far greater percentage (83 percent) of the respondents. This result is reminiscent of and confirmation of the study's fundamental aim to exclusively assess the contributions of a long term 'excluded and marginalised group of women.' However, the available percentage of men beneficiaries/ respondents clearly indicate the growing awareness among men not only of the rights of women to be part of the peacebuilding and development process but also their willingness and acceptance of the importance of including women in the peacebuilding and development processes; firstly because of their numbers (52 percent of the total population) and secondly to factor in their perspectives/ experiences and harness their skills for local ownership and sustainability of the peace process.

Figure7.11: *Age composition of respondent beneficiaries*

Percentage distribution of age composition of beneficiaries
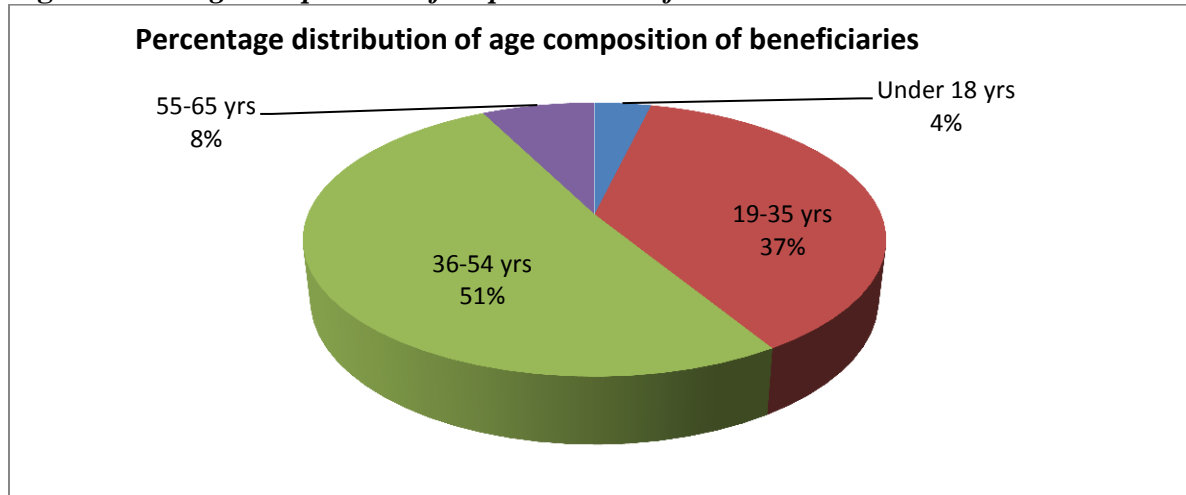
Figure 7.11 offers a breakdown of the composition of respondent beneficiaries of peacebuilding programmes/ projects implemented in Sierra Leone by LWCSOs. Smaller percentages of 4 percent for beneficiaries under 18 years and 8 percent of those aged between 55 – 65 are shown. The greater percentages of 37 percent are represented by respondents aged between 19 – 35 percent and 51 percent of those aged 36 – 54 percent respectively. This is quite significant as these two age brackets form the most vibrant and productive section of the Sierra Leonean society. However, the 18percent respondents under 18 years shows that the LWCSOs are aware of the need to also contribute and develop the younger generation, especially in the area of the girl child education, which is one of the crucial issues that need urgent address for a long term effect on gender equality.

Figure 7.12: *Marital status of beneficiaries*
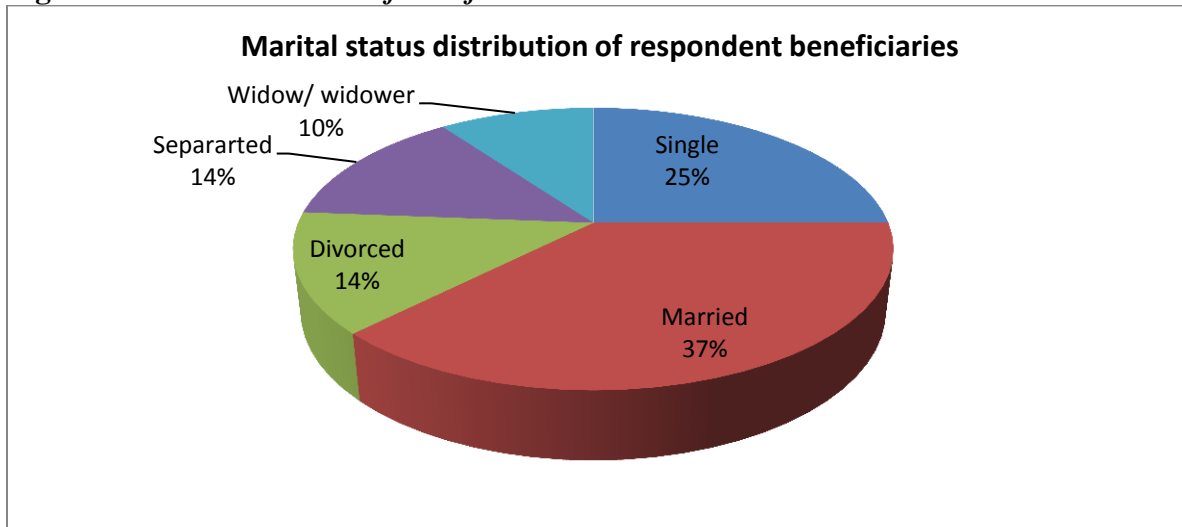
Figure 7.12 represents the marital distribution among the beneficiaries. It shows that 37 percent of the respondent beneficiaries are married. The data also is a reinforcement of the fact that although majority of women suffer the brunt of inequality in Sierra Leone and therefore determined to participate in the peace process, yet married women are in the greater majority. This is partly because married women, as has been highlighted in earlier discussions, bear the greater family responsibilities, experience greater effects of inequalities and suffer in conflicts the most, are closer to life because of their roles and responsibilities as life and care givers and nurturers of peace and are therefore more than willing and committed to chatting the way forward for family, community and country's peace and development. The data also shows that 25 percent of the respondents are single, and 14 percent are either separated or divorced. But more important the participation of all of the four percentage group distributions are a clear sign that women in Sierra Leone, no matter what their marital status are committed to working for peace in this war torn country.

Table 7.7: *Education & occupational distribution of target beneficiaries*

		Education							Total
		Prima ry Sch.	Some Sec. Sch.	Complet ed Sec. Sch.	Vocatio nal Trainin g	Under gradua te	Post gradua te	Higher/ Teachers , Certifica te	
Occupati on	Teacher	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	6
	House wife	0	3	1	2		0	0	8
	Farmer	0	9	1	0	0	0	0	10
	Small scale business	1	6	7	0	0	0	0	14
	Gender Activist	0	1	1	3	4	1	0	10
	Civil Servant/ Retired	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	6
	Self Employed	0	4	1	3	0	0	0	8
	Auto Mechanic / Technicia n	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
	Security Officer	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
	Student	1	1	1	5	0	0	1	9
	Journalist	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Total		2	25	15	18	10	4	6	80

Figure 7.13: *Occupation of target beneficiaries*

Occupational distribution of target beneficiaries

- News reporter/journalist 4%
- Security officer 3%
- Auto Mechanic/technician 5%
- Self employed 10%
- Civil servant/retired 8%
- Student 11%
- Teacher 7%
- House wife 10%
- Farmer 12%
- Small scale business 17%
- Gender activist 13%
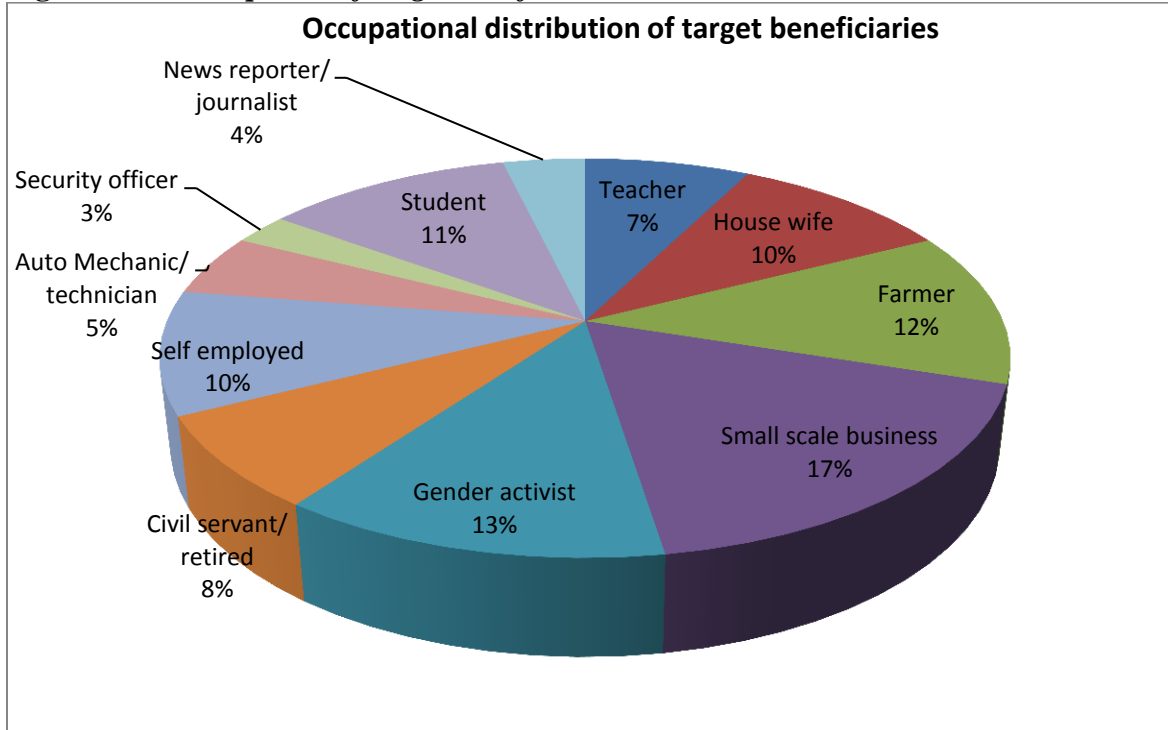
Figure 7.13 shows the analysis of the various occupations of the project beneficiaries of LWCSOs as shown in table 7.7 above. The data shows that very few women, 8 percent had managed to gain access to jobs that could offer them some security. Majority of the women, especially in the provincial areas are unemployed or if employed at all, must be in very low income earning jobs as revealed in clearly shown in this figure - 10 percent are house wives, another 10 percent self-employed, 17 percent in small scale business, 3 percent are journalists, 5 percent are engaged in auto mechanic jobs, 12 percent farmers, 7 percent as teachers and 3 percent being security officers. This clearly supports my early findings that women in Sierra Leone are engaged in very low paid jobs, which accounts for their greater economic dependence on the men folk. This situation is widely prevalent in the Sierra Leonean society and clearly shows the economic inequality that exist between men and women, which is also as a result of the high illiteracy among women leading to their low statuses that often leads to their marginalisation, abuse and increased GBV, conditions that were worsened by the war.

Figure 7.14: *Educational level of target beneficiaries*
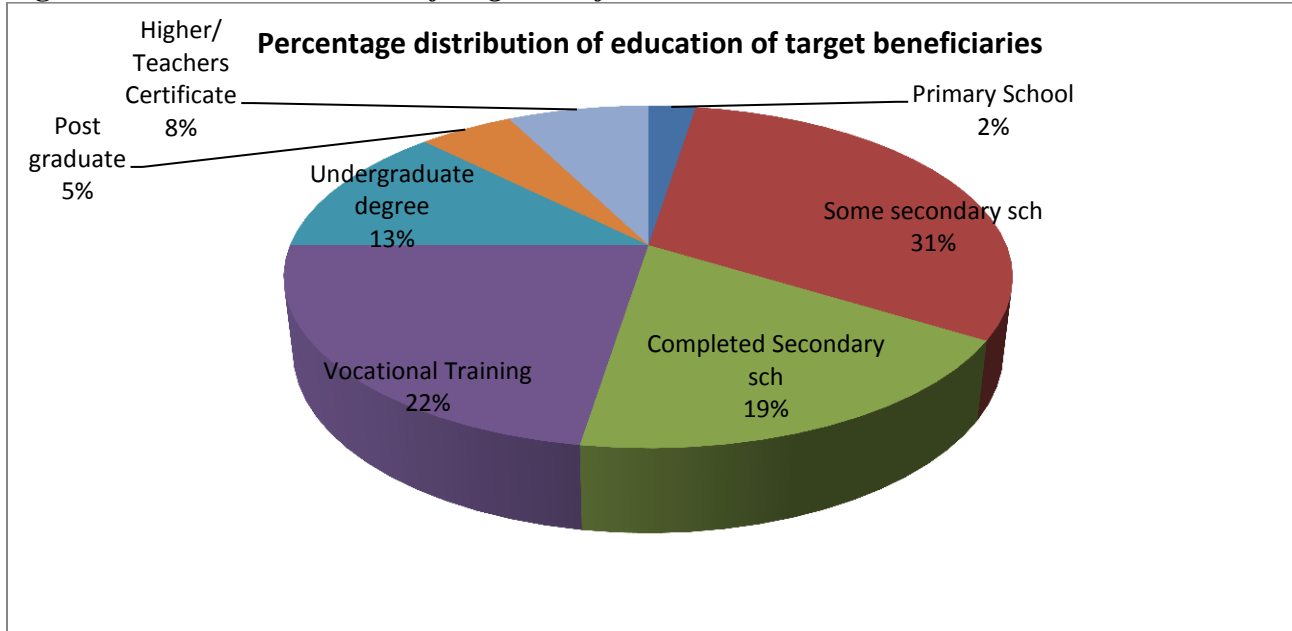
Figure 7.14 presents the educational background of target beneficiaries as shown in table 7.7 above. The data shows that greater percentages (31 percent, 22 percent, 19 percent and 13 percent) of the respondents have at least acquired some form of education. This shows, on one hand that at the time of this study majority of the women folk have attained a secondary school education and can therefore read and write. But on the other, it clearly also supports the high and prevalent illiteracy rate among women in Sierra Leone, which could as well be one of the main reasons why the level of employment in highly paid jobs and their number in very high and decision making positions are low. Nonetheless, a significant number of women (13 percent, 5 percent) exist that are very highly educated, followed by another 8 percent with middle level education. These percentages combined form a reasonable number of women that can take up important and higher level decision making positions even as the 30 percent quota for women in all political and decision making positions is slated to take effect in the 2012 elections. Even more importantly, this number does not include officials of the researched women's groups who are very highly educated women and others in the diaspora, which clearly refutes the patriarchal and anti-gender equality views held by some percentage of the population that women do not have the required human resource to take and live up to the challenges come 2012. This data also reveals that there is an increased awareness among the less fortunate women to attain very high

education in order to come together for collective action. It also implies that their non-attainment of higher educational status could not act as a barrier to banding together not to only contribute to improving their well-being and to make their plight known to the powers that be, but they have also grabbed hold of this opportunity of belonging to groups that can mount, trumpet and maintain a sustained voice on advocacy in order to break the culture of silence in suffering.

Table7.8*: Regional population distribution of beneficiaries*

Region	Frequency	Percent
Western Area	17	21.3
Northern Province	22	27.5
Southern Province	22	27.5
Eastern Province	19	23.8
Total	**80**	**100.0**

Figure7.15*: Regional population distribution of target beneficiaries*
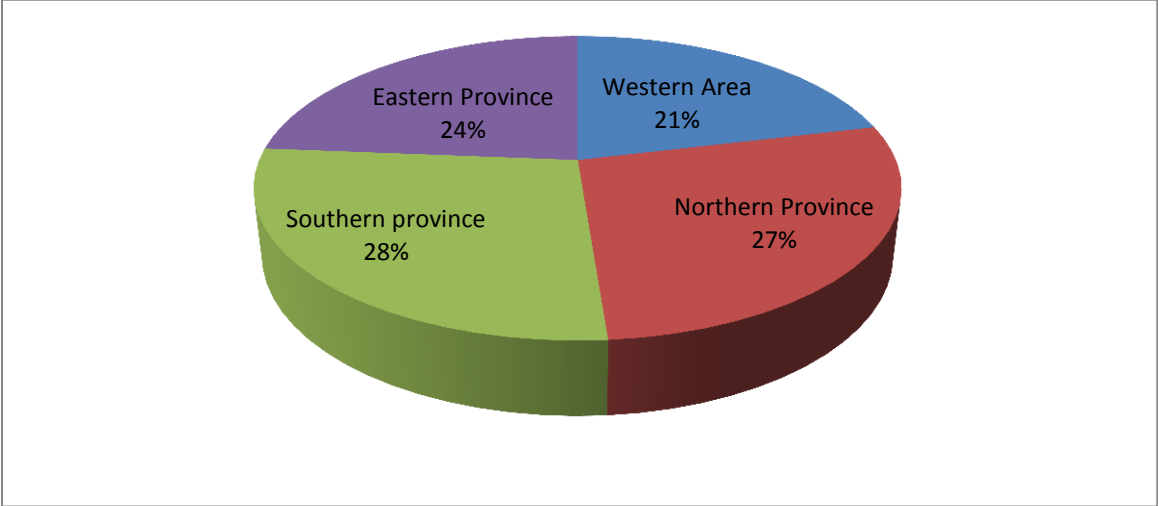
Figure 7.15 above presents the population distribution of the target beneficiaries by provinces that were interviewed during the survey concerning the implemented programmes/ projects by LWCSOs in their communities/ towns as shown in table 7.8 above. The frequency record shows that out of the 90 beneficiaries interviewed, 28 percent of the respondents are from the Southern Province, 27 percent from Northern Province; 24 percent from the Eastern Province and 21 percent from the Western Area. This data basically shows a fair distribution/ representation of interviewed beneficiaries from all the five regional divisions in Sierra Leone. This is very

significant as it also implies that the survey finding and report is not only a fair representation of the target population (women) and unbiased, but portrays a true and holistic reflection/ representation of the peacebuilding and development activities/ processes for the achievement of gender equality/ equity for sustainability in the entire country.

7.1.3 Personal and Organizational Bio-data of Stakeholders of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Process: UN/ PBF, HRCSL, CGG, MSWGCA, INGO, CSO (National), FBC, Women's Forum, UN Women, NMJD, and Local Governance Officials and Ordinary Citizens

Table 7.9*: Gender, organisational affiliation and position of respondent's stakeholder organisations in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process*

Position			Organisational Affiliation											Total
			UN PBF/ UNDP	Gender Ministry	HRC-SL	UN Women	CSO	Women's Forum	CGG	NMJD	FBC	INGO	Local Gov.	
Commis-sioner	**Gender**	Female			1									1
	Total				1									1
Prog. Officer	**Gender**	Male		1										1
	Total			1										1
Prog. Specialist	**Gender**	Male	1											1
	Total		1											1
Comm. Animator	**Gender**	Male								0		1		1
		Female								1		0		1
	Total									1		1		2
Admin Officer	**Gender**	Male					1							1
	Total						1							1
National Chairperson	**Gender**	Female						1						1
	Total							1						1
National Director	**Gender**	Female				1								1
	Total					1								1
Head of Dept.	**Gender**	Female									1			1
	Total										1			1
Prog. Officer	**Gender**	Male							1					1
	Total								1					1
Town chief	**Gender**	Male											1	1
	Total												1	1
Grand Total														**11**

The data contained in table 7.9 above represents a break down by gender, organisational affiliation and positions of the eleven respondents to the survey instruments administered during the study that belong to different organisations and institutions involved in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. These respondents are from some of the major local and international partner organisations working with the GoSL to support and promote the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. The data reveals that one representative each (a senior official) from major organisations including the UN PBF/ UNDP, MSWGCA, UN Women, HRCSL and many others were interviewed. Their financial, moral and technical support aside, the result and findings of this study would not have been credible without a collaborated perception and assessment of the peacebuilding process by all of these experts, stakeholders and sponsors, especially the UN and other international backers.

7.1.4 Peacebuilding Programme Activities of LWCSOs and their Impacts on Target Beneficiaries

Objective 1(b): To identify the programmes/ projects implemented by LWCSOs in Sierra Leone and to assess how these programmes have impacted on: target beneficiaries (women's issues) and their communities, the development and promotion of civil of society and the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. Table 7.10 below is a summary of the programme activities of LWCSOs and figure 23 presents a brief summary and discussion of the impacts of these programmes on the various sectors mentioned above, using testimonies of target beneficiaries, stakeholders, sponsors, and officials of various organisations and institutions interviewed.

Table 7.10: *Programmes/ projects implemented by surveyed LWCSOs in all regions*

Programmes implemented			MARWOP NET	50/50	WIP NET	All 3 orgs.	MARWOP NET 50/50	50/50/ WIPNET	MRWOPNET/ WIPNET	Total
			LWCSOs that implemented programmes/ projects							
Radio/ media awareness/ sensitization on GJLs, gender policies/ equality laws, political participation & peace	Region	Western Area	0		0	1		0		1
		Northern Province	4		0	0		0		4
		Southern Province	1		1	1		0		3
		Eastern Province	0		1	0		1		2
	Total		5		2	2		1		**10**
Advocacy w/shops, Trainings, capacity building in peace, rule of law & political participation	Region	Western Area		3		0	0			3
		Northern Province		0		0	1			1
		Southern Province		2		0	0			2
		Eastern Province		2		1	0			3
	Total			7		1	1			**9**
Humanitarian Assistance/trauma healing	Region	Northern Province	7		0					7
		Southern Province	0		1					1
	Total		7		1					**8**
Peacebuilding skills & early warning & monitoring trainings	Region	Western Area	0	1			0	0		1
		Southern Province	0	0			0	1		1
		Eastern Province	1	0			1	0		2
	Total		1	1			1	1		**4**
Conflict mgn., resolution/ peace & capacity building; early warning, political part.& monitoring trainings& trauma healing	Region	Western Area	1		1	0	0		0	2
		Northern Province	0		1	0	0		0	1
		Southern Province	1		3	0	1		1	6
		Eastern Province	1		1	1	1		1	5
	Total		3		6	1	2		2	**14**
Reconstruction/developm ent assistance/ empowerment projects	Region	Northern Province	3		0					3
		Southern Province	0		2					2
	Total		3		2					**5**
Awareness raising/ advocacy on gender & women's rights & political participation	Region	Western Area	1	0	0	1				2
		Northern Province	2	1	1	0				4
		Southern Province	0	1	4	1				6
		Eastern Province	0	0	2	0				2
	Total		3	2	7	2				**14**
Awareness/sensitisation, advocacy; conflict mgn./resolution trainings on rule of law; GJLs/gender , peace, capacity building, empowerment, early warning & monitoring& GBV trainings	Region	Western Area		1		7				8
		Northern Province		0		2				2
		Southern Province		1		0				1
		Eastern Province		0		5				5
	Total			2		14				**16**

Figure 7.16: *Programmes/ projects implemented by LWCSOs*

Percentage distribution of implemented projects by LWCSOs

- Advocacy for law reform, Radio/ media awareness raising & sensitisation / trainings on women's rights, socio-economic & political political participation/ empowerment trainings — 20%
- Radio/ media campaigns on gender equality issues, GBV & early warning/ monitoring trainings projects — 12%
- Campaigns & w/shops, trainings on capacity capacity building & the rule of law — 11%
- Humanitarian assisstance & trauma healing — 10%
- Skills training & assistance to girl child education — 5%
- Radio/ media awareness raising & training on conflict management & resolution , peace making & peace building, capacity building and — 18%
- Reconstruction and development assistance projects — 6%
- Campaigns, worshops/trainings on GJLs, gender policies & political leadership/ empowerment — 18%

Figure7.16 shows a comprehensive analysis of the various peacebuilding programmes/ projects and activities that were implemented or undertaken by LWCSOs in all the five provinces throughout Sierra Leone and within the ten year period (2002-2012) under review as indicated in table 7.10 above by the 90 respondent beneficiaries interviewed. Among the numerous projects implemented, data collected shows that much of the efforts by LWCSOs at peacebuilding in Sierra Leone are mainly concentrated on advocacy and awareness/ sensitisation on gender and women's rights issued through radio discussions, consultations, conflict management, making, resolution and peacebuilding trainings; trainings in early warning and monitoring systems and skills; socio-economic and political empowerment trainings, skills and capacity building trainings in the rule of law for more leadership and decision making roles by women; whilst trauma healing and counseling; construction, educational support and development projects; and

humanitarian assistance occupy a smaller percentage. It is not surprising that the greater percentage is focused on mainly awareness because if there has to be any breakthrough in the move for peace, equality and sustainability, the perceptions or awareness of people especially of men and traditional authorities in Sierra Leone, needs to be raised about patriarchal thoughts and disregard for women's human rights and equal status. The impacts of these projects on target beneficiaries and their communities are discussed and analysed below. Included as additional proof of the impacts of the peacebuilding activities by LWCSOs are photos of some of the impacts/ awards, beneficiaries and peacebuilding programmes/ activities undertaken by LWCSOs.

Figure 7.17: *MARWONET's Training of Trainers (TOT) of – e.g. women's groups, opinion leaders, youth groups, governmental and non-governmental agencies and local level security institutions in early warning at the Sierra Leone border areas*
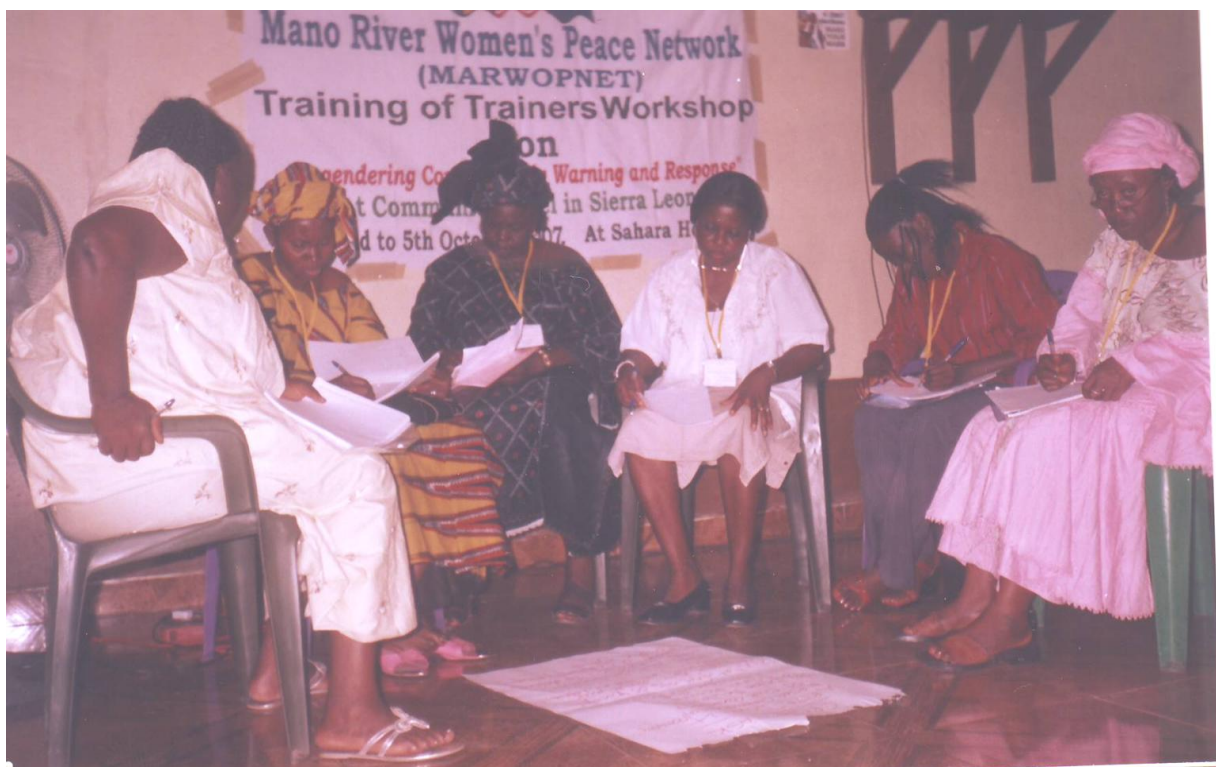
Figure 7.18*: Launching of MARWOPNET's Community Radio FM 88.4 for peace and reconciliation - Gbalamuya, Sierra Leone - Guinea-Conakry border*

Figure 7.19: *MARWOPNET's peace campaign in a Sierra Leone –Guinea border town*

Figure7.20: *Annual Peace Games to Mark the Day of the African Child – June 16th*

Figure 7.21: *Campaign against SGBV by WIPNET members in BO – Southern Sierra Leone*

Figure 7.22: *A victim of SGBV with two kids but father at large*

Table 7.11: *Impacts assessment of peacebuilding programmes implemented by LWCSOs on women, their rights and gender issues*

Programmes	Impacts of programmes on beneficiaries/ communities								
	Raised awareness on women's rights and restored marriages/ relationships & reduced GBV	Restored dignity, statuses, empowered and emancipated women	Restored self-confidence/ worth and given voice to women on their issues	Improved support, peace & unity in the home/ family	Enhanced understanding/ acceptance / sharing of roles	Increased women's voices, participation in politics, and contribution to social development	Increased in capacity, leadership roles of women and girl child education	Disunity in some families/ mediation not successful / no school for children/	Total
Awareness Raising/ Radio.	3	2	2	0	2	1	0	0	10
Advocacy workshop/ trainings in peace/ capacity building; rule of law & political participation.	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	9
Humanitarian Assistance	0	3	0	1	0	0	4	0	8
Skills. Peacebuilding, leadership and early warning trainings & monitoring.	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	4
Conflict management, resolution/ peacebuilding & capacity building and early warning & monitoring trainings.	1	2	1	3	3	2	2	0	14
Development/ empowerment projects.	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	5
Awareness raising/ Advocacy	3	2	3	3	1	0	1	1	14
Awareness/sensitisation, advocacy, conflict resolution; training on rule of law; peace and capacity building skills/ empowerment; early warning & monitoring trainings	1	1	2	1	3	2	5	1	16
Total	10	15	10	9	11	8	15	2	80

Figure 7.23: *Impacts of LWCSOs activities on women (rights and gender issues) and Civil Society*
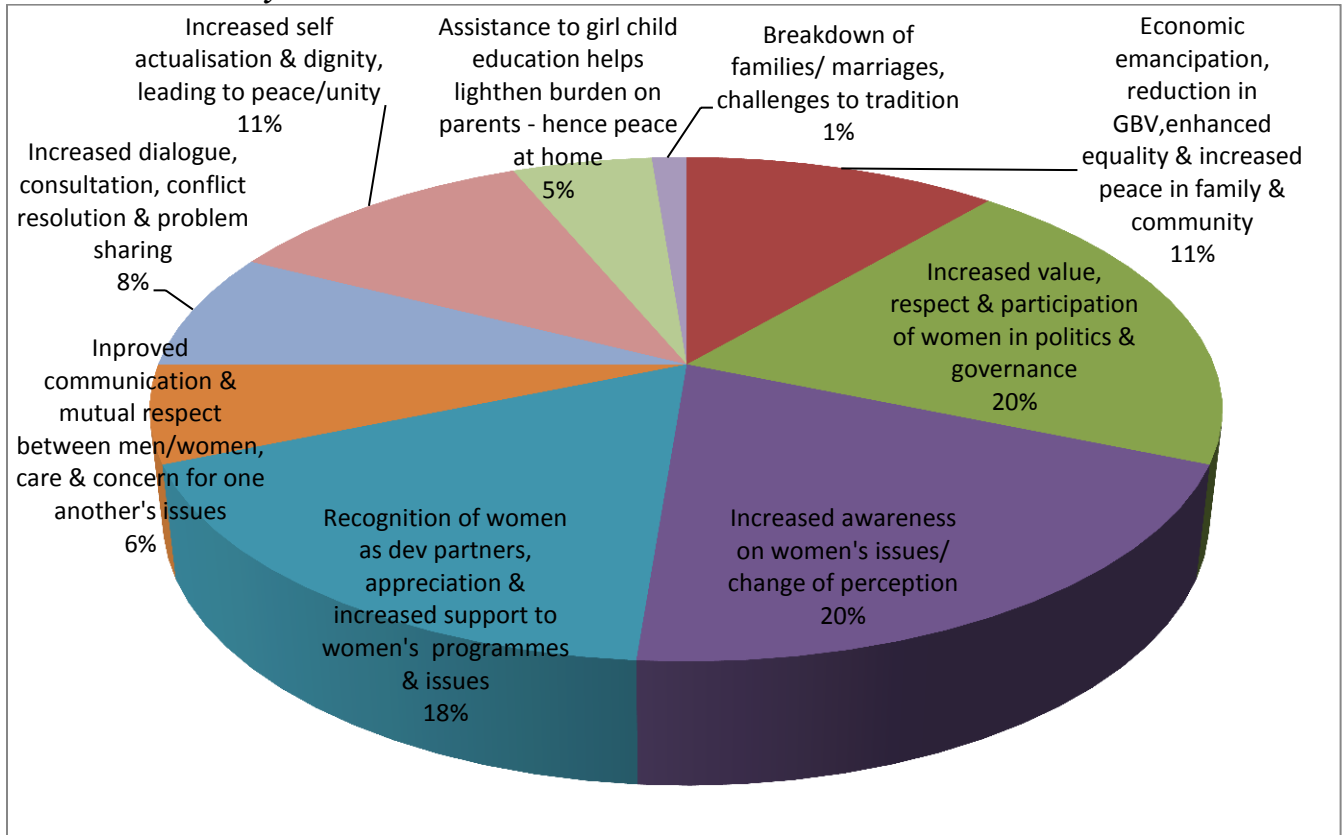
Figure 7.23 above represents a summary of the overall impacts of LWCSO's implemented projects and peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone as shown in table 7.11 above. As peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet till this time, led to massive unrest; the presentation and analysis of the impacts of LWCSOs activities on women, their rights and gender issues; civil society and thus the overall peacebuilding process are discussed below. The impact analysis and assessments are carefully done under the seven categories outlined in the analytical framework in figure 3.1 of chapter three, which includes: Advocacy/ awareness raising, waging conflict nonviolently/ enhanced political participation, reducing direct violence, building capacity, transforming and restoring conflict relationships, humanitarian assistance/economic empowerment and development work and protection/ early warning. LWCSOs in Sierra Leone have and continue to play important roles in each of these categories of peacebuilding as extensively discussed below.

Advocacy and Sensitisation/ Awareness Raising Campaigns

As advocators for peace and community sensitisers about democracy and good governance, gender equality and the need for a peaceful co-existence, women in Sierra Leone have always been committed and remain as such to peace. Being fully aware that their exclusion from the decision making process in Sierra Leone for decades, was the major cause of the widened gender inequalities and one that men are not accountable to or responsive to women's citizens, thereby perpetuating women's political, social and economic marginalisation; LWCSOs were poised to quickly address the issue at policy level and therefore made it one of their main focus or target areas of intervention. The TRC in its 2004 report on the rebel war in Sierra Leone clearly recommended the amendment of certain laws in the law books of Sierra Leone that are discriminatory, endorsing also the Lome Peace Agreement's recommendation on the creation of the HRC for Sierra Leone to help address the rights, issues and the injustices that obtain in the society in general and against women in particular.

Recognising that the genuine address of the inequalities mentioned above may prevent, reduce, and address the root causes of the Sierra Leone civil conflict and help usher in a lasting peace, LWCSOs, especially the 50/50 Group moved into gear immediately they came into existence in 2000 to tackle the issue of discriminatory laws. Their first task was to produce the "Local Government Made Simple Handbook" on the discriminatory laws against women in collaboration with the Layers Centre for Legal Assistance (LAWCLA) and the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE) with funding from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. [636] In collaboration with the Gender Ministry, UN Women, Women's Forum, international organisations, feminists and some other NGOs, both local and international that are working on women's issues; and with support from the international community, women have been able to push through the enactment of the following gender acts and policies: the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy (2004), the Child Rights Act (2007), the three Gender Justice Laws (GJLs) of 2007 that are meant to address the discriminatory issues against women discussed in chapter five of this study. The gender acts comprise of: a) The Domestic Violence Act (2007), which deals with three important issues - domestic violence, protection of victims,

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[636] The 50/50 Phenomenon in Sierra Leone. (Available at: www.fiftyfifty-sl.org) Sourced: 06/12/2011

and settlement out of court; b) The Devolution of Estate Act (2007),[637] and c) The Registration of Customary Marriages and Divorces Act (2007) – calls for the registration of customary marriages and divorces so as to protect marriages contracted under customary law or live together as husband and wife in the name of custom. Additionally, the adoption of the National Policy on the Advancement of Women (2009), the National Gender Strategic Plan (2009), and the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820 (2009), the transformative action of offering 'free education' to the girl child at the primary level by the GoSL in 2002are all notable achievements of LWSCOs in their search for and contribution to building the peace Sierra Leone needs.

Sensitisation and advocacy campaigns for women to vote and to be voted for by LWCSOs using T-Shirts, posters, and stickers with cultural sensitive messages, including nationwide radio programmes in all the major local languages were and are still being undertaken. Voter education, workshops on gender-sensitive voter registration and training programmes and seminar activities of LWCSOs targeting mainly men, in order to ensure their understanding of the need for gender equality, need to protect and support women for and into positions, and need to ensure the rights of women to vote independently; as it is a common practice in Sierra Leone for heads of households (mainly men) to select candidates that the entire family members should vote for. Sensitisation of civil society, religious and traditional leaders, first time voters, and organising gender mainstreaming training sessions to gender-sensitive election observers and monitors are the other activities that have altogether been successful in: a) mobilising both male and female voters, b) providing a forum for people to hear and raise issues important to them and stay abreast with the electoral process, c) prevent violence that have occurred in the past due to insufficient or false information and d) the increase in women voters, candidates/ political aspirants and hence, an increasing number of women in politics, governance and positions of trust. For example Sierra Leone is the first country in West Africa to have a female brigadier in

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[637] This Act examines what happens when a man dies without writing a will (intestate), and even in the event where there is a will (testate). Before the coming in to effect of this Act women were disadvantaged more especially under the Muslim and Customary laws. This act now abolishes some sections of the Sierra Leone constitution that were discriminatory against women. These include: Section 26 of the Christian Marriage Act which states that a marriage celebrated in which one of the parties is a native will not have any effect on the property of the native. Subsection (1) of section 9 of the Muslim Marriage Act which states that when the woman dies intestate the man takes the whole whiles the woman is not entitle to benefit if the man dies intestate. The Second Schedule to the Administration of Estates Act Cap.45 which states that if a woman dies intestate leaving a husband the whole of the estate shall go to him, whereas if a man dies intestate leaving a widow only one third will go to the wife.

the military, including the recent sending of women police personnel on UN peacekeeping missions abroad. But irrespective of these endeavours and successes recorded, the study found out that lots of women organisations are unable to undertake effective advocacy work because of the lack of confidence in themselves, which is as a result of the high and prevalent illiteracy rate among them. At national level, advocacy campaign programmes are constrained by the lack of adequate logistical support mainly for the 50/50 Group that is leading the way.

LWCSOs, especially MARWOPNET, were very instrumental in the UN successfully led and sponsored Disarmament, Demobilisation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRR) process as a result of their insistence on a special and focused attention to women and their inclusion in the process as well as it's monitoring for a harmonious delivery. Their main arguments were based on the premise that it was women who were engaged in petty trading and farming during the war and those who took part in the fighting may have come from poor, discriminated and abandoned backgrounds. Mrs. Memunatu Pratt, Head of Department – Peace and Conflict Studies at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone; a human right and gender activist in an interview with the author underscored this point by saying:

> *Women who were involved in the war were either those from difficult (less privileged or poor) family backgrounds, such as single parents fending for themselves and were therefore easy bait for conscription and other exactions. The peacebuilding process should therefore pay keen interest in helping women in these categories to raise their children in stable families and the sensitisation of grass roots women as part of the peace process. A truly harmonious peace should be all-inclusive and must address the needs of the vast number of single mothers, widows, victims of sexual abuse, deprived and poor women some of whom are just little above the age of a child with no sense of direction or bright future.*[638]

Awareness raising activities have been and continue to be done by LWCSOs both for women politicians through the publication of their profiles in newspapers, and the media through trainings on gender-sensitive reporting. More importantly, radio programmes such as 'voice of women', 'we di woman dem' (translated we the women), 'Ta tas su' and others on topics and or issues such as: GBV, HIV/Aids, Wife beating, health education, women's empowerment for self-reliance, agriculture, child labour, sexual exploitation, women's participation in politics,

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[638] Interview: Mrs. Memunatu Pratt. Head of Department, Peace and Conflict Studies – Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. Freetown. 2nd June, 2011. 2:00 pm

women's rights and responsibilities in peacebuilding and development and many more, through radio interviews, programmes and live discussions involving community stakeholders, film shows, not only among the women but also the general civil populace are all some of the major impacts of the LWCSOs peacebuilding activities. Figure 23 above shows a high percentage (20 percent) rate of awareness among the general populace about women's rights and issues, which has correspondingly led to an 18 percent rate of appreciation and community support to women's programmes respectively. One of the results of these radio discussion programmes was the introduction of the DFID sponsored free health care service for pregnant women, under five children and lactating mothers.[639] These developments are a direct result of the advocacy, awareness and sensitisation activities of LWCSOs on gender inequality and its accompanying negative impacts as the legal system in Sierra Leone, especially parts of the constitution, the Islamic and traditions and customary practices, which governs more than 70 percent of the population in provincial Sierra Leone, have always been skewed towards men as they contain discriminatory practices against women and their rights. But more importantly, this finding is extremely important as the gender equality/ inequality and women's political participation debate in Sierra Leone and indeed many countries in the world are directly related to perception, which is most often fueled by traditional beliefs, customs and practices.

Mr. Patrick Lamboi, the PBC Programme Specialist in Sierra Leone, in his response to the question on the level of awareness among the Sierra Leonean populace on women's rights and gender equality issues retorted thus:

> *Greater awareness on the rights of women have been raised by organisations like 50/50, MARWOPNET, WIPNET and others campaigning for women's representation at local, municipal and national level elections, importance of their roles in the peacebuilding process, respect for their rights as equal partners and the abolishing of discriminatory laws and practices against women now exists. This to some extent has helped and will continue to lessen the domestic tensions and to blunt the edge of the prevalent male dominance in the Sierra Leone society in so far as the GoSL is willing to achieve gender equality through the proper and sincere implementation of the GJLs and other relevant policies and also by taking other necessary steps.[640]*

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[639] Interview: Gibril Gottor. General Manager, MARWOPNET Radio. Gbalamuya, Kambia District – Northern Sierra Leone. 22nd May, 2011. 2:00 pm

[640] Interview: Patrick Lamboi. PBC Programme Specialist. PBC Headquarters, Signal Hill Road, Wilberforce, Freetown-Sierra Leone. 6th June, 2011. 11: 30 am

The United Nations Country Team's (UNCT) assessment report on the peacebuilding process and its designed gender equality projects, totally agrees with this result.[641]Achieving a wide spread awareness among the general Sierra Leone populace on these issues, ideas, notions and discussions that have never in the past been received with open hands, could as well mark the starting point for the hard fought for vices, rights and values that could enhance lasting and sustained peace and development in the country.

Marie Kargbo, one of the respondent beneficiaries of the LWCSOs peacebuilding projects in Kambia, Northern Sierra Leone; in summarising some of the impacts said:

> *Although violence (wife beating) against women is still prevalent here, yet we have seen some reduction in the rate of occurrence and there is now a great deal of awareness among men about the rights of women, benefits of involving them in decision making not only in the home but also in politics through the MARWOPNET community radio FM 88.4. But more importantly, the peace messages and awareness on needed travel/ immigration documentations has helped to drastically reduce the harassment market women usually faced at the border crossings, especially into Guinea; and the scholarship/ educational support to our girl children is not only helping to alleviate the astronomical educational costs but will also, not in the long distance future narrow the educational gap between boys and girls and indeed the widened economic gap.[642]*

Waging Conflict Nonviolently/ Enhanced Political Participation

As peace activists and peacemakers, characteristics that have been developed over the years due to the roles allocated to them by traditions and the societal structures in which they live, women in Sierra Leone have been able firstly, to persistently 'wage war nonviolently' through the pursuit of democracy and the rule of law tenets and pressuring others to bring about meaningful change. Women's political activism, which was giving birth to by the atrocities and ills that accompanied the eleven year rebel war, took center stage between 1995 and 1996 following the successful organisation of the famous Bintumani I and II conferences that ushered in a return to democratic governance in Sierra Leone. Considering the untold sufferings and misery that the rebel war brought upon the people, especially women, and realising that peace could only be achieved through the return to civilian democratic rule, they were determined to intervene and end the war.

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[641] See: UN Country Team SIERRA LEONE. Joint UN Approach to Peacebuilding and Gender Equality. 17 March, 2011. Pp.1-7 (Available at: http://www.betterpeace.org/files/CSC_SL_Joint%20Approach%20to%20Peacebuilidng%20and%20Gender%20 Equality.pdf) Sourced: 9/10/2011

[642] Interview: Marie Kargbo. Gbalamuya - Kambia Town, Northern Sierra Leone. 23th May, 2011. 8:00 pm

This determination, which was strengthened particularly by the economic collusion between government soldiers and RUF rebels, which meant that a speedy battlefield victory by the military government was unlikely, coupled also with the unwillingness of both the military junta that seized power from the APC led government and the RUF rebels to negotiate peace, led to women's avoid decision to intervene directly by organising peaceful campaigns/ matches, prayer rallies, sit-ins in front of parliament, writing articles, radio discussions, and protests with a simple and compelling message "[T]ry Peace to end this senseless war."[643] These bold steps helped put discussions of the war and its pursuit by the military junta in the public domain in a non-partisan and non-confrontational manner and fostered ignited constructive public debate of contentious issues possible. With the backing of the international community, women were able to single handedly and effectively conduct the two consultative conferences mentioned above irrespective of the renewed violence, the orchestrated campaign calling for peace before elections and threats both from the rebels and military junta that endorsed the holding of democratic elections; which ushered in the Tejan Kabba led government in 1996. The successful conduct of the 1996 election became a stepping stone for women's enthusiasm to continue the campaign for a negotiated settlement between the rebels and the Tejan Kabba government through separate but sustained and sincere meetings with both sides. As a result of these interventions by women a negotiated peace settlement became the only respectable option that offered both rebels and the government the opportunity to climb down from entrenched positions without loss of face. Although the materialised peace talks in Lome, Togo did not include women or indeed LWCSOs that paved the way for it, yet their self-sponsored presence at the corridors of the talks, campaigning and pilling pressure on the mediators and parties to the talks; enhanced the signing of the 1999 Lome Peace Agreement, which did not only end the war but also laid the foundation upon which 'the much publicised and hailed Special Court for Sierra Leone' and the ongoing benevolent UN led peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone hinges.

Secondly, activities of LWCSOs have not only increased and enhanced women's political participation in politics but have offered them the opportunity to participate in the decisions that shape and determine their life's issues. Women's global activism and call for equal political

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[643] Jusu-Sheriff, Yasmin. Sierra Leone women and the peace process. Conciliation Resources. September 2000
(Available at: http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/women-peace.php) Sourced: 29/11/2011

participation of both men and women, which has culminated in the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on gender equality[644] and the development of the 'good governance' agenda have immensely increased the international community's interest in the role of women and the need to strengthen their political participation. Irrespective of their individual political party allegiances, women from all the political parties in Sierra Leone have come together to form the All Political Parties Women Association (APPWA) for the advancement and enhancement of their participation and successful political inclusion at all decision making levels in the country. Although the Sierra Leone society is highly patriarchal and characterised by its discriminatory and exclusionist tendencies against women at all three layers of governance: formal/ national level (elected parliament and president), formal local government (district councils) and ward communities at community level; and customary chiefdom structures, yet LWCSOs have been able (with support from the international community) to break through some of these barriers and to train and encourage women to vie for positions in these various sectors. From the available statistics on national elections in Sierra Leone, out of 107 women candidates, who contested the 2004 Local Government election, 58 were elected: 54 as Councilors, accounting for about 13.7 per cent, 1 (5.3 per cent) out of 19 Chairpersons/Mayors and 2 (10.5 per cent) out of 19 Deputy Chairs/Mayors were women. In 2008, the number of female candidates doubled that of the 2004 figures from 107 to 225. A total of 86 women or 18.9 per cent won as Councilors, but none, however, won as Chairperson/ Mayor. Only 3 (15.7 per cent) out of 19Deputy Chairpersons/Mayors elected are women. Thus an increase of about 5.2 per cent and 5.3 per cent more female councilors and Deputy Chairpersons/ Mayors, respectively, was recorded. [645] Nonetheless, although it is provided by law that the Ward Development Committees (WDC) should have a 50/50 percent representation of males and females, not all have fulfilled this criteria. But irrespective of these increases, coupled with the assumption that women's political participation will help champion women's interests, Cornwall and Goetz have however sounded a note of caution by pointing out that "women in office do not necessarily defend a feminist position on policies. Indeed for some women winning and keeping office can

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[644] In particular indicator 3.3 "Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament" has increased the focus of development actors on women's political participation.

[645] Abdullah, Hussainatu J. & Lahai, Bernadette. Pathways, Research and Policy Notes - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Peacebuilding in   Sierra Leone: An Impact Study. Centre for Gender Studies & Advocacy, P.O. Box 862, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana. Pp.3-4

be contingent upon *downplaying* feminist sympathies."[646] However, the increase in women's number in politics creates a critical mass that is required to make their voices hard and to push women's agenda issues, as is seen happening at the ward and some council levels around the country. The increase political participation by women and indeed its positive impacts on their welfare according to the respondents is indicated by the higher percentages (20 percent) as shown in the table.

Thirdly, LWCSOs have been able to reduce SGBV, which is a practice that is deeply embedded in the culture of Sierra Leone through their radio discussion and interview programmes, conflict management and resolution mechanisms and sometimes even naming and shaming perpetrators. Through sensitisation and psycho-social counseling, LWCSOs have helped women victims of SGBV to overcome their trauma conditions and differences, to forgive, accept and live amicably with perpetrators of violent crimes against them. Similarly, grassroots women have been enabled by these activities by LWCSOs to lessen worries, and to sensitise children on the evils of violent conflict, and the need to desist from joining rebels and other gang groups.

Dr. Nana Pratt, a retired academic Professor, one of the leading pioneers and strong pillars of women's political activism in Sierra Leone, in an interview with me on the issue of LWCSOs contributions to women's gender issues, had this to say in summary:

> *Civil society, especially LWCSOs are no doubt the right arena and the stepping stone for women's equal participation and mobility in formal politics. But more importantly, LWSCOs have and continue to perform one of the most difficult but sacred duties in campaigning for women's greater involvement in politics, sensitising communities and their leaders especially in traditional and patriarchal Sierra Leone on the importance and benefits of increased women's political participation; and their relentless awareness raising and training, equipping, and given support to women running for political office. My only appeal to donors and funding partners in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process is for them to provide core funding to LWCSOs; especially those like 50/50, MARWOPNET, WIPNET and others that are genuinely operating at grass root levels for these activities to continue and to also build their capacities for full and effective political participation.[647]*

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[646] Cornwall, A. and Goetz, A.M.(2005). 'Democratising Democracy: Feminist Perspectives', Democratisation, Vol.12, No. 5, pp. 783-800

[647] Interview: Dr. Nana Pratt. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 9th June, 2011. 9:00 am

Reducing Direct Violence

As mothers and wives and relief and charity workers, LWCSOs have and continue to contribute to reducing direct violence among people in need in various communities, cities, districts and regions in Sierra Leone. During the war, women ran soup kitchens to provide food to the hungry, offer clothing and basic needs for displaced persons including erection of English Language schools for Sierra Leonean refugee girls in French-speaking Guinea. They also set up safe havens and shelters for those who were trapped behind rebel lines and provided humanitarian assistance and medical assistance when no other groups were able or unwilling to provide relief to these victims of the civil violence for fear of their lives. As a result of the sustained advocacy and awareness campaigns by LWCSOs, coupled with an admirable display of skills and capability by women in Sierra Leone to reduce violence in conflict situations, the GoSL quite recently have started sending women police officers on UN peacekeeping missions abroad. Mrs. Memunatu Pratt, Head of Department – Peace and Conflict Studies at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in a brief summary of the impact of LWCSO's peace education campaigns and trainings in conflict resolution and peacemaking remarked:

> *[D]omestically, women have been able to reduce direct sexual and gender-based violence, especially wife beating and battering that have been very evident and encouraged by the local tradition and culture; through the peace education programmes of LWCSOs, organised protest marches by the general women population and through their work with the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone police.[648]*

Capacity Building/ Empowerment

As educators and participants in the development process, LWCSOs have also been involved in 'building capacity' of civil society in general and especially their constituencies in order to prevent violent conflicts erupting again. As part of their traditional roles, mothers have the ability to nurture the values of peace, respect and empathy for others with their children. LWCSOs in Sierra Leone are involved in building the capacities of women through skills training for their meaningful engagement and contribution to the ongoing peacebuilding process in their communities, organisations and nation. Through grassroots initiatives in peace education, conflict management and resolution, peacebuilding and socio-economic empowerment,

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[648] Interview: Mrs. Memunatu Pratt. Head of Department, Peace and Conflict Studies – Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.
Freetown. 2nd June, 2011. 2:00 pm

LWCSOs in the peacebuilding process are one of the few groups if not the only in sierra Leone that have been able to transcend the fault lines of faith, class, gender, ethnicity and political persuasion to facilitate an all-inclusive, gender, and sustained dialogue among adverse stakeholders in the conflict as explained above. The capacity building activities of LWCSOs, especially by MARWOPNET is multipurpose involving skills acquisition and replication in weaving and soap making, health education, micro-credit facilities and small scale businesses that have empowered women to support their families as well as providing advocacy tools for traditional community leaders. Meeting the specific political training needs of women candidates and aspirants led to the development and publishing of a 'Women's Manifesto', which serves as a reference document for all political party manifestoes in their drive to achieve gender equality. But even more importantly, because of their dedication to promoting women's participation, empowerment, human rights, and the positive results and impacts of their training and capacity building activities, the 50/50 Group was chosen to host the first Commonwealth Female Parliamentarians in 2002. LWCSOs, especially MARWOPNET, through its workshops and training activities in border communities in Sierra Leone, has been able to train over one hundred and fifty (150) of their members and six hundred (600) women and men belonging to civil society in early warning, conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation and leadership skills. These activities have immensely led to relative calm in would be quaotic border communities, one of which (Bomaru, eastern Sierra Leone) was used by the RUF fighters and their Liberian backers to launch their violent attack into Sierra Leone.

Mr. Patrick Lamboi, the Programme Specialist for the PBC, expressing his views on the economic empowerment of women and civil society in general remarked:

> [A]t the local or civil society level, women's civil society groups had inter-alia been formed mainly for economic purposes, and they have been able to help many by providing economic opportunities such as micro-credits for small scale businesses in cotton cloth weaving, gara tying and dying, soap making and others. Nowadays, a lot of these groups have increased their objectives, and have had great achievements in advocacy on rights, gender equality laws and political participation. Civil society is now able, through trainings received, to monitor, assess and make recommendations for change where necessary of implemented peacebuilding projects and government's development activities in the country. [649]

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[649] Interview: Patrick Lamboi. PBC Programme Specialist. PBC Headquarters, Signal Hill Road, Wilberforce, Freetown-Sierra Leone. 6th June, 2011. 11: 30 am

In another vein, LWCSOs are also devoting their peacebuilding efforts to supporting the girl child education. Discrimination against the girl child either on grounds of poverty, customs, cultural/ traditional beliefs and practices, or social neglect by parents or government for centuries until recently, is one of the underlying causes of the vast inequality and poverty gap between women and men in Sierra Leone. However, there has been key post war achievements including the successful completion of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, TRC process, Special Court for Sierra Leone's indictment, trail and conviction of 'those that bear the greatest responsibility', series of successful democratic elections after 23 years of undemocratic rule and now, the implementation by UN, GoSL and its international backers of various and specific peacebuilding projects targeted at various groups (women, youths and children); including free primary education for the girl child. Unfortunately however, some of the remote rural communities in provincial Sierra Leone have been neglected in this entire process. LWCSOs therefore decided to target some of these communities, especially those in the north of Sierra Leone. MARWOPNET whose main target areas in the peacebuilding, among others are 'abandoned/ vulnerable border communities' intervened in some of these communities in their drive to contribute to peacebuilding by offering scholarships to very brilliant girl children in desperate need of support. For example scholarship grants were awarded to girls who are mainly orphans and those from very poor homes, whose parents cannot afford to pay for their schools in the Tambaka, Sanya and Fondohorie communities in northern Sierra Leone. The grant included: uniforms, text and exercise books, school bags, pens and pencils, erasers, rulers, sharpeners, rain coats, jerseys, hurricane lamps, kerosene, shoes, toiletries, including money for games tunic, breakfast, lunch, and medical for six months. Although this programme was not undertaken widely but in limited areas, yet it has had tremendous impact by not only motivating the recipient children to study hard but also non-recipient children in order to become beneficiaries also, thus enhancing healthy educational competition, improvement and development. The findings in figure 23 clearly reveals the support to women's economic emancipation and girl child education by 11 percent and 5 percent respectively, the two issues that are at the core of women's apathy, marginalisation and discrimination from the socio-economic, political participation and decision making roles in Sierra Leone.

In recognition and show of appreciation for this great gesture by MARWOPNET, which was generally referred to as a dream come true by the community people, one of the mothers speaking on behalf of all the recipient families retorted:

> *Today we are full of joy and we are so very grateful and thankful for these wonderful and life sustaining gifts. This gesture will not only serve as motivation to our children and others, helping them to learn and become leaders of tomorrow but have also made us very proud and dignified in our communities. Now we know that even though we are not considered or feel neglected by the government and some of our political representatives, but we are sure that we have sisters and relations who are always thinking about us. We will monitor and make sure that these facilities and provisions are properly utilised and see that the children do very well in school in order to be selected next year.*[650]

The 50/50 Group, whose specific focus is to enhance women's equal participation and inclusion in politics and governance, has had a tremendous impact in this field. In order to accomplish their task, they developed a training manual, which has since been used for training to develop the capacity of women who want to or contest for elected positions - parliament, district council sand or ward and chiefdom positions. They have also developed a data base for all Sierra Leonean women both at home and abroad who are educated and or have special skills in order to keep track of their members and to call on them when the need arises as the agreed upon 30 percent quota for women's representation in all political institutions is expected to come into operation in 2012. They have also succeeded in building the first 'Gender and Women's Leadership Training Institute' in West Africa. Additionally, they also disseminate information to women about governance mechanisms and also connect and unit women involved in politics irrespective of their political or party affiliation. Haja Saiminatu A. Kasim, President of the 50/50 Group in an interview response to my question on the importance of the activities of the 50/50 Group to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone and the way forward specifically for women reiterated thus:

> *……the 50/50 Group was not involved in the war and peace process. Our work started in 2001 and during the ten years in existence we have trained over 5000 women and have worked in almost all districts. This has not only increased women's general participation in politics but has significantly increased their number in positions of trust, which will sooner or later bring about a positive and permanent change and total freedom from discrimination and exclusion from governance and developmental issues of this country,*

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[650] Interview: Mamusu Kamara. Tambaka, Bombali District – Northern Sierra Leone. 11:30 am.

not only for this current generation but even for our children and their children's children.[651]

In another interview on the issue of SGBV, victims who had earlier undergone the trauma healing and counseling process were full of praises for the work of LWCSOs; a process they claimed had had a tremendous impact on their perspectives and improved their social relationship with others. One of these M.M, a 39 year old woman whom I interviewed in Kambia remarked:

> *I have had inner peace since the sensitisation, psycho-social healing and counseling processes and I have now become a peacemaker. I used to have sleepless nights with persistent worries but now I have come to terms with my situation. With the skills training I can now fend for my family and pay for my children to go to school. My other job I have now embarked on is to reconcile families and members, especially colleague women that are often victims of SGBV in my community.*[652]

An ex-combatant S.M in the Eastern provincial town of Kenema, who was a beneficiary of the multipurpose skills training by LWCSOs, in an interview with me (author) in June was very enthusiastic to share her new found economic independence and how women who are gainfully employed can not only contribute to the creation of employment but also to the return to normalcy in their communities. In her words:

> *When women are empowered economically, they generate income; assist not only their husbands and family members but also others who are less fortunate and most importantly in situations where men, who are traditionally regarded as providers, could not rise up to their responsibilities and challenge. We have seen how women are now contributing meaningfully to the development of not only our children but even of our communities, towns, environment and peace in general*[653]

The above revelation clearly shows that the age old and honoured patriarchal concept or 'myth' of the male as the protector and provider for his family, especially his wife who is stereotypically regarded as 'weak', is not always true especially in post-war situations, which are always marked by a radical transformation in gender roles resulting from the negative impacts of the fighting.

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[651] Interview: Haja Saiminatu A. Kasim. President, 50/50 Group. 50/50 Headquarters, Main Motor Road, Congo Cross, Freetown – Sierra Leone. 10th June, 2011. 1:30pm.
[652] Interview: M.M. Kambia Town, Northern Sierra Leone. May 25th, 2011. 10:30am
[653] Interview: S.M. Kenema Town, Eastern Sierra Leone. May 12th, 2011. 9:00am

Transforming and Restoring Relationships

As mediators, peacemakers and trauma-healing counselors, LWCSOs in Sierra Leone have continued to work relentlessly to transform relationships and address the root causes of the war. During intense conflicts, women's peacemaking non-violent initiatives and dialogue are often the only channels of communication between hostile communities, personalities and groups. A display of women's fearless high level lobbying skills to transform relationships was displayed when a delegation of women from MARWOPNET (Headquartered in Freetown) were able to successfully lobby the government of Sierra Leone as well as the rebels of the RUF, when they took a helicopter into a rebel controlled area with just a cameraman without prior notice to meet the commanders at their Makeni headquarters – Northern Sierra Leone, in their attempt to prevail on the two warring parties to have a peaceful dialogue. Upon their arrival, the rebels who had been watching the chopper as it made its approach to the land told them: "You are welcome. We could see you."[654] The outcome of their meeting with regards the rebel's stance on the peace proposal was later relayed to the GoSL, a move that all contributed to the signing of the final peace agreement in Lome that ended the war. In another separate but same peace related moves, the LWCSOs in 2001 succeeded in urging the then Sierra Leonean President Tejan Kabba to mediate in a cold war that existed between his feuding peers – President Lansana Conte (Guinea) and Charles Taylor (former President of Liberia), who was not only funding the activities of the RUF in Sierra Leone but had also expelled the Guinean ambassador from Monrovia and closed the bother with Guinea. MARWOPNET women prevailed as their frequent shuttles between the three capitals (Conakry, Monrovia and Freetown) brokered the deadlock that set the ball rolling for diplomatic mechanisms that ended with a Mano River Summit that addressed the deteriorating security situation. Eventually, Charles Taylor opened the bothers, restoring relations between Guinea and Liberia, which helped foster calm in Sierra Leone. In a separate but related incident also, LWCSOs in Sierra Leone, especially MARWOPNET sought audience with the Vice-President and Minister of Internal Affairs over the Yenga issue,[655] a part of the territory of Sierra Leone that was occupied by the Guinean military forces during the rebel war and still been, to advocate for peace.

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[654] Op. Cit. Isis – WICCE. 2005. Nurturers Of Peace, Sustainers Of Africa…..p.82

[655] Yenga is a small Sierra Leonean town on the north-western border with Guinea, which was over ran and occupied by the Guinean military forces, with the claim that the territory to belonged to Guinea.

In 2000, LWCSOs demonstrated their prowess to manage, mend and restore relationships in a standoff between the UN Peacekeeping forces and the RUF rebels that was caused by the adoption and holding of 500 Pakistani UNAMSIL contingent hostage by the Sierra Leone warlord Foday Sankoh in the eastern province of Kailahun. It took the intervention of women, among others, to secure the release of these forces without any incident.

Humanitarian Assistance, Reconstruction/ Development Work

Spurred by their various objectives, as mentioned in the profiles of the case study groups, LWCSOs were initially actively involved in addressing the humanitarian aspects of the war from a feminist perspective – that started with visits to IDP and refugee camps, followed by the setting up of way stations in Zimmi; a border town with Liberia. Access to first-hand experience of tending victims of violence, offered the opportunity to LWCSOs not only to contribute to its address but also to report on the nature of human right violations to the international community with the view of seeking their redress. As a result of their wide publicity on human rights violations and SGBV, especially on rape and sexual violence, and their sustained interventions on gender based violence, MARWOPNET was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for the year 2003 as shown in figure 24 below, and since there has been a significant improvement or reduction in SGBV as stated by 21percent of the respondents in figure 23 above, one of the commonest forms of abuse to women's rights but ironically a widely accepted norm by women themselves, especially the majority of them that reside in the provinces. Below is the picture (figure 7.24) showing the UN Human Rights award ceremony with the president of MARWOPNET, Yasmin Jusu-Sherriff (middle)delivering her speech to grace this wonderful achievement.[656]

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[656] The President of MARWOPNET Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff (middle), flanked by one MARWOPNET member on her left holding the award and the other with the Sierra Leone map. She is giving an address during the award ceremony of UN Human Rights prize.

Figure 7.24: *Ceremony marking the UN Human Rights Prize Award to MARWOPNET in 2003*

In their moves to enhance cordial relationships and peace between the men and women who were receiving the capacity building and training in skills, and the success of the micro-credit scheme earlier mentioned; LWCSOs devised a strategy of setting up a group of supportive men, their leader being the Chief of the area to bring an amicable settlement to issues involving, especially women and men. This move is significant in traditional Sierra Leone as it signals respect and recognition of the husband as head of the family and male leaders in their communities, which also helps to dispels fear of intimidation, worthlessness and inability to take care of their families from the minds of the men; that may otherwise lead them (males) to seeing women as a challenge to their authority; which might in turn lead to sabotage, orchestrated violence against the women, forceful confiscation or seizure of micro-credit funds. LWCSOs were involved in post war reconstruction and community development work, though on a very minimal scale but all campaign for the fair distribution of development assistance. In 2008, MARWOPNET, the HRCSL, and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of Sierra Leone in collaboration with Isis-WICCE deliberately commemorated the International Human Rights Day and World Anti-Corruption Day celebrations in Tambaka in a bid to call the attention of GoSL and its backers to the plight of the people in the region, which was climaxed by the opening

ceremony of the newly constructed town roundabout community project by MARWOPNET members spearheaded by the local woman councilor Nserah Kamara.

In an interview with John Coker, the husband of one of the beneficiaries of the multipurpose scheme that was implemented in Jimmy Bargbo, Southern Sierra Leone, who very much appreciated the fact that women were actively involved in the reconstruction and rebuilding of the war raved communities said:

> *Our women folk are now greatly contributing to peace in their families as they are helping not only with the physical reconstruction and rebuilding work, but of relationships and responsibilities that were initially undertaken by us husbands. They have become partners in the development process and we are indeed proud of them. If this is one of the benefits of the gender equality campaign by international community for women, I would like to employ all my fellow men to allow their wives to contribute and play their part in improving the lives of our children and even ourselves but I must say to the women that their empowerment should not be used as grounds to challenge or look down on their husbands that may not now have the ability because of the effects of the war to provide for the families"[657]*

However, irrespective of the positive impacts the peacebuilding activities have had on civil society in general and women in particular, there is a significantly low percentage (6 percent) breakthrough or achievement in improved communication, dialogue and consultation on women's equality and rights issues in some parts of the country, especially traditional settings and patriarchal areas. The data in figure 23 above clearly reinforces the prevalent patriarchal nature of the Sierra Leonean society that has always prevented women from being equal partners in all spheres including development and politics until now. But of more significance, though the very insignificant and minimal 1 percent admittance of a breakdown of families, marriages and challenge to tradition caused by LWCSO's project activities, is worthy of note. These comes as no surprise since some people, especially some patriarchal and traditional male rulers, in different parts of Sierra Leone are not prepared or worst still ready to accept women as equal partners in the peacebuilding, political and development continuum for fear of losing or compromising their positions, authority and control.

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[657] Interview: John Coker. Jimmy Bargbo, Pujehun District, Southern Sierra Leone. 5th June, 2011. 9:00 am

Protection, Early Warning Signals and Monitoring

Lessons learned from the eleven years of civil conflict in Sierra Leone indicate the urgent need for protection, especially of women and girls and of the porous border areas with Liberia through which there were massive movements of proliferated small arms in the sub-region into Sierra Leone to fuel the rebel carnage on the society. This meant therefore that adequate measures including early warning systems needed to be put in place in order to address and protect not women and girls' human rights and the movement of small arms but also to alert the Office of National Security (ONS), the organisation responsible for monitoring, reporting, advising the GoSL on emerging or brewing signs of conflict for example as in the case of Yenga on the border with Guinea and other possible conflict spots.

To address the need for conflict monitoring, LWCSOs especially MARWOPNET, have been effectively involved in efforts by ONS in training, setting up of an early warning system and the monitoring of border communities mainly because of their humanitarian activities during the war, their decision to concentrate mainly on border towns and communities whose remoteness and marginalisation led to them being the source of conflict and instability that erupted in the 1990s, and the experience they had acquired by attending meetings of the Secretary General's Special Representative in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. WIPNET also has been at the core of this process by training local peace monitors in early warning and early response in border communities to monitor and report on conflict as well as generating local responses for conflict prevention. To facilitate the monitoring operations, Chiefdom Response Committees have been formed comprising of civil society members who have been trained in early warning systems to compliment and highlight areas of potential threats and draw government's attention to areas where security services in combating smuggling of drugs, arms and commodities including merchandise, agricultural produce and livestock are lacking or not adequate. In other to enhance the effective monitoring of the security situation, MARWOPNET developed a module on early warning, which has been widely used during workshops and training sessions. This process has led to relative calm and quiet in border communities, which were before and during the eleven year rebel conflict, scenes of skirmishes and clashes leading to deaths.

In the area of protection for women and girls, LWCSO's advocacy and lobbying strategies recorded earlier successes with the strengthening of the Law Reform Commission to enable it pass laws to guarantee women's rights in all sectors of the society in the private and public spheres. Notably, they have succeeded in prevailing on the GoSL to pass the Three Gender Acts: Domestic Violence, Devolution of Estate, Women's Rights in Customary Marriages and Divorce enacted in 2007, and others such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), the Citizenship Amendment Act (2006), the Child Rights Act of 2007 and the Chieftaincy Act (2009).

Furthermore, the setting up of the TRC and the Special Court of Sierra Leone (which was a caveat in the Lome agreement), the establishment of the Family Support Unit (FSU) within the Police force with the mandate to respond and investigate cases and all forms of child abuse and violence against women; and the creation and inclusion of the legal Ombudsman position in the country's post-war legal framework, have all helped to address impunity against women. Additionally, between 2003 and 2004, the Sierra Leone Law Reform Commission drafted a Bill on Sexual Offences, which codified and modernised the law on rape, including marital rape, and made comprehensive provisions to deal with sexual offences.

On a more personal basis, LWCSOs, especially WIPNET under the Newfield Foundation Peace Initiative, which was "a pilot initiative to increase rural women's capacity to understand and claim rights", was implemented in the Bo and Kailahun districts in Southern and Eastern provinces respectively. This project provided protection, especially for women and girls who were sensitised to report cases of SGBV, abandonment of responsibility, children and or families by husbands or fathers of children; which were pursued and resolved by WIPNET/ WANEP.[658]

One of the victims of SGBV and abandonment by the boyfriend, who also had a six months old baby in Kenema, praised and commended the WIPNET implemented Newfield Foundation project by saying:

> *I am so grateful and thankful to WIPNET, especially its project officials for intervening in the suffering and pitiful situation I found myself, which has helped secure the regular financial/ child support for my baby by his father. Now I am able to buy food, cloths, take*

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[658] It is a common practice in Sierra Leone, especially in the provincial areas of the country for husbands and boyfriends to impregnate women/ girls or commit acts of violence against them; and to abandon as seen in figure 22 above or run away from prosecution or the responsibility of caring for the pregnant women or mothers and their babies. Sometimes it is because of poverty and lack of job/ finances but some others could be a deliberate act to either punish the women or refuse to be responsible.

my child to hospital for treatment or medical check in case of any illness and to buy whatever he needs without asking/ begging from my neighbours or friends as usual.[659]

In an interview with Mr. Moses Kamara, a civil society member in one of the border communities in Kailahun, on the benefits of the early warning and response trainings they received, he revealed:

> *Civil society, including us have received several trainings in capacity building and institutional development, and early warning and early response in order to monitor and report on conflict as well as generating local responses for conflict prevention. I also know that other border communities received these same trainings. In collaboration with the Chiefdom Response Committees that were established, we are now able to quickly identify areas of potential threats and draw government's attention through ONS to areas falling short in the discharge of security services in combating for example the smuggling of drugs, arms and commodities including merchandise, agricultural produce and livestock. Our women folk also have a department in and work with ONS on issues relating to security and early warning. This enhancement in skills and collaboration has not only helped reduced the flow of harmful drugs, acts of violence especially against women but also the severe shortage of commodities that we use to experience in our communities.*[660]

In brief summary, the activities of LWCSOs in Sierra Leone have contributed to increasing women's political participation, raising the gender awareness on women's rights, roles, responsibilities and the need to uphold and maintain equal gender participation, helped to elevate the role of civil society, particularly women in peace, security and development at all levels, strengthened the capacity of civil society in general and women in particular. Firstly, its helping them to monitor, evaluate and determine the course of development and secondly, by giving them a resounding voice and stake in their affairs, the state and those that relate to the general wellbeing of the citizenry; and has helped to accelerate the socio-economic reintegration of displaced people, refugees and ex-combatants and empowerment of women that have seen some form of sustainability in the peace that is being built, and the gradual rebuilding and development of the country. Their activities have not only contributed to an increased level of acceptance of women by men, promoted stability and peaceful coexistence at the family, village, community and national levels by integrating a gender perspective into peace, conflict resolution processes and into development mechanisms but have also brought international respect, recognition

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[659] Interview: A.F. (Full name withheld). A victim of GBV. Kenema Town, Kenema district. 20[th]May, 2011. 11:00am

[660] Interview: Mr. Moses Kamara. Bomaru, Kailahun district. 5th June, 2011. 5pm

through the awards – the UN Human Rights Prize (2003) and the Madeleine K. Albright Grant (2007), all of which have brought huge financial and international support to rebuilding the war ravaged Sierra Leone.

7.2 General Views on Contributions/ Impacts of LWCSO's Peacebuilding Programme Activities by Officials of UN, International and Local Stakeholder Organisations

Objective 2: The purpose of this section is to gage the views of target beneficiaries, the general populace, UN, local and international organisations and the international community involved in the peacebuilding process on the contributions/ impacts of LWCSO's peacebuilding programmes/ projects of LWCSOs. Responses from the above name groups were divided into four main categories, ranging from very high/good, moderate and poor. Below are both the table and the pie chart that provides a brief summary of the responses recorded.

Table 7.12*: Assessment of impacts of LWCSO programmes/ projects by both local and international stakeholder organisations*

		Assessment of programmes/ projects of LWCSO to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone				
		Very high/ good	High/ good	Moderate	Poor/low	Total
Organisational Affiliation	UN PBF/ UNDP	0	0	0	1	1
	Gender Ministry (MSWGCA)	0	1	0	0	1
	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL)	0	0	0	1	1
	UN Women.	0	1	0	0	1
	CSO (Umbrella Org).	0	1	0	0	1
	Women's Forum.	1	0	0	0	1
	Campaign for Good governance (CGG).	0	1	0	0	1
	Network Movement for Justice & Development	0	0	0	1	1
	Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.	0	1	0	0	1
	INGO	0	1	0	0	1
	Local governance	0	0	1	0	1
Total		1	6	1	3	11

Figure 7.25: *Assessment of LWCSO programmes/ projects by local and international stakeholders*

Impact assessment of LWCSOs peacebuilding programmes by local and international organisations

- Very high/ good 9%
- High/ good 55%
- Moderate 9%
- Poor 27%
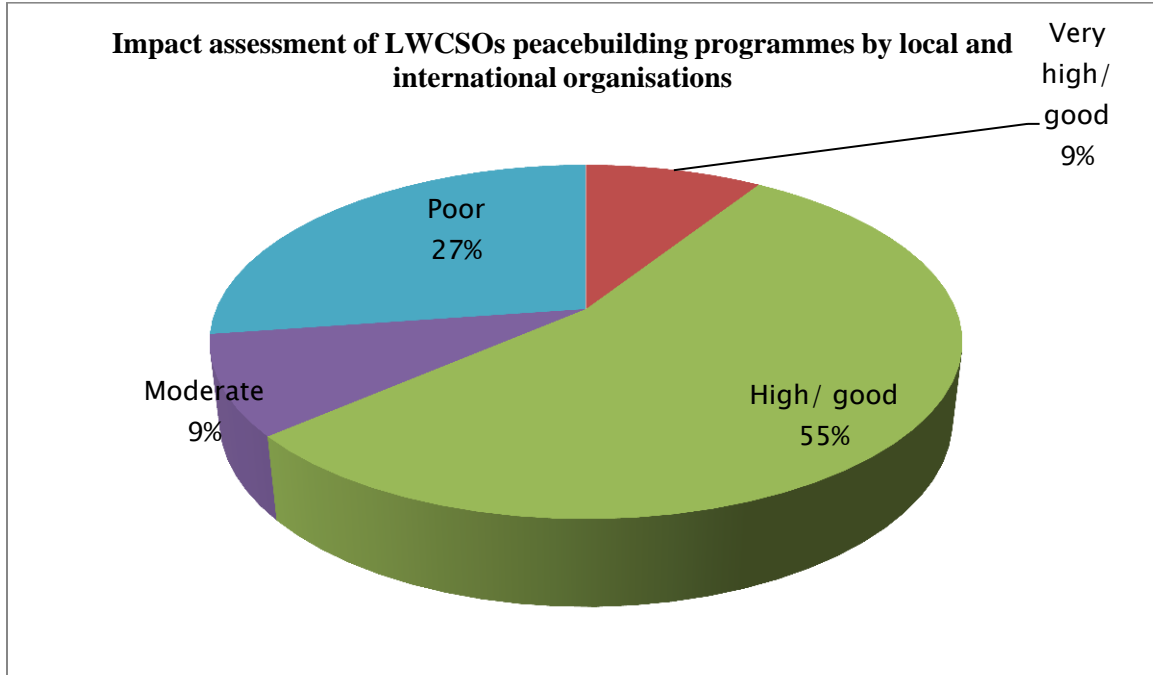
Figure 7.25 offers an analysis of the overall assessment of the programmes/ projects undertaken by the surveyed LWCSOs by both local and international stakeholders as shown in table 7.12 above. According to the data findings above, 9 percent of the respondents believed that the impacts/ success of the programmes/ projects were very high and good. A higher percentage of 55 also believed that projects had high and good impacts on the target beneficiaries, the communities and even the general population in Sierra Leone, and 9 percent rated their impacts as moderate. However, 27 percent of the respondents believed that the impacts of the peacebuilding activities of LWSCOs are poor or low. From the overall assessment, it is clear from the three positive ratings that there is a prevalent and significant amount of impact amongst the targeted beneficiaries and the general populace and a prospect of recording more successes with the passing of time. The expressed poor or low rating of the impacts of these projects might as well be interpreted in the light of the high expectations of a quicker result or remedy to emancipate the people from the plights they have suffered and lived with for decades. The summary assessment therefore is that the recorded impacts are encouraging and that the emancipatory and revolutionary expectations and equality desires of the people are no longer an illusion but an achievable goal in a matter of time.

In an interview with Jamesina king, a Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and its former first Chairperson, on the impact of the peacebuilding programmes by LWCSOs in Sierra Leone, she remarked:

> *They have been at the forefront in peacebuilding moves though they were excluded and not allowed in as an official delegation at the peace table in Lome. They have confronted issues that have been affecting them and called on government to take their issues into account, for which we have seen positive results. Their awareness raising campaigns are tremendous and effective and they have also played a great role in mediating an important role in conflict resolution and the building of peace in general through their various peacebuilding and development projects.[661]*

In a separate but related engagement with Madam Rosaline McCarthy, the National Chairperson of Women's Forum in Sierra Leone, on the same question posed to Mrs. Jamesina King, she remarked:

> *Women demanded and obtained a peaceful return to democratically elected civilian government in 1996 (Bintumani I and II). They challenged the rebels to lay down their arms. Local women civil society organisations are engaged with traditional rulers to transform customary institutions into more gender friendly operations. They have lobbied the government to give women the space for greater political involvement (30 percent representation at all decision making levels). They have been able to raise awareness on women's rights issues, achieved the enactment of gender friendly laws and enhanced women's participation and representation in decision making. They have also joined the campaign to renew the chieftaincy act which currently discriminates against women.[662]*

But irrespective of the above enumerated successes of LWCSOs in the peacebuilding process, some percentage of the Sierra Leonean civil society are not very impressed with their contributions to the peacebuilding process. One of the traditional chiefs in Moyamba town, Moyamba district in Sothern Sierra Leone had this to say in response to the questions of LWCSO's contribution to peace and civil society development:

> *I don't see anything meaningful that these women are claiming to have contributed to peacebuilding and development except the too much talking about rights in the radio stations everywhere you go. I know that they have been given the right, with the backing of UN and the international community to now challenge men and their husbands, which they refer to as equality, because they do not want to submit to authority and control.*

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[661] Interview: Mrs. Jamesina King. Commissioner, HRCSL. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 2nd June, 2010. 11:00am

[662] Interview: Madam Rosaline McCarthy. National Chairperson, Women's Forum. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 10th June, 2011. 12:00 noon

Their contributions were only noticeable during the conflict period but since the end of war, their determination and momentum died out.[663]

In summarising the overall contributions and or achievements of LWCSOs, especially WIPNET/ WANEP-SL in collaboration with other civil society organisations building peace in Sierra Leone in general, the National Coordinator of WIPNET/ WANEP-SL commented thus:

WIPNET/ WANEP-SL collaborates with other civil society organizations to host the 'biggest ever' civil society learning and sharing forum on Peace and Development (PaD Forum). Twice annually, this program brings together civil society actors, media and the private sector to build relationships, promote lesson learning and a non-violent environment. The forum (social evening) is always climaxed with the issuance of peace and development communiqué with action oriented recommendations for all relevant partners. Equally, the forum campaigns for the peaceful settlement of the Yenga border conflict, in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone, which continues to pose as a threat to our fragile peace and democracy.[664]

7.3 Assessment of GoSL's Political Will and Support to LWCSOs Peacebuilding Efforts in Sierra Leone

Objective 3: The objective of this section is to assess and determine the political will to ensure equality and support both financial/ moral (if any) by GoSL to the researched LWCSOs, and to determine the influence this has, if any, on the programme activities and outcome of LWCSOs.

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[663] Interview: Traditional ruler. Moyamba Town, Southern Sierra Leone. 15th May, 2011. 9:00am

[664] See: WANEP-SL – Home Page at: http://www.wanep.org/wanep/networks-our-networks/sierra-leone.html?start=6) Sourced: 15/12/2011

Table 7.13: *Assessment of GoSL's support to LWCSOs and the political will for Women's inclusion by respondents from both local &international stakeholder organisations*

			GoSL's support to LWCSOs		
Position			Yes	No	Total
Commissioner	Organisational Affiliation	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL)		1	1
Programme Officer	Organisational Affiliation	Government/ MSWGCA	1		1
Programme Specialist	Organisational Affiliation	UN Peacebuilding Fund/ UNDP		1	1
Community Animator	Organisational Affiliation	Network Movement for Justice & Development		1	1
		INGO		1	1
	Total			2	2
Administrative Officer	Organisational Affiliation	CSO (Umbrella Org)	1		1
National Chairperson	Organisational Affiliation	Women's Forum	1		1
National Director	Organisational Affiliation	UN Women		1	1
Head of Department	Organisational Affiliation	Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone		1	1
Programme Officer	Organisational Affiliation	Campaign for Good governance (CGG)		1	1
Paramount Chief	Organisational Affiliation	Local governance	1		1
Grand Total			4	7	11

Figure 7.26: *Assessment of GoSL's support to LWCSOs and the political will for Women's inclusion by local and international stakeholders*

Percentage distribution of assessment of GoSL's support and political will for women's inclusion by officials of stakeholder organisations

Yes 36%

No 64%
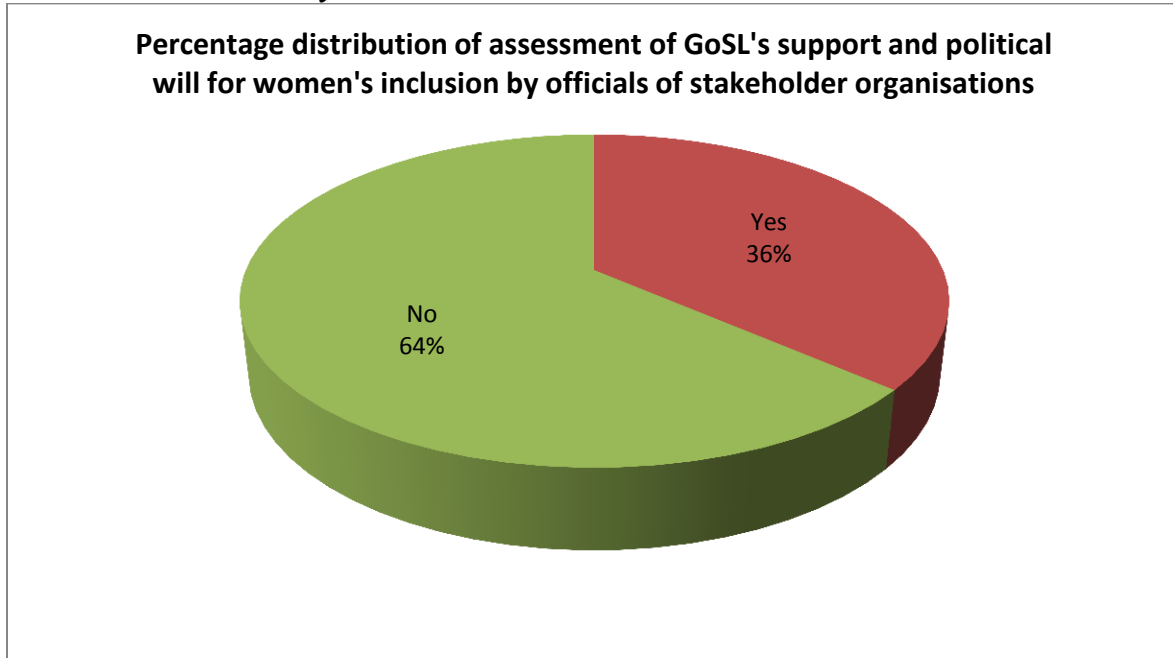
Figure 7.26, which represents the responses of interviewees as in table 7.13 above, presents an overall assessment by both local and international stakeholders of the GoSL's support and the political will for women's inclusion in the governance and decision making, development; achievement of gender equality and the building of peace in Sierra Leone. The figure clearly indicates that 36 percent of both local and international stakeholders involved in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone believe that the GoSL is providing the required support to LWCSOs and that the political will for women's inclusion participation exists. This response might be mainly due to the passing of the GJLs, and the development of both the National Gender Action Plan and the Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 and 1820, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), the Citizenship Amendment Act (2006), the Child Rights Act of 2007, the Chieftaincy Act (2009), the Sexual Offences Act, the granting of the 30 percent minimum quota to women that should be implemented in the 2012 general elections; and other developments such as some significant increase in women's participation in decision-making in the judiciary since 2005.In 2005 also, 7 (30.4 percent) out of 16 judges in Sierra Leone appointed were women, thus attaining the 30 per cent minimum quota requirement. Both the Master Registrar of the High Court and the Administrator-General are women although only 2 (10.5

percent) of the 17 magistrates are women. But more importantly, history was also made in 2008 with the appointment of the first woman Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Charles B. Vandi, the Gender Programme Officer at the MSWGCA, in an interview with me summarised the support, efforts and interventions on the part of GoSL to women's inclusion in the overall governance, development architecture and the achievement of gender equality in Sierra Leone thus:

> *The political space and will exists for women to operate. We (MSWGCA) have done several trainings on gender, peace and security, worked with other stakeholders to engender the peacebuilding fund, and coordinated the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 and 1820. In 2000 the Ministry developed the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, Advancement of women policy and in2007; three Gender Justice Laws were enacted in Parliament. In 2010 we launched the National Strategic Plan and the Sierra Leone NAP on UNSCR 1325 and 1820. The NAP has necessitated the legislation of bills on sexual offences, matrimonial Causes, National Gender Equality Commission, Affirmative Action Bill on minimum 30 percent quota for women in governance etc. The Ministry developed a project proposal on gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment and child protection for the UN PBF funding. It was approved and supported issues of rights, empowerment and participation.*[665]

A senior retired civil servant in Sierra Leone, speaking on condition of anonymity, who commented on the political will of the GoSL to include women and to promote gender equality, had this to say:

> *I commend the GoSL for granting women the 30 percent for political participation and for enacting the GJLs but the structures and willingness to practicalise or implement these laws are key, which are yet lacking and the biggest challenge at hand facing women is that of addressing the culture of patronage that infuses politics in Sierra Leone and thus acts as a barrier to women's participation. Another important issue is the accountability relationship between political institutions/ political parties and the citizens – the influence of democratic patronage within Sierra Leone's democratic politics. The only possible solution to this is for donors (who at this point have a great leverage) to hold the GoSL and these institutions to account on these policies and to directly support LWCSOs that are franticly raising the community's awareness on the roles and responsibilities of women in politics, politicians and the political institutions.*[666]

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[665] Interview: Charles B. Vandi. MSWGCA, New England Ville. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 2nd June, 2011. 1:30 pm
[666] Interview: A senior retired civil servant. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 10th June, 2011

But irrespective of this affirmation, a greater number (64 percent) of the respondents retorted a 'resounded big no' to the existence of the required political atmosphere, which can also be interpreted to mean that the acclaimed existing political will or space is either insignificant or insufficient. This position can be ascertained or confirmed from the available figures on women's political positions across board. For example, at the Chiefdom level there are currently 13 (8.7 percent) women out of 149 Paramount Chiefs. There is only one woman Court Chairperson in the country. At the Cabinet or Ministerial level, there were only two women both at the Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial levels constituting 8 and 10 percent respectively in 1996. Although a slight improvement was made in 2002 with 3 (14.3 percent) female appointees out of 21 full Ministers and 3 (30 percent) female Deputy Ministers out of 10, and the status-quo maintained under the new government in 2007 until a cabinet reshuffle in 2010, which increased the number of female Deputy Ministers from 3 (13.4 percent) to 4 (19 percent) on one hand, yet on the other there was a reduction in the number of female Ministers from 3 (12.6 percent) to 2 (7.6 percent).This same low level participation and representation obtain in the political party structures. For example in the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP), one of the two most powerful and popular political parties in Sierra Leone, only 4 (13.3 percent) out of the 31 national executive members are women and all of its 17 District Chairpersons are men. No woman is Chair in any of the four administrative regions of the Party; only one woman (0.9 percent) is Chair out of 112 Constituency Chairpersons. At the Chiefdom, Sectional and Zonal levels, there are between 1 and 3 women, on average, holding executive positions out of a ten-person executive. In the other political parties, women operate only in the 'women's wing' and not in the mainstream of the parties, a practice that has been criticised for relegating women to the periphery of politics.[667] But even more intriguing is the fact that although the government has promised to institute a minimum 30 percent quota in 2012 electoral process, there is a great deal of unease among many Sierra Leoneans about the political will to effect this promise because the cabinet reshuffle in December 2010occurred after the President's speech commiting his government to granting the 30 percent quota to women but only two women were appointed to the 26-membercabinet he named.

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[667] Op. Cit. Abdullah, Hussainatu J. & Lahai, Bernadette. Pathways, Research and Policy Notes - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: An Impact Study.p.4

Similarly, even though laws and measures meant to address SGBV have been put in place, especially on rape, Ms. Bernadette Cole, former Chair of the Independent Media Commission, using data from FSU 2009 statistics, noted that of the 927 sexual abuse and 1,543 domestic violence cases that were reported none yielded conviction.[668] May be, the adoption of the draft Sexual Offences Act will strengthen the legal framework and make it possible for perpetrators to be prosecuted and punished.

An official belonging to one of Sierra Leone's donor support countries or the international stakeholder community, who agreed to offer me an interview on this issue on a strict condition of anonymity, had this to say:

> *It is somehow difficult to judge the actual level of political will to include women or the sincerity to address gender equality issues within the political institutions in Sierra Leone. There has been some major steps taken by the GoSL to enhance women's rights - the enactment of the GJLs and other legal instruments, some measures to improve women's access to justice and even policy statements and language on gender equality and women's rights tend to be relatively well integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II. However, the government's commitment to gender issues is not the same in all ministries and departments as one can sense that resistance from some junior ministry staff is hampering the effective implementation of government policies on gender. On the question of the provision of support to LWCSOs and sufficient resources for gender equality issues, I can say that there is very little political will. The MSWGCA, which is the designated ministry and the front runner for the achievement of equality, is the least funded and also lacks the necessary funding and human capacity to be effective.[669]*

However, the majority (64 percent) of the respondents admitted that the contrary situation obtains as women wishing to get into formal politics have to be ready to face and overcome gatekeepers at various stages of the political process – i.e. gaining the social space and acceptance to be involved in the public sphere and getting selected and supported to run for office. Reasons for this revelation may not be devoid firstly, of the fact that there is no level plain field in Sierra Leone for a healthy political competition by both women and men; the continued political violence against women such as the stabbing of the female politician in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone in September 2011, GoSL's reluctance to investigate the incidences of rape that

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[668] Ibid.p.6

[669] Interview: Member of the Sierra Leone donor support or international stakeholder community. Freetown, Sierra Leone. 4th June, 2011. 4:00 pm

occurred during the March 2009 political clashes in Freetown[670],and also because the alleged GJLs have not been implemented as earlier mentioned in this survey, especially in traditional Sierra Leone where customs and traditions are still the daily regulatory and conditioning norms of human lives. The recognition of this fact by the UNCT led to one of several recommendations in their March 2011 joint approach to peacebuilding and gender equality. In the report, UNCT told the GoSL that "[E]ngagement with key stakeholders such as the traditional and religious leaders, paramount chiefs and communities themselves to promote gender equality is essential."[671] A host of challenges or difficulties women political aspirants face range from hostility and harassment, rejection and traditional patriarchy, little or no financial support from political parties, male chauvinism and patronage practices. Below are some of the interview responses to illustrate this point.

A female member F.K. of the district council in northern Sierra Leone talking about the difficulty women political aspirants, especially for parliamentary and district councils face (which is mainly absent at the ward level since representation is on equality basis) mentioned:

> *Women attempting to enter parliament and district councils face significant hostility and obstruction from local men. We face much difficulty in getting the party nomination or selection as some of us do not have the patronage networks to support us because we do not come from 'big' local family or 'party' family. Our supporters, who are most often women are often harassed, threatened and beaten by supporters of rival male aspirants to withdraw their support for us.[672]*

Melrose Kargbo, the National Coordinator/ Director of UN Women in Sierra Leone, commenting on her organisations contribution and support to enhancing LWCSOs peacebuilding capacity and ability said:

> *UNDP through the UN Women programme is rendering huge support to LWCSOs training for their meaningful and sustained engagement in governance, provides funding for livelihood schemes such as micro-credit for income generation and peacebuilding programmes.[673]*

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[670] Op. Cit. Abdullah, Hussainatu J. & Lahai, Bernadette. Pathways, Research and Policy Notes - UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: An Impact Study.p.5

[671] UN Country Team SIERRA LEONE. Joint UN Approach to Peacebuilding and Gender Equality.   17 March, 2011. p.7 (Available at: http://www.betterpeace.org/files/CSC_SL_Joint%20Approach%20to%20Peacebuilidng%20and%20Gender%20Equality.pdf) Sourced: 9/10/2011

[672] Interview: FK. Kambia town, Kambia district. Sierra Leone. 23rd May, 2011. 5: 00 pm.

[673] Kargbo, Melrose. National Director, UN Women. UNHCR Head Office, Aberdeen Ferry Road, Freetown. Sierra Leone. 12th June, 2011. 1:00pm

Table7.14: *Assessment of UN/ international community's commitment to gender equality in Sierra Leone by respondents from both local and international stakeholder organisations, including UN*

		Assessing UN/ Int'l Community's commitment to enhancing gender equality in the peacebuilding venture in Sierra Leone			
		Excellent	Very high	High	Total
Organisational Affiliation	UN PBF/ UNDP	1	0	0	1
	Government/ MSWGCA	0	1	0	1
	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL)	0	1	0	1
	UN Women	0	1	0	1
	Civil Society Organisation (Umbrella Org)	1	0	0	1
	Women's Forum	0	1	0	1
	Campaign for Good governance (CGG)	0	1	0	1
	Network Movement for Justice & Development	0	1	0	1
	Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone	0	0	1	1
	INGO	0	1	0	1
	Local governance	0	1	0	1
Total		2	8	1	11

Figure 7.27: *Assessment of UN and International Community's commitment to Gender Equality in Sierra Leone*

Percentage distribution of UN/ International commitment to gender equality

High 9%
Excellent 18%
Very high 73%
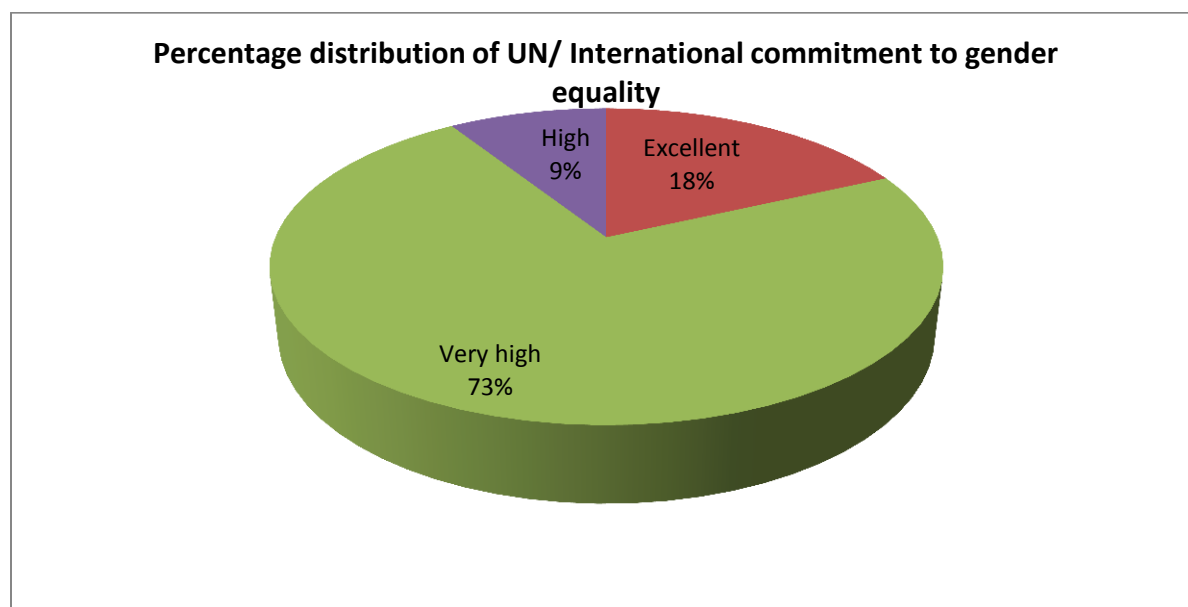
Figure 7.27 provides an analysis of the UN and international community's alleged commitment to gender equality in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone as shown in table 7.14 above. A sizeable number (18 percent) of the respondents say the commitment is very high, whilst the greater number (73 percent) regards the commitment as very high and another, 9 percent high. This overwhelming positive agreement among respondents about UN and International Community's support clearly confirms the findings of this survey and the logical conclusion that UN and the international community are the sole sponsors of the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone, having allocated a staggering amount of $35 million to the process.[674]

7.4 Challenges Faced by LWCSOs in the Peacebuilding Venture in Sierra Leone

Table 7.15: *Assessment of challenges faced by surveyed LWCSOs in Sierra Leone*

Challenges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack of resources, capacity and the burnt out syndrome in women	1	9.1	9.1	9.1
Political violence, poverty, marginalisation, lack of self-esteem, lack of trust and confidence	2	18.2	18.2	27.3
Poverty, high rate of attrition among school girls; discrimination and lack of access to justice; customary laws and traditions are not gender friendly; lack of self- esteem among women; inadequate support for women's organisations; lack of understanding of	2	18.2	18.2	45.5
lack of capacity, lack of supportive policies and needs of women CSOs; and the need for women to find a niche for themselves	2	18.2	18.2	63.6
Lack of logistics, adequate lobbying skills; traditional and cultural practices; and high levels of illiteracy	1	9.1	9.1	72.7
Lack of resources, logistics and financial support	1	9.1	9.1	81.8
Lack of adequate empowerment, resources due to unequal distribution; lack of political will and low budget/ financial support to gender issues; slow implementation of gender acts & laws; socio-cultural & traditional biases against women; lack of institutional codes	1	9.1	9.1	90.9
Lack of capacity/ ability, self- esteem, unity, organisational skills,	1	9.1	9.1	100.0
Total	11	100.0	100.0	

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[674] See table 1 in Chapter Six above

Figure 7.28: *Challenges to LWCSOs participation in peacebuilding*

Percentage distribution of peacebuilding challenges of LWCSOs

Lack of empowerment, lack of political will / low financial support to MSWGCA/issues, lack of institutional/ regulatory codes
9%

Lack of unity, self esteem & adequate training on organisational skills
9%

Lack of resources , capacity, burn out syndrome
9%

Political violence, poverty, marginalisation, lack of trust & confidence among women
19%

Lack of financial support by govt.
9%

High rate of attrition, among sch. girls, discrimination &lack of access to justice, gender incensitive customary & traditions inadequate support to women's orgs
18%

Lack of logistics, in adequate lobbying skills & high illiteracy level
9%

Lack of capacity, govt. supportive policies & needs to LWSCOs; lack of effective implementation of gender equality laws and recommendations, and need to find a niche by women
18%

Figure 7.28 is a summary of most of the challenges LWCSOs face in their peacebuilding engagement in war torn Sierra Leone as shown in table 7.15 above. In brief, these challenges range from lack of proper or effective implementation of enacted gender equality laws/ policies and recommendations, lack of capacity and burnt out syndrome among LWCSOs; lack of adequate resources and skills, finance and sustainable support; poverty; marginalisation, discrimination and political violence, to persistent customary and traditional practices that deter women's rights and freedoms. All of these challenges have in no doubt negatively affected the

performance rate and the recorded level of success by LWCSOs in their various peacebuilding ventures in Sierra Leone.

7.5 Conclusion

It is clear from the findings and their justifications as evident from the personal recorded views above as expressed both by beneficiaries, the Sierra Leonean populace and international stakeholders that LWCSOs are doing a tremendous job and contributing meaningfully not only to the betterment and emancipation of the women folk from the age old patriarchal practices, the pursuit of gender equality and the eradication of discriminatory and exclusionist policies of the different administrations as explained in earlier chapters, but are contributing both to the promotion and development and of civil society in general by empowering and enhancing their performance through training. However, irrespective of these successes and the major inputs made, the UN and international community, majority of Sierra Leoneans, including some members of the donor community still think that the GoSL has still not, amidst the steps taken to achieve gender equality and women's inclusion in the governance and decision making affairs of Sierra Leone, done enough by fully providing the full political will or space that is required to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs) and equality for sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. As already stated above, reluctance both on the part of traditional rulers to accept women as partners in development and the male political candidates or aspirants to accept women as equal contestants; coupled with the absence of institutional codes; and the slow or none implementation of the GJLs by the GoSL could as well be the underlying reason why majority of the respondents interviewed doubted the total commitment of the GoSL to achieving equality for women.

CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, SUGGESTED POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY LWCSO PEACEBUILDERS; AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RRESEACH

8.1 Summary of the Design and Implementation of the Study Process

Summary of Study Design

The main focus of this study was to investigate, identify and document the contributions by LWCSOs to the building of sustainable peace in post conflict Sierra Leone. The exclusive focus on investigating LWCSOs was influenced by many factors among which are: the enviable and special position women occupy in the family, the community and the country at large as care and life givers and sustainers and as development agents, which were all abandoned and swept aside by patriarchy but have experienced a rebirth in the new Sierra Leone; the current UN and international community's insistence and premium on women's inclusion in peace and decision making as a human right, their perceived non-violent role as the potential way forward to building sustainable peace; the extensive documented examples of successful non-violent struggles of women as discussed in three separate sample cases in chapter two. The study developed five main objectives for a proper and effective assessment of LWCSOs peacebuilding activities in Sierra Leone from 2002 – 2012. These objectives are:

1. To identify the programme/ project activities of case study LWCSOs and assess their impacts on:
 a) Target beneficiaries (women)/ communities
 b) Women's/ gender issues
 c) Civil society's development/ promotion and

2. To assess the overall contributions of case study LWCSOs to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

3. To assess the political space/ will and support of GoSL to case study LWCSOs building peace in Sierra Leone

4. To examine the challenges faced by case study LWCSOs in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone

5. To solicit ways/ measures to obliterate these constraints for the achievement of gender equality and political participation for sustainable peace in Sierra Leone

The sample population or target beneficiaries of the LWCSO's peacebuilding activities/ projects interviewed during this study were ninety (90) respondents in total, including both women and men who were selected using the random sampling method. The three LWCSOs used as case study for this study include: Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), Fifty-Fifty Group (50/50) and Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET). Ten (10) members/ officials of the three surveyed LWCSOs, holding senior positions were interviewed and another eleven (11) respondents belonging to the UN, local and international stakeholder organisations involved in and or rendering support to the peacebuilding programme in Sierra Leone, including some gender experts, were interviewed. The total number of all interviewees for this study was one hundred and eleven (111) excluding the experts. This research, which is an exploratory descriptive one, employed the qualitative approach involving various primary data collecting methods and instruments, which included semi-structured and open ended questionnaires administered to all respondents in the three separate groups, interviews; focus group discussions, use of expert opinions, visual aids (pictures); and the participant observation method to arrive at the findings presented in chapter seven.

For the secondary data, books, magazines, newsletters, unpublished papers, journals, video cassettes, and the World Wide Web internets services were also used to access information on the subject.

The primary data collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to develop statistical tables, calculate simple percentages, perform cross tabulations, and to create pie charts from the calculated percentages. A quantitative analysis method was used to analyse the responses/ data collected from the focus group discussions conducted among the beneficiaries of programmes/ projects of three surveyed LWCSOs that made up to the sample population. Three separate sets of questions were developed for the three different categories of respondents and responses were classified and analysed under five broad categories such as: personal/organizational bio-data, programmes/ projects implemented by LWCSOs and their impacts, general assessment of contributions by LWCSOs to peacebuilding; examination of the political space/ will and support of GoSL to LWCSOs; challenges faced by the surveyed LWCSOs involved in the peace building process; and ways/ measures to obliterate

these constraints for the achievement of gender equality and political participation for sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

8.2 Summary of Findings and Conclusion

This study sought to investigate the focus and claim by conflict practioners, UN and the international community that civil society, especially local women's civil society, has a potential and significant role to play in building sustainable peace in war torn countries from an academic point of view; using LWCSOs in Sierra Leone as case study. The findings and conclusions reached in this study are as a result an extensive and scholarly analysis of the history and socio-economic and political involvement of LWCSOs, the available political space for participation and role of LWCSOs in the governance mechanism in Sierra Leone - from pre-colonial, colonial, post-independence and through the eleven years of rebel conflict up to 2012. In a view to establishing a position on the matter, the study explored possible answers to the following questions: What contributions are LWCSOs making to the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone? How are the activities of local women's civil society organisations impacting the target beneficiaries and contributing to promoting women's issues in Sierra Leone? How are these activities of LWCSOs contributing to the growth, and enhancement of civil society's role in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process? What are the challenges faced by these contributions of local women's civil society organisations in their efforts to establish a more peaceful post-war Sierra Leone?

Although this study's aim is to convey the message of support for the practitioner's and international community's view of the potential role LWCSOs can play in enhancing sustainable peacebuilding in Africa, it specifically focuses on LWCSO's peacebuilding activities and their impacts on peace and development in Sierra Leone.

LWCSOs have been and are still very visible at the forefront of efforts to bring about peace and the building of a sustainable one in Sierra Leone. Although there are debates around their innate pacifism, socialised protection mechanisms, the relevant capacity/ skill for a sustainable peace and divided opinions exist regarding the impacts of these involvements; the fact of these contributions to peace, especially their contributions in raising awareness in gender issues/ rights and radical changes and developments in the legal sphere (enactment of GJLs and others) being

heavily weighted towards LWCSOs is difficult to refute. Regardless also of the gender-specific assumptions and or doubts about qualities of the impacts of the peacebuilding activities of LWCSOs or propositions on the grounds of equality or acknowledgement that a wealth of untapped resources is being neglected; international notions of peacebuilding include specific reference to a gender element and the participation of women. But more importantly, this study have found out that LWCSO have and are making important contributions towards building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. From empirical evidence from the field, coupled with the wide range and changing trends, especially in the social, political and peacebuilding issues in Sierra Leone, the study's findings clearly support the assertion that LWCSOs in Sierra Leone are indeed potential partners in building sustainable peace in this war ravaged country as they continue in summary to act as mediators and advocators for basic community development initiatives – water, markets, roads, farming tools/ equipments, electricity and other basic services, offer support to girl child education, engage in reconciliation activities between conflict parties and reuniting families, educate women and men on the rights of women and their roles in conflict and peace, handle issues of disagreement with traditional chiefs and other local authorities, participate in district and provincial security committee meetings and work with the gender section of the Office of National Security (ONS) on security issues.

Since the study has produced summary/ conclusions at the end of each chapter, the remaining part of this chapter is devoted to the principal summary and conclusions of this chapter, analysis of major questions and the challenges that remain for LWCSOs ongoing peacebuilding activities in post -war Sierra Leone.

One of the major findings by this study is that women have been visible at the forefront of efforts, contributing to make, and build peace both during the war and in post-war Sierra Leone. Although the debate about women's innate pacifism, socialised protection mechanisms and experience related interest in peace still lingers unabated, it is clear from all visible signs that their meaningful intervention in the peacebuilding venture has brought significant development, improvements, and positive changes to the female gender and introduced a new paradigm in the peacebuilding and governance mechanism. An earlier recognition of LWCSO's immense

contributions to peace amidst their unofficial representation at the peace table in Lome is glaring in the 2004 TRC report for Sierra Leone. The report states:

> *While women played a strong role in peacemaking, only two women attended the negotiations that led to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999. Nonetheless women are increasingly playing a more prominent role in the public life of Sierra Leone.*[675]

From the comprehensive analysis of the collected data in chapter seven, coupled with the successful positive results of the same cases analysed in chapter two, it is clear that the call and perceived importance of LWCSO's involvement in peacebuilding is not just a matter of their human rights and justice or to have a say on matters that affect their lives, families and communities where they are most often in the majority, but an overwhelming evidence that abounds have shown from the findings that women in Sierra Leone are making meaningful contributions to building a sustainable peace. From the analysis above, their extensive and effective awareness raising on women's human rights and the need for equality, mending and building broken relationships, building capacities and empowering women and civil society with conflict management and resolution, peacemaking and early warning skills through trainings; contributing to girl child education; undertaken reconstruction and development programmes etc. are all irrefutable evidences. Through advocacy and lobbying, LWCSOs have been able to influence the passing of the GJLs and other acts, the development of a National Action Plan on UN Resolution 1325 and 1820 and the Gender National Action Plan and important policies at the national level. Security Council Resolution 1325, which is regarded as a ground breaking venture by the UN, is built on four pillars: a) participation of women in senior decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities and structures at all levels, b) the protection of women and girls not only from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), but should also include – socio-economic, political and legal protection, c) the prevention of women and girls from discrimination and abuse(addressing impunity), and d)relief and recovery (which deals with the issue of disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and reparation). This resolution has the potential or is well designed to address the gender imbalances that exist in Sierra Leone as

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[675] The Final Report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, Volume 3B Chapter 3 paragraph 13

extensively discussed in this study and enhance the equality that women are yearning for if this resolution is effectively implemented by the GoSL.

The peacebuilding efforts by LWCSOs have not only given voice to women and civil society, demonstrated their ability as equal partners in the pursuit of peace; and increased women's political participation but also their election into prominent decision making positions, especially at the local governance level and their expected increase in number in the national politics through the granted 30 percent quota at the party, parliamentary, and national levels has a high probability of producing positive results for a sustainable peace, gender equality and development in Sierra Leone. The study has provided a profound insight into the programme activities by LWCSOs that has had positive and revolutionary thoughts and increased level of acceptance of women as potential peacebuilders by patriarchal Sierra Leoneans, especially traditional men. One positive impact of the war, was that women suddenly became aware of their own agenda and became gender conscious. It was also revealed that, there has been an acceleration of women's groupings during the war for collective action despite their harsh experiences of the war.

Results of the analysis of the data have revealed that women in Sierra Leone, regardless of their different educational statuses, different age bracket and political affiliations, are indeed peace lovers and builders as they have been able to break through the negative barriers of tradition, customs, practices and stereotypes in order to consolidate peace. The driving force behind the success of LWCSO's contributions to peace building process has been their willingness, determination 'never again to remain silent,' and the commitment among them. For instance, the grassroots women took the full responsibility to face the difficult and threatening challenges of the post-war period and put their efforts together to ensure the survival of their families and to ensure that Sierra Leone does not slide back into war but continue to move forward toward lasting peace.

The study also reveals that women's role in peace building is highly linked to women's cultural and traditional roles of being mediators and helpers in their families, communities and of those in need. This role is very critical to women's participation and voluntary activities aimed at

promoting peace building at community level as well as household level. The findings have clearly revealed also that LWCSOs have not only worked exclusively with women and women organisations but with men and other organisations led by men alike to positively influence the country's democratic processes by contesting for elected positions, mass participation in elections, constitutional reviews and decision making, and legal reforms in the justice and security sectors.

Similarly, LWCSOs have indicated by their actions and contributions to peace that women are better in defending their own interests and their representation at decision making levels is very essential because it is only when they are part of those who plan, design, formulate and implement policies that they will be able to meaningfully and effectively contribute to making the peace truly sustainable, the only conducive atmosphere within which development thrives.

Despite the feasible and substantial contributions women have made towards peace building in Sierra Leone, they still face a host of challenges that hinder their effective and full contribution to the promotion of sustainable peace. Some of the outstanding challenges range from lack of adequate financial and political support and will, persistent customary and traditional practices; poverty; lack of implementation of policies/ enacted laws and recommendations of women's groups to women's continued subjection to subordination, GBV and political intimidation in the society. The study also reveals that the high rate of illiteracy, cultural and religious practices, financial and logistical constraints undermines women's confidence and capacity to participate effectively in community and national programs.

Nonetheless, the study recognises the fact that there may be some reservations, questions and or criticisms regarding the quality of these activities and contributions by LWCSOs, but as Potter (2004) opines, "whether a consideration of gender-specific assumptions about qualities of peacemaking, grounds of equality or an acknowledgement that the wealth of untapped resources is being neglected, international notions of peacebuilding include specific reference to a gender element and the participation of women. Women are therefore essential to the formal processes of building peace in areas of conflict."[676]

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[676] Op. Cit. Potter, Michael. Women, Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Paths to Peace Through the Empowerment of Women…p.30

There growing notions of a prominent role by LWCSOs to peacebuilding in post-war settings, may be subject to challenge and debate. However, the qualities and definitions of a vibrant civil society accords to the imperative of the participation of women. In general, the civil society landscape in Sierra Leone is gendered and its development has always been skewed towards men, but the eleven year rebel war provided sufficient opportunity for women to organise and influence in significant ways that have been very difficult in formal political processes. Although there is some tension however, between what constitutes civil society and the ideas embodied in contemporary feminism, there is scope for women to claim substantial sections of civil society for their advantage. This successes notwithstanding, the findings in this study reveals, amidst the numerous highlighted achievements that i) there are lots of women organisations in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone that are unable to do advocacy work because of the lack of confidence in themselves and the high level of illiteracy among them, ii) that national advocacy campaigns are constrained by lack of logistical support, iii) that many and effective advocacy campaigns are done only through the radio/media and even this is limited because of lack of the needed finances to pay for air time, iv) that there is a very low capacity/ skills among LWCSOs and even the few skilled and empowered women are very busy with livelihood and family duties that they have a very little to time to focus on national and peacebuilding issues, v) that there is a lack of a strong link, unity, proper coordination between LWCSOs and vi) that the impacts of the programmes/ projects of LWCSOs, as revealed by respondents from the stakeholder groups as at the time of this research, are not very huge. However, it is believed by the respondents interviewed and the greater section of the Sierra Leonean populace that the impacts of these programmes/ projects, especially the awareness programmes on women's rights, need for equality, rule of law, and the trainings in early warning, peacemaking/ resolution and peacebuilding and the gender GJLs (if properly implemented); the increase of women politicians and decision makers and many other peacebuilding activities, if maintained, implemented and upheld, will all have some huge positive, and sustainable impacts on the peacebuilding and development process in the long term. Perhaps an appropriate explanation of the findings of this research could best be summarised in the views of Potter (2004) who says that "the strength and cohesion of civil society depends largely on how women are integrated into its structures and processes. As with formal political and economic structures, the positions of influence and power

within civil society remain largely in male hands, but women have a marginal advantage in this field in comparison with the often hostile environment of political institutions."[677]

The empowerment of women in any post-conflict society can be a difficult and cumbersome process. However, if there is going to be any headway in dealing with the inequality, marginalisation/ exclusion and the injustices that led to the war, women in Sierra Leone needs to travel from a marginalised position, as was evident from pre-colonial times through the conflict, to one of leadership during the peacebuilding process in the new Sierra Leone. But this can only be achieved through women's equal political representation in institutions, influence in leadership structures in civil society and recognition of the extensive impact of their involvement in maintaining communities throughout conflicts and its transition, as well as healing processes during and after conflict for a remarkable impact to be realised. The reinforcement of LWCSOs trainings and additional ones in new and emerging conflict management/ resolution mechanisms in various communities, especially in those that are still considered fragile and therefore vulnerable to conflict such as the border areas in Sierra Leone – Guinea and Sierra Leone – Liberia communities; contributes to essential framework of promoting peace and empowering women to become assertive in the transition phase from conflict and the formation of a post-war society.

The greater investment in these activities, which will eventually lead to the empowerment of women in post-conflict Sierra Leone, though may be considered a very long and difficult process, is a doable one where the willingness exists through activities such as capacity building/ skills trainings, extension of women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship for economic independence and increased support to women and girl child education as discussed below will enhance an effective and sustainable contribution by LWCSOs to peacebuilding. In other words, these processes if undertaken will contribute to women's options of emancipation; build their capacity and confidence to challenge traditional power structures and exert pressure on decision making processes; and provides greater recognition of the resources available and potential for leadership in civil society in its role in peacebuilding. If undertaken, these processes can lead to multiple contributions to the task of building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

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[677]Ibid.

Firstly, the improvement and increase in women's participation in employment and entrepreneurship can help strengthen Sierra Leone's economy which is a needed criteria for the stability of various societies, especially the economically weaker ones across the country.

Secondly, women's economic independence will contribute immensely to options for their emancipation, "a pre-requisite for a just and egalitarian society."[678]

Thirdly, these trainings and support/ assistance will help build LWCSO's/ womens's confidence and capacity to challenge traditional power structures and exert pressure on decision- making processes, offering them the role to fully participate in the reconstruction of their societies. Finally, LWCSO's/ women's empowerment in the various communities in Sierra Leone will present a greater recognition of the resources (social capital) available and the potential for leadership in civil society in its role in peacebuilding.

However, the contextual reality of LWCSOs involvement in the peacebuilding projects funded mainly by contributions from their membership, some countries of the African sub-region, individuals, international non-governmental organisations and countries in the international community that support women's participation in politics and peacebuilding, as part of the UN's led peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone clearly shows how important women's participation is crucial to the process. In Sierra Leone women have been long differentially disadvantaged by their exclusion from major socio-economic and political processes that were worsened by the eleven year rebel conflict as discussed in chapter four. These situations subordinated women's needs and aspirations to the imperatives of competing national identities. This has over the decades created a deficit in women's capacity and ability to participate effectively in society. Structured and specifically tailored and targeted trainings of contexts in which LWCSOs find themselves, will help create the formal qualifications and opportunities for self-improvement and progression needed to facilitate a greater participatory role in society, the economy and political life, whether formally or through the consultation processes of civil society. More importantly also, the informal processes of empowerment and self-development that have been constantly undertaken by LWCSOs are very crucial to the process of moving beyond a conflict identity. But

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[678] Ibid. p.31

while trainings for political participation at national and council levels and awareness raising on gender and women's issues and rights, social and legal reforms and infrastructural development have been the main focus of peacebuilding activities, this can only partially contribute to the development of a more peaceful society. People require the confidence, economic empowerment and a built capacity to engage with different communities and to take on leading roles in structures of leadership in communities and civil society that are not oriented towards a confident stance. Since the accomplishment of the above mentioned measures leading to the realisation of its resultant benefits, requires an extended involvement of LWCSOs and indeed women general in the socio-economic and political spheres for their effective contribution; some proactive/ practical measures need to be taken in order to remove the barriers faced by LWCSOs/ women. Below are some of the practical and possible ways suggested by survey respondents of removing the existing barriers faced by LWCSOs for their equal, formidable and effective participation in building the desired and sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

In a nut-shell, there are a lot of hiccups that are most often associated with any peacebuilding venture, which therefore requires the input and cooperation of all stakeholders. It is no doubt that the socialisation process of women coupled with their biological makeup endows them with peacemaking qualities as the various successful peace ventures by the LWCSOs (displaying these qualities) significantly contributed to ending the Sierra Leone's rebel war in 2002. LWCSOs in no doubt have warned the admiration of many including former President Tejan Kabba who openly acknowledged and thanked them as effective partners in the search for peace during his Presidency. [679] In firmly expressing his faith in the potentials of women as peacebuilders, Mahatma Gandhi said "women are the only ones who could save the world."[680] In her description of women's role in peace, former Minister of Agriculture of Tanzania, Anna Msekwa said women are the "missing link in the peacemaking chain."[681] In this regard Thelma Ekiyor adds that women's nurturing qualities must be made plain or utilised for the public inorder to "purify politics and to tip the balance to peace and decency."[682] Former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan underscored the importance of women by emphasising that "efforts to

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[679] Nzomo, M. (2002).Gender, Governance and Conflict in Africa. Dakar, Senegal

[680] Op. Cit. Ekiyor, Thelma. Women in Peacebuilding: An Account of the Niger Delta Women. WANEP-From the Field 3rd Edition. p.8

[681] Ibid

[682] Ibid

resolve these conflicts and address their root causes will not succeed unless we empower all those who have suffered from them - including and especially women. And only if women play a full and equal part can we build the foundations for enduring peace - development, good governance, human rights and justice."[683] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report of 2004 for Sierra Leone made this point very clearly in its recommendations.[684]

8.2.1 Conclusion

With all the findings about the significant contributions by LWCSOs and its impacts on the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone and the challenges that remain, coupled with the author's experience and observation and the reality of events, the study arrived at the following summary of conclusions.

a) That the sustainability of peace in post-war Sierra Leone requires a sincere and firm dealing with the root causes of the conflict through the involvement of all stakeholders and by addressing social inequalities, education, poverty, political participation and women's engagement at all levels of decision making. Although LWCSOs have succeeded in pushing through the enactment of GJLs and policies that will help raise more awareness on rights, and promote increased women's political participation/ role in governance and ensure gender equality in the Sierra Leone, if these laws/ policies are not fully implemented, supported, and the right political environment/ space and will provided; and justice and equal participation ensured; these achievements/ activities may not produce the much desired sustainability of the peace that is being built.

b) That although LWCSOs have and are contributing immensely to peacebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone, their efforts are challenged by deep seated patriarchal and socio-cultural beliefs embedded in tribal, ethnic, and cultural values and norms that are part of the wider society that needs to be adequately addressed.

c) That the role of local women's peacebuilding organisations provide a very good platform to addressing gender inequalities and women's empowerment in post-conflict peacebuilding societies.

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[683] Anan, Kofi. A. Forward: Women, Peace and Security. Study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).UN, United Nations Publication 2002, Sales No.E.03.IV.1 ISBN 92-1-130222-6

[684] See report of TRC – Available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html Sourced: 24/01/2011

d) That LWCSO's general contribution to peacebuilding also provides support to the process of addressing violence, human rights, and human security, which aids the achievement and enhancement of national and international development targets – i.e. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

8.3 Suggested/ Possible Solutions for Overcoming the Challenges faced by LWCSO Peacebuilders

Objective 5: The objective of this section is to provide a summary of some of the suggested possible remedies to the challenges and or obstacles that LWCSOs are faced with in their bold, active and commended step in building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone.

In the past ten years, women's contribution to peace building has been varied and quite remarkable though not very much feasible as it is more psycho-social and legal and less concrete as clearly shown in the survey findings in chapter seven despite the fact that it has not been largely acknowledged and well documented. The overall recorded successes LWCSOs are largely attributed to the traditional role of women as care givers and nurturers of life, and peace ambassadors. However, great challenges as outlined and summarised in Figure 29 of chapter eight remains to be overcomed if the roles of LWCSO's in the most desired process of building a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone has to be maximised. Below are some of the specific and outstanding measures, as strongly suggested by all respondents during the interview process that will help overcome the challenges and enhance the effective and meaningful contributions of women in the peace building process, viz:

Figure 29: *Percentage distribution/ suggestions of possible solutions for overcoming the challenges*
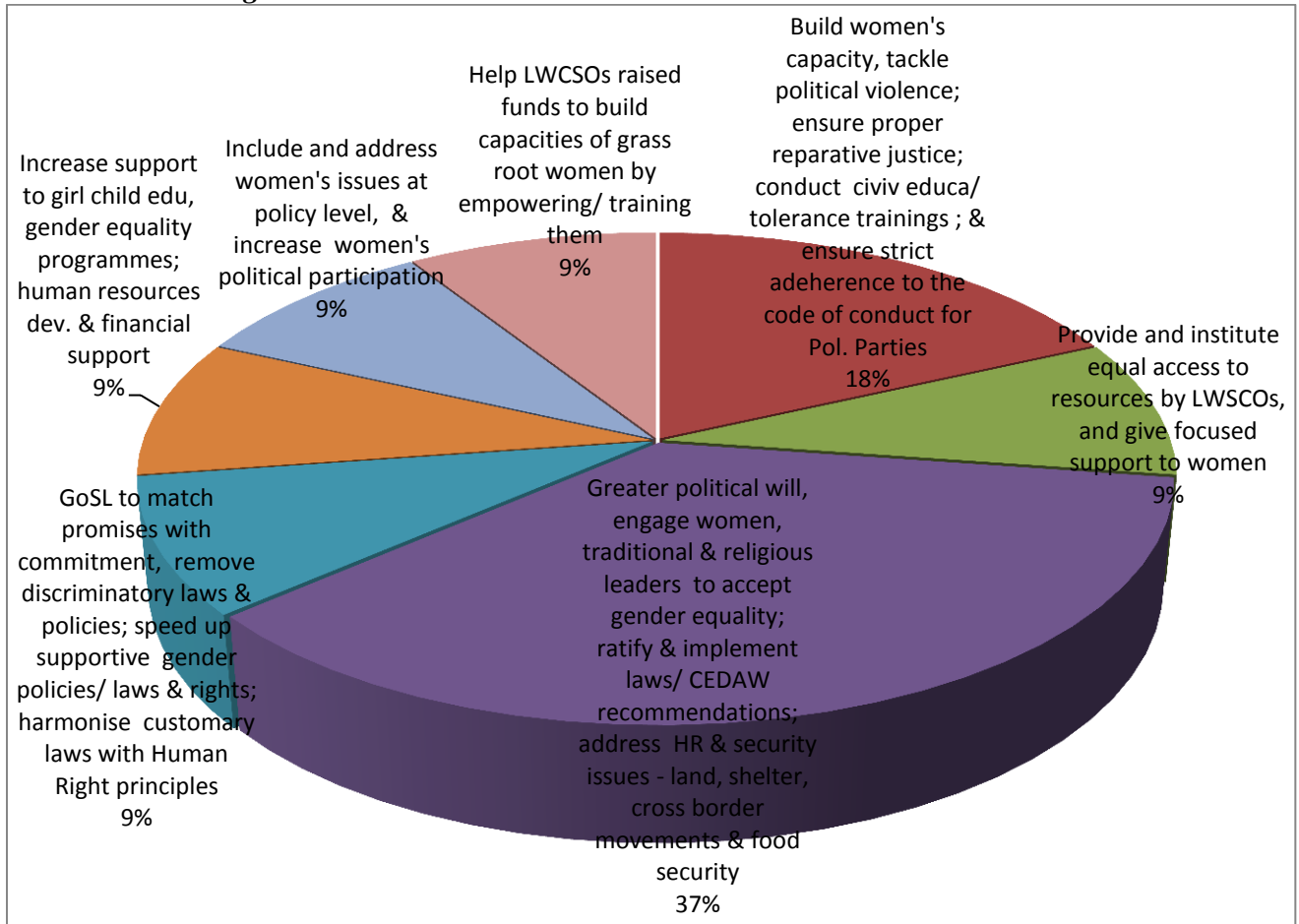
Figure 29 presents an overall summary of some of the various possible ways, as suggested by respondents, by which the obstacles and challenges faced by LWCSOs in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone as highlighted in figure 28 above, could be surmounted in order to enhance a fuller participation and the maximisation of the skills of LWCSOs for a better and sustainable peacebuilding; and the achievement of gender equality in Sierra Leone.

Firstly, that United Nations and other peacebuilding and development partners in Sierra Leone should focus on specific gender projects and not depend on the mainstreaming gender policy it (UN) operates on and to also increase support for women's participation in peace building initiatives by ensuring that the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) domesticates and

implements several international instruments like UN Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889and others that will give women the opportunity to use their expertise to contribute to sustainable peace and development in post-war Sierra Leone. Similarly so, respondents think that the international community and donor agencies should also improve the opportunities and collaboration with women's groups and continue to facilitate and provide financial assistance to peacebuilding efforts especially in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment issues in order to tackle the problem of insufficient funding for meaningful programmes. With these developments effected, women will not only be able to contribute more to building peace, but that the entrenched issues of marginalisation and discrimination would eventually be a thing of the past and equality will be enhanced. More importantly also, it is suggested that organisations such as UN Women, UNICEF, UNIFEM and other international NGO's that are already contributing to the peacebuilding process should extend/ increase, improve and strengthen existing leadership programmes for women at all levels in order to build their capacities all over the country for better and appropriate interventions.

Secondly, it is suggested that the GoSL should offer focused financial and moral support, create more and unhindered political space for women and legislate regulatory institutional codes, which will in turn ensure the statuses and roles of women as equal partners in the building of a sustainable peace in Sierra Leone; which will make the country experience a peaceful co-existence and a rapid increase in development; address and mainstream women's issues and concerns into every policy and programme that is designed not only to deal with the root causes of the war but to offer a level plain field that will provide and enhance gender equality and development. In another vein, respondents suggested a complete repeal of customary laws; traditional beliefs and practices that contribute to further marginalisation of women and their replacement with gender equal ones or their harmonisation with human right principles; and to engage traditional and religious rulers to accept women as equal partners for a harmonious productive leaving. They also mentioned that the GoSL should ratify outstanding international human rights instruments, ensure compliance with them and to also implement all recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee in its initial fifth Country Report in 2007, domesticate CEDAW and ratify the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo Protocol). With regards the issue of

elections, respondents suggested that elections should not be seen only as an event but a process and therefore pre, during and post-election support should be provided for LWCSOs, CSOs and state institutions in order that they are able to sustain and build on the democratic gains since the end of war. The enhancement of a gender sensitive environment within the security sector because of the insignificant number of women especially in decision-making levels is another key suggestion that was made.

Thirdly, that LWCSOs should embark on massive fundraising activities to support programmes relating to the empowerment of women, especially those at the grass roots and should encourage other women to find time to participate in peace building initiatives, as it is their right. Similarly, that women should be encouraged to develop self-esteem, and unite to support each other in solidarity to fight their course especially to continue to lobby parliament for the achievement of the remaining 20 percent representation of women in every sphere, institutions and higher positions of decision making for the total achievement of equality and their needs and concerns to be highlighted and addressed adequately.

Lastly but most important, is the need to institute or undertake a proper reparative justice mechanism for victims, especially women and girls. The 2004Truth and Reconciliation Commission *(*TRC*)* report for Sierra Leone, in its conclusion on the findings on the eleven year rebel war made mentioned of the wrongs in which it said:

> *The Commission focused on reparations as another element of restorative justice, which can be provided either in material or symbolic forms to redress the harm suffered by victims as a consequence of the violation and abuses they endured. The Commission took the view that the implementation of a reparations programme in Sierra Leone would be vital to the reconciliation process because it has the potential to assist those victims whose lives have been most devastated. The implementation of a reparations programme also helps to facilitate relations between victims and perpetrator.*[685]

However, although the TRC report mentioned corruption and nepotism, rampant unemployment and poverty, coupled with violent suppression that characterised Siaka Steven's APC rule from 1968, factors that were directly or indirectly related to discrimination, especially against women in Sierra Leone as vividly discussed in this study, the report however failed to recognise the

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[685] The Final Report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, Volume 3B Chapter 7: Reconciliation, paragraph 9

sufferings (either physically, morally or psychologically) of those who were discriminated against, disadvantaged and made poor by the policies and repressive laws, especially women. Because of their narrow definition or victims of the twenty three years of APC misrule, the recommendations for reparations covered only victims of the rebel war, which was the overall result/ outcome of all the wrongs committed during the APC misrule as mentioned in the TRC report.

The GoSL in 2010 offered an open apology to the women of Sierra Leone on behalf of the perpetrators, for all the wrongs that were done to them during the war period based on the TRC report, a message that does not carry any sign of regret or remorse by the perpetrators. This study extensively discussed this issue as recommended by Margret Walker in her book titled 'What is Reparative Justice? The Aquinas Lecture, 2010.' Even the UN reparation benefits that were given only targeted a number of selected women who were recognised as victims of the war. But careful consideration of the factors that brought about those wrongs as were seen committed during the war, were as a result of all the discriminatory and isolationist laws and wrong policies instituted during the colonial period, which worsened during the dictatorship regime of Siaka Stevens after independence as discussed in previous chapters of this study; resulting to those gravious human right violations. So to apologise only for the atrocities committed during the war, ignoring all that culminated into its outburst, to my mind, raises the question of the GoSL's sincerity, acceptance of responsibility and its genuine intension to address the inequalities that led to the problem of discrimination, marginalisation, poor and vulnerable state of women, which still lingers around but under a different nomenclature. The UN PBF has paid some compensation to victims of the rebel war in Sierra Leone but ultimately any attempt at compensating only a small group of women that have been identified as 'war victims,' that does not adhere to the prescribed, logical legal way of addressing such a pertinent issues as discussed in section 2.3.1- leaving the greater women population unattended is totally unfair, a mockery of democratic tenets, and denial of the human rights of the majority of the women. Any compensation under such a scheme cannot befittingly be called reparation but 'charity,' and is in no doubt a cosmetic solution to the Sierra Leone problem that may have negative consequences for the future.

Additionally, from the findings of the survey questionnaire administered, 18 percent of the respondents recommended among other things the tackling of violence by political parties and the conduct of civic education and trainings on tolerance and strict adherence to the Political Party's code of conduct; and the institution of a proper reparative justice mechanism, 9 percent suggested that the gender-discrimination laws should be removed from the law books of Sierra Leone, that the GoSL to match words with commitment, legislate more supportive gender policies and their implementation including the GJLs, 9 percent agitated for more and improved support from the GoSL and its international partners to the girl child education, 9 percent for equal access to resources, 37 percent for the proper address of human right abuses and security issues relating to food, land, shelter and cross border movements, 9 percent in support of the raising of more funds by LWCSOs to train and empower grass roots women inorder to reach a wider audience and to continue the peace building initiatives, among others.

8.4 Suggestions for Further Research

During the course of this study, I observed that my survey could not cover all the peacebuilding activities of LWCSOs as more may have been done than the study could cover, mainly because of the limited available time, small sample size and financial resources and other factors as discussed in chapter one under the section 'limitations and challenges to the survey.' Because of these limitations, the findings of this study therefore could not have captured the bigger picture of the various activities and therefore their maximum impacts, and the effect leadership skills and motivation would have had on the findings if they observed and analysed. I therefore suggest a follow up and further investigation of this study with a bigger study sample size and a broader coverage area in the near future. Because of this, I would want to suggest the following for further research on this subject:

  i) An investigation of the relationship between the leaders of LWCSOs and the grass root women and the impacts of their leadership, motivational skills and styles on the outcome of the peacebuilding programmes/ projects.

  ii) A comparative investigation into the level of success by the exclusively LWCSOs and those that are composed of both men and women.

  iii) A cross country/ regional comparative investigation of the activities, impacts and challenges of LWCSO peacebuilders – e.g. a sub-regional comparative study of the

peacebuilding activities of either WIPNET or MARWOPNET in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry .

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Appendix l

Summary of the Articles of Resolution 1325 (2000) adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting on 31 October 2000 (S/RES/1325(2000)

1. Urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels.
2. Encourages the Secretary General to implement a strategic plan of action to increase the participation of women.
3. Urges the Secretary General to appoint more women as special representative and envoys.
4. Urges the Secretary General to seek to expand the role of women in UN field operations.
5. Expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations.
6. Requests the Secretary General to provide to member states training guidelines and materials on the specific needs of women.
7. Urges member states to increase their support for gender-sensitive training efforts.
8. Calls on all actors involved when negotiating and implementing peace initiatives to adopt a gender perspective.
9. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect international law regarding the rights of women and girls.
10. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to prevent gender-based violence.
11. Emphasises the responsibility of all states to end impunity for crimes against humanity, including gender-based crimes.
12. Call upon all parties to armed conflict to respect civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps
13. Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, etc, to take into account the different needs of male and female ex-combatants.
14. Reaffirms its readiness to give consideration to gender impacts when acting under Article 41
15. Expresses its willingness to ensure Security Council missions take account of gender perspectives.
16. lnvites the Secretary General to carry out a study of the impact of conflict on women and girls
17. Requests the Secretary General to include progress on gender mainstreaming in his report to the Security Council

Appendix 2
Percentages of Women in National Legislatures

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	**Rwanda**	9 2008	80	45	56.3%	10 2003	26	9	34.6%
2	**Andorra**	4 2011	28	15	53.6%	---	---	---	---
3	**Sweden**	9 2010	349	157	45.0%	---	---	---	---
4	**South Africa** [1]	4 2009	400	178	44.5%	4 2009	54	16	29.6%
5	**Cuba**	1 2008	586	253	43.2%	---	---	---	---
6	**Iceland**	4 2009	63	27	42.9%	---	---	---	---
7	**Finland**	4 2011	200	85	42.5%	---	---	---	---
8	**Norway**	9 2009	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	---
9	**Belgium**	6 2010	150	59	39.3%	6 2010	71	26	36.6%
"	**Netherlands**	6 2010	150	59	39.3%	5 2011	75	27	36.0%
10	**Mozambique**	10 2009	250	98	39.2%	---	---	---	---
11	**Angola**	9 2008	220	85	38.6%	---	---	---	---
"	**Costa Rica**	2 2010	57	22	38.6%	---	---	---	---
12	**Argentina**	6 2009	257	99	38.5%	6 2009	71	25	35.2%
13	**Denmark**	11 2007	179	68	38.0%	---	---	---	---
14	**Spain**	3 2008	350	128	36.6	3 2008	263	85	32.3%

				%				
15	**United Republic of Tanzania**	10 2010	350	126	36.0 %	---	---	---	---
16	**Uganda**	2 2011	375	131	34.9 %	---	---	---	---
17	**New Zealand**	11 2008	122	41	33.6 %	---	---	---	---
18	**Nepal**	4 2008	594	197	33.2 %	---	---	---	---
19	**Germany**	9 2009	622	204	32.8 %	N.A.	69	15	21.7%
20	**Ecuador**	4 2009	124	40	32.3 %	---	---	---	---
21	**Burundi**	7 2010	106	34	32.1 %	7 2010	41	19	46.3%
22	**Belarus**	9 2008	110	35	31.8 %	7 2008	58	19	32.8%
23	**The F.Y.R. of Macedonia**	6 2011	123	38	30.9 %	---	---	---	---
24	**Guyana**	8 2006	70	21	30.0 %	---	---	---	---
25	**Timor-Leste**	6 2007	65	19	29.2 %	---	---	---	---
26	**Switzerland**	10 2007	200	58	29.0 %	10 2007	46	10	21.7%
27	**Trinidad and Tobago**	5 2010	42	12	28.6 %	6 2010	31	8	25.8%
28	**Austria**	9 2008	183	51	27.9 %	N.A.	61	18	29.5%
29	**Ethiopia**	5 2010	547	152	27.8 %	5 2010	135	22	16.3%
30	**Afghanistan**	9 2010	249	69	27.7 %	1 2011	102	28	27.5%
31	**Portugal**	6 2011	230	61	26.5 %	---	---	---	---
"	**South**	8 2011	332	88	26.5	8 2011	50	5	10.0%

	Soudan				%			
32	**Mexico**	7 2009	500	131	26.2 %	7 2006	128	29	22.7%
33	**Monaco**	2 2008	23	6	26.1 %	---	---	---	---
34	**Bolivia**	12 2009	130	33	25.4 %	12 2009	36	17	47.2%
35	**Iraq**	3 2010	325	82	25.2 %	---	---	---	---
36	**Sudan**	4 2010	346	87	25.1 %	5 2010	28	5	17.9%
37	**Lao People's Democratic Republic**	4 2011	132	33	25.0 %	---	---	---	---
38	**Australia**	8 2010	150	37	24.7 %	8 2010	76	27	35.5%
"	**Canada**	5 2011	308	76	24.7 %	N.A.	103	37	35.9%
39	**Namibia**	11 2009	78	19	24.4 %	11 2010	26	7	26.9%
"	**Viet Nam**	5 2011	500	122	24.4 %	---	---	---	---
40	**Lesotho**	2 2007	120	29	24.2 %	3 2007	33	6	18.2%
41	**Liechtenstein**	2 2009	25	6	24.0 %	---	---	---	---
42	**Croatia**	11 2007	153	36	23.5 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Seychelles**	5 2007	34	8	23.5 %	---	---	---	---
43	**Kyrgyzstan**	10 2010	120	28	23.3 %	---	---	---	---
44	**Senegal**	6 2007	150	34	22.7 %	8 2007	100	40	40.0%
45	**United Arab Emirates**	12 2006	40	9	22.5 %	---	---	---	---
46	**Pakistan**	2 2008	342	76	22.2	3 2009	100	17	17.0%

				%				
"	**Singapore**	5 2011	90	20	22.2 %	---	---	---	---
47	**Mauritania**	11 2006	95	21	22.1 %	11 2009	56	8	14.3%
"	**Philippines**	5 2010	280	62	22.1 %	5 2010	23	3	13.0%
48	**Czech Republic**	5 2010	200	44	22.0 %	10 2010	81	15	18.5%
"	**Eritrea**	2 1994	150	33	22.0 %	---	---	---	---
"	**United Kingdom**	5 2010	650	143	22.0 %	N.A.	733	147	20.1%
"	**Uzbekistan**	12 2009	150	33	22.0 %	1 2010	100	15	15.0%
49	**Serbia**	5 2008	250	54	21.6 %	---	---	---	---
50	**Peru**	4 2011	130	28	21.5 %	---	---	---	---
51	**China**	3 2008	2987	637	21.3 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Italy**	4 2008	630	134	21.3 %	4 2008	321	59	18.4%
52	**Cambodia**	7 2008	123	26	21.1 %	1 2006	61	9	14.8%
53	**Bulgaria**	7 2009	240	50	20.8 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Cape Verde**	2 2011	72	15	20.8 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Dominican Republic**	5 2010	183	38	20.8 %	5 2010	32	3	9.4%
"	**Malawi**	5 2009	192	40	20.8 %	---	---	---	---
54	**Nicaragua**	11 2006	92	19	20.7 %	---	---	---	---
55	**Latvia**	10 2010	100	20	20.0 %	---	---	---	---

"	**Luxembourg**	6 2009	60	12	20.0 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Poland**	10 2007	460	92	20.0 %	10 2007	100	8	8.0%
56	**Estonia**	3 2011	101	20	19.8 %	---	---	---	---
57	**Israel**	2 2009	120	23	19.2 %	---	---	---	---
58	**Lithuania**	10 2008	141	27	19.1 %	---	---	---	---
59	**El Salvador**	1 2009	84	16	19.0 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Tajikistan**	2 2010	63	12	19.0 %	3 2010	34	5	14.7%
60	**France**	6 2007	577	109	18.9 %	9 2008	343	75	21.9%
61	**Mauritius**	5 2010	69	13	18.8 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Republic of Moldova**	11 2010	101	19	18.8 %	---	---	---	---
62	**Bangladesh**	12 2008	345	64	18.6 %	---	---	---	---
63	**Sao Tome and Principe**	8 2010	55	10	18.2 %	---	---	---	---
64	**Honduras**	11 2009	128	23	18.0 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Indonesia**	4 2009	560	101	18.0 %	---	---	---	---
65	**Kazakhstan**	8 2007	107	19	17.8 %	8 2011	47	?	#VALE U
66	**Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**	12 2010	23	4	17.4 %	---	---	---	---
67	**Greece**	10 2009	300	52	17.3 %	---	---	---	---
68	**Venezuela**	9 2010	165	28	17.0 %	---	---	---	---

69	**United States of America** [2]	11 2010	432	73	16.9%	11 2010	100	17	17.0%
70	**Turkmenistan**	12 2008	125	21	16.8%	---	---	---	---
71	**Bosnia and Herzegovina**	10 2010	42	7	16.7%	6 2011	15	2	13.3%
"	**San Marino**	11 2008	60	10	16.7%	---	---	---	---
72	**Albania**	6 2009	140	23	16.4%	---	---	---	---
73	**Azerbaijan**	11 2010	125	20	16.0%	---	---	---	---
"	**Slovakia**	6 2010	150	24	16.0%	---	---	---	---
74	**Thailand**	7 2011	500	79	15.8%	4 2011	149	23	15.4%
75	**Democratic People's Republic of Korea**	3 2009	687	107	15.6%	---	---	---	---
76	**Burkina Faso**	5 2007	111	17	15.3%	---	---	---	---
77	**Uruguay**	10 2009	99	15	15.2%	10 2009	31	4	12.9%
78	**Zimbabwe**	3 2008	214	32	15.0%	3 2008	99	24	24.2%
79	**Gabon**	1 2009	116	17	14.7%	1 2009	102	18	17.6%
"	**Republic of Korea**	4 2008	299	44	14.7%	---	---	---	---
80	**Ireland**	2 2011	166	24	14.5%	4 2011	60	18	30.0%
81	**Slovenia**	9 2008	90	13	14.4%	11 2007	40	1	2.5%
82	**Chile**	12 2009	120	17	14.2%	12 2009	38	5	13.2%
"	**Turkey**	6 2011	550	78	14.2%	---	---	---	---

83	**Russian Federation**	12 2007	450	63	14.0 %	N.A.	169	8	4.7%
"	**Zambia**	9 2006	157	22	14.0 %	---	---	---	---
84	**Cameroon**	7 2007	180	25	13.9 %	---	---	---	---
85	**Djibouti**	2 2008	65	9	13.8 %	---	---	---	---
86	**Swaziland**	9 2008	66	9	13.6 %	10 2008	30	12	40.0%
87	**Grenada**	7 2008	15	2	13.3 %	8 2008	13	4	30.8%
"	**Jamaica**	9 2007	60	8	13.3 %	9 2007	21	5	23.8%
"	**Niger**	1 2011	113	15	13.3 %	---	---	---	---
88	**Sierra Leone**	8 2007	121	16	13.2 %	---	---	---	---
89	**Central African Republic**	3 2011	92	12	13.0 %	---	---	---	---
90	**Chad**	2 2011	188	24	12.8 %	---	---	---	---
91	**Colombia**	3 2010	166	21	12.7 %	3 2010	102	16	15.7%
92	**Dominica**	12 2009	32	4	12.5 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Liberia**	10 2005	64	8	12.5 %	10 2005	30	5	16.7%
"	**Madagascar**	10 2010	256	32	12.5 %	10 2010	90	10	11.1%
"	**Paraguay**	4 2008	80	10	12.5 %	4 2008	45	7	15.6%
93	**Syrian Arab Republic**	4 2007	250	31	12.4 %	---	---	---	---
94	**Bahamas**	5 2007	41	5	12.2 %	5 2007	15	5	33.3%

95	**Guatemala**	9 2007	158	19	12.0 %	---	---	---	---
96	**Romania**	11 2008	334	38	11.4 %	11 2008	137	8	5.8%
97	**Japan**	8 2009	480	54	11.3 %	7 2010	242	44	18.2%
98	**Montenegro**	3 2009	81	9	11.1 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Saint Lucia**	12 2006	18	2	11.1 %	1 2007	11	4	36.4%
"	**Togo**	10 2007	81	9	11.1 %	---	---	---	---
99	**India**	4 2009	545	59	10.8 %	3 2010	242	25	10.3%
"	**Jordan**	11 2010	120	13	10.8 %	11 2010	60	9	15.0%
100	**Cyprus**	5 2011	56	6	10.7 %	---	---	---	---
101	**Antigua and Barbuda**	3 2009	19	2	10.5 %	4 2009	17	5	29.4%
"	**Morocco**	9 2007	325	34	10.5 %	10 2009	270	6	2.2%
102	**Democratic Republic of the Congo**	7 2006	500	52	10.4 %	1 2007	108	5	4.6%
103	**Mali**	7 2007	147	15	10.2 %	---	---	---	---
104	**Barbados**	1 2008	30	3	10.0 %	2 2008	21	7	33.3%
"	**Equatorial Guinea**	5 2008	100	10	10.0 %	---	---	---	---
"	**Guinea-Bissau**	11 2008	100	10	10.0 %	---	---	---	---
105	**Malaysia**	3 2008	222	22	9.9%	N.A.	64	18	28.1%
106	**Kenya**	12 2007	224	22	9.8%	---	---	---	---
"	**Suriname**	5 2010	51	5	9.8%	---	---	---	---
107	**Armenia**	5 2007	131	12	9.2%	---	---	---	---

108	Hungary	4 2010	386	35	9.1%	---	---	---	---
109	Cote d'Ivoire	12 2000	203	18	8.9%	---	---	---	---
110	Malta	3 2008	69	6	8.7%	---	---	---	---
111	Brazil	10 2010	513	44	8.6%	10 2010	81	13	16.0%
112	Bhutan	3 2008	47	4	8.5%	12 2007	25	6	24.0%
"	Panama	5 2009	71	6	8.5%	---	---	---	---
113	Benin	4 2011	83	7	8.4%	---	---	---	---
114	Ghana	12 2008	230	19	8.3%	---	---	---	---
115	Ukraine	9 2007	450	36	8.0%	---	---	---	---
116	Botswana	10 2009	63	5	7.9%	---	---	---	---
117	Algeria	5 2007	389	30	7.7%	12 2009	136	7	5.1%
"	Kuwait	5 2009	65	5	7.7%	---	---	---	---
"	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	3 2009	468	36	7.7%	---	---	---	---
118	Gambia	1 2002	53	4	7.5%	---	---	---	---
119	Congo	6 2007	137	10	7.3%	8 2008	70	9	12.9%
120	Somalia	8 2004	546	37	6.8%	---	---	---	---
121	Saint Kitts and Nevis	1 2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
"	Tuvalu	9 2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
122	Georgia	5 2008	138	9	6.5%	---	---	---	---
"	Maldives	5 2009	77	5	6.5%	---	---	---	---
123	Sri Lanka	4 2010	225	13	5.8%	---	---	---	---
124	Kiribati	8 2007	46	2	4.3%	---	---	---	---
"	Myanmar	11 2010	326	14	4.3%	11 2010	168	6	3.6%
125	Haiti	11 2010	95	4	4.2%	11 2010	30	1	3.3%
126	Samoa	3 2011	49	2	4.1%	---	---	---	---
127	Mongolia	6 2008	76	3	3.9%	---	---	---	---
128	Vanuatu	9 2008	52	2	3.8%	---	---	---	---
129	Nigeria	4 2011	352	13	3.7%	4 2011	109	4	3.7%
130	Tonga [3]	11 2010	28	1	3.6%	---	---	---	---
131	Lebanon	6 2009	128	4	3.1%	---	---	---	---

132	Comoros	12 2009	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
"	Marshall Islands	11 2007	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
133	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3 2008	290	8	2.8%	---	---	---	---
134	Bahrain	10 2010	40	1	2.5%	11 2010	40	11	27.5%
135	Papua New Guinea	6 2007	109	1	0.9%	---	---	---	---
136	Yemen	4 2003	301	1	0.3%	4 2001	111	2	1.8%
137	Belize	2 2008	32	0	0.0%	3 2008	13	5	38.5%
"	Micronesia (Federated States of)	3 2011	14	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
"	Nauru	6 2010	18	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
"	Oman	10 2007	84	0	0.0%	11 2007	72	14	19.4%
"	Palau	11 2008	16	0	0.0%	11 2008	13	2	15.4%
"	Qatar	7 2010	35	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
"	Saudi Arabia	2 2009	150	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
"	Solomon Islands	8 2010	50	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---

Figures up to 31 August 2011 from the Inter-Parliamentary
Available at: (http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm). Sourced: 20/09/2011

Appendix 3: Population Indicators

Country	% under 15	Median Age	Fertility (children per woman)
Afghanistan	43	18.1	6.8
Albania	28	26.7	2.43
Algeria	33	21.7	3.15
American Samoa	41		
Andorra	16		
Angola	48	16.3	7.2
Antigua and Barbuda	28		
Argentina	27	27.9	2.62
Armenia	20	30.7	1.42
Aruba	23		
Australia	20	35.2	1.77
Austria	16	38.3	1.36
Azerbaijan	29	25.6	2.3
Bahamas	29	26.1	2.4
Bahrain	29	26.9	2.98
Bangladesh	38	20	3.95
Barbados	19	32.6	1.5
Belarus	16	36.5	1.27
Belgium	17	39.1	1.6
Belize	38	19.8	3.6
Benin	45	16.6	6.1
Bermuda	20		
Bhutan	41	18.3	5.5
Bolivia	39	20.1	4.32
Bosnia and Herzegovina	17	35.1	1.35
Botswana	40	19.1	4
Brazil	28	25.4	2.34
Brunei Darussalam	30	25	2.7
Bulgaria	14	39.1	1.14
Burkina Faso	49	15.5	6.89
Burundi	46	15.8	6.8
Cambodia	41	17.5	5.25
Cameroon	42	18.1	5.1
Canada	18	36.9	1.56
Cape Verde	39	18.5	3.8
Central African Rep.	43	18.3	5.3
Chad	47	16.7	6.65
Chile	27	28.3	2.44
China	23	30	1.8
China, Hong Kong SAR	15	36.1	1.1
China, Macao SAR	19	33.5	1.15
Colombia	32	24	2.8
Comoros	42	18	5.4
Congo	47	16.7	6.29
Cook Islands	36		
Costa Rica	30	24.5	2.58
Cote d'Ivoire	41	18.1	5.3
Croatia	17	38.9	1.6
Cuba	20	33	1.55

Cyprus	22	33.4	1.96
Czech Republic	15	37.6	1.18
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	47	16.5	6.7
Denmark	19	38.7	1.75
Djibouti	43	18.3	6.1
Dominica	33		
Dominican Republic	32	23.1	2.88
Ecuador	33	22.7	3.1
Egypt	35	21.3	3.51
El Salvador	35	21.8	3.17
Equatorial Guinea	44	18.2	5.89
Eritrea	45	16.9	5.93
Estonia	16	37.9	1.28
Ethiopia	46	16.9	6.5
Fiji	32	23.1	3.2
Finland	18	39.4	1.74
France	19	37.6	1.76
French Guiana	35	23.7	3.83
French Polynesia	29	25.1	2.6
Gabon	41	18.9	4.5
Gambia	41	19.4	5.2
Georgia	19	34.8	1.58
Germany	15	39.9	1.34
Ghana	40	18.8	4.6
Greece	15	39.1	1.3
Guadeloupe	25	31.8	2.1
Guam	31	27.4	3.2
Guatemala	43	17.8	4.93
Guinea	44	17.6	6.27
Guinea-Bissau	47	16.6	7.1
Guyana	30	24.1	2.45
Haiti	38	18.9	4.38
Honduras	40	18.7	4.3
Hungary	16	38.1	1.38
Iceland	23	32.9	2.06
India	33	23.4	3.45
Indonesia	30	24.6	2.6
Iran (Islamic Republic)	32	20.6	2.53
Iraq	41	18.7	5.25
Ireland	21	31.9	1.9
Israel	28	27.9	2.94
Italy	14	40.2	1.21
Jamaica	30	24.1	2.5
Japan	14	41.3	1.39
Jordan	38	20.1	4.11
Kazakhstan	25	27.9	2.1
Kenya	41	17.7	4.6
Kiribati	...		
Korea, Dem. People's Rep.	26	29.4	2.05
Korea, Republic of	20	31.8	1.51
Kuwait	26	28.6	2.89
Kyrgyzstan	32	23.2	2.89

Lao People's Dem. Rep.	42	18.5	5.3
Latvia	16	37.8	1.17
Lebanon	29	25.2	2.29
Lesotho	40	18.8	4.34
Liberia	47	16.6	6.8
Libyan Arab Jamahariya	31	21.8	3.43
Lithuania	19	36	1.38
Luxembourg	19	37	1.73
Madagascar	45	17.5	6.1
Malawi	46	17.1	6.46
Malaysia	33	23.6	3.26
Maldives	42	17.7	5.8
Mali	49	15.4	7
Malta	19	36.5	1.86
Marshall Islands	49		
Martinique	23	33.8	1.9
Mauritania	43	18.2	6
Mauritius	25	28.9	2.05
Mexico	32	22.9	2.75
Micronesia, Fed. States of	39	19	4.3
Monaco	13		
Mongolia	32	21.8	2.7
Morocco	31	23	3
Mozambique	44	17.8	5.9
Myanmar	32	23.4	3.3
Namibia	43	18.4	5.15
Nepal	40	19.5	4.65
Netherlands	18	37.6	1.6
Netherlands Antilles	24	32	2.1
New Caledonia	29	26.9	2.6
New Zealand	22	34.5	1.97
Nicaragua	42	18.1	4.32
Niger	50	15.1	8
Nigeria	44	17.3	5.92
Norway	20	37.2	1.85
Occ. Palestinian Territory	46	16.8	5.99
Oman	37	21.2	5.44
Pakistan	41	18.8	5.48
Palau	...		
Panama	31	24.8	2.79
Papua New Guinea	41	19.1	4.6
Paraguay	38	19.7	4.17
Peru	33	22.7	3.2
Philippines	36	20.9	3.64
Poland	17	35.2	1.48
Portugal	17	37	1.46
Puerto Rico	23	31.8	1.99
Qatar	26	31	3.7
Republic of Moldova	20	31.7	1.56
Reunion	27	28.3	2.3
Romania	17	34.7	1.32

Russian Federation	16	36.8	1.25
Rwanda	45	17	6.2
Saint Kitts and Nevis	31		
Saint Lucia	30	23.8	2.4
Saint Vincent/Grenadines	30	22.7	2.4
Samoa	40	19.1	4.51
San Marino	15		
Sao Tome and Principe	41	18.4	4.5
Saudi Arabia	39	20.6	5.09
Senegal	43	17.6	5.4
Serbia and Montenegro	19	35.4	1.77
Seychelles	28		
Sierra Leone	44	17.9	6.5
Singapore	21	34.5	1.57
Slovakia	18	34	1.4
Slovenia	15	38.1	1.25
Solomon Islands	42	18	4.99
Somalia	48	16	7.25
South Africa	33	22.6	2.9
Spain	14	37.4	1.19
Sri Lanka	25	28.1	2.1
Sudan	39	19.7	4.9
Suriname	31	23.5	2.62
Swaziland	43	17.4	5.1
Sweden	18	39.6	1.56
Switzerland	16	40.2	1.47
Syrian Arab Republic	37	19	3.82
Tajikistan	36	19.9	3.72
Thailand	25	27.5	1.95
The FYR of Macedonia	22	32.3	1.92
Timor-Leste	36	17.4	4.35
Togo	44	17.7	5.8
Tonga	37	20.3	4.2
Trinidad and Tobago	22	27.6	1.65
Tunisia	28	24.4	2.32
Turkey	30	24.2	2.7
Turkmenistan	34	21.6	3.03
Tuvalu	41		
Uganda	50	15.1	7.1
Ukraine	16	37.7	1.25
United Arab Emirates	25	29.6	3.17
United Kingdom	18	37.7	1.7
United Rep. of Tanzania	45	16.8	5.7
United States of America	21	35.2	2.05
U.S. Virgin Islands	25	33.4	2.25
Uruguay	24	31.4	2.4
Uzbekistan	34	21.5	2.88
Vanuatu	41	18.6	4.59
Venezuela	33	23.1	2.98

Viet Nam	31	23.1	2.5
Western Sahara	35	22.1	4.4
Yemen	49	15.4	7.3
Zambia	47	16.7	6.05
Zimbabwe	43	17.5	4.5

Taken from the Indicators on Youth and Elderly Populations Table, United Nations Statistics Division, 2003; Table 8: Median Age of Population 2000, United Nations Population Division; and Table 3: Total Fertility, United Nations Population Division.

Appendix 4

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY

Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC)
Department of Peace & Co-existence
1-5-1 Kagamiyama Higashi Hiroshima, 739-8529 Japan
URL:http://www.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/index-j.html
Tel: (+81) 824246910

Research Project Title: Local Women's Civil Society Organisations and Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

The researcher, Alex Sivalie Mbayo, is a PhD student at the Hiroshima University in Japan. The purpose of the research is to find out the contributions if any, Local Women Civil Society Organisations (LWCSOs) are making to the ongoing peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone. The interview will cover such topics as the activities of LWCSOs and their impacts on target beneficiaries and peacebuilding in the entire country, contribution to women's issues and the development of civil society; the existing political space, support and willingness of the Government of Sierra Leone to improve women's political participation, and role of United Nations, international community and the Government towards gender equality.

The interview will take approximately thirty minutes in full, but you are under no obligation to complete the interview once it has started. You are free to choose whether or not to participate, and you may change your mind at any point during the interview if you would continue for any reason. With your permission, the researcher will take notes during the interview. Your responses will be kept confidential and no-one other than the researcher will have access to any records kept of the interview. But more importantly, you can choose to remain anonymous if you wish, and your comments and answers will be recorded without reference to your name or any other identifying features.
If you have any further questions or would like to find out more about this research project you can contact the researcher as follows:

Alex Sivalie **Mbayo**
PhD Candidate
Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC)
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If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research, please contact:
Professor Hideaki **Shinoda**
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Department of Peace & Co-existence
Hiroshima University
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hshinoda@hiroshima-u.ac.jp

Please sign below if you agree to be interviewed for this research. Your signature indicates you understand the purpose of the research and the conditions of the interview as outlined above,

_____   _____
Signed   Date

Appendix 5
The Map of Sierra Leone

Appendix 6
Semi Structured/Open Ended Questionnaire for Civil Society Research in Sierra Leone.

Project Title: **"Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Africa: A Critical Assessment of the Contributions by Local Women's Civil Society Organizations to Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone."**
There are three sections/set of questions prepared for this survey: Please answer only the
 section that applies to you.
1. Section A, contains 11 questions and is mainly for the officials of the researched
organisations: WIPNET, MARWOPNET and the 50/50 Group
2. Section B has 14 questions, which are both semi structure and open-ended, are basically for
the target beneficiaries of the various programmes initiated or instituted by the CSOs studied.
3. Section C, which has 12 questions are semi structured/ open-ended. These
questions are directed to the Human Right Commission of Sierra Leone, Government/ Gender
Ministry officials, the UN Peacebuilding Commission and officials/members of other civil
society in Sierra Leone.

Section A

1. Which of the CSOs do you belong to? Please tick the appropriate box.
 a. WIPNET ☐   b. MARWOPNET   ☐ c. 50.50 Group   ☐
2. Name and position held in your
organisation…………..
……………………………………………………………………………………………
3. Marital status: a. Married ☐ b. Single ☐ c. Divorced ☐ d. Separated ☐
 f. Widow ☐   g. other (specify) …………………………………………………..
4. Educational background? Please tick the appropriate box.
   a. Primary ☐ b. Secondary ☐   c. Tertiary ☐   d. Vocational ☐
   e. No Education ☐
5. Where does the financial and material resource for your organisation's work come from?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
6. Is there any collaboration, help or relationship (financial, material or otherwise) between your
organisation and the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the Government or any other organisation
involved in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process?   a). Yes ☐   b). No ☐
If yes, please specify the organisation and kindly explain…………………………………….…
7. How are decisions regarding your organisations activities, programmes and areas of
intervention
taken?...
....
8. What is the level of involvement of the target beneficiaries from programme design to
implementation? Please tick.   a) Yes ☐   b) No ☐
Please explain your choice of option……………………………………………………………
9. Which specific regions/areas (location) in Sierra Leone has/is your organisation implemented/
implementing
programmes?...
....

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
10. Please state which contribution(s) your organisation has or is making in lieu of the categories (A, B, C…) listed below, with the corresponding programme(s)/activities(s) under each of them as they relate to the building of peace in Sierra Leone since the rebel war to present. Please kindly explain he details of your organisations involvement in those that apply.

A. **Waging Conflict Non-violently**
- Monitoring and advocacy…………………………………………………………………..
- Direct action (as part of the fighting factions)……………………………………………………...
  …………………………………………………………………………………………………
  ..
- Civilian-based defense……………………………………………………………………

B. Education and Training
- Training & education…………………………………………………………………
- Development…………………………………………………………………………
  ….
  …………………………………………………………………………………………..
- Military Conversion…………………………………………………………………………

- Research and evaluation………………………………………………………………...
  …………………………………………………………………………………………..

C. Reducing Direct Violence
- Legal and justice systems……………………………………………………………………
- Humanitarian assistance…………………………………………………………………..
- Peacekeeping/ Military intervention……………………………………………………
  …………………………………………………………………………………………..
- Ceasefire agreements……………………………………………………………………
- Belonging to Peace zones? (please state)……………………………………………………
- Early warning programs……………………………………………………………………
  …

D. Transforming Relationships
- Trauma healing…………………………………………………………………………..
- Conflict transformation such as dialogue, negotiation, mediation…………………………………
  …………………………………………………………………………………………..
- Restorative justice………………………………………………………………………..

- Transitional justice…………………………………………………………………………...........

- Governance & policymaking……………………………………………………………………

E. What are some of the impacts of your organisations activities on the target
   beneficiaries?……...
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

F. How are these activities generally promoting of women's issues in Sierra
   Leone?.........................
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ..

G. Are your organisation's activities generally promoting civil society in Sierra Leone?
   a. Yes ☐   b. No ☐   If yes, how?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………...

H. Are the activities of your organisation promoting peacebuilding in Sierra Leone?
   a. Yes   ☐   b. No ☐   If yes, how?
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

I. What are some of the difficulties faced by your organisation in its work and how have
   you been able to overcome these problems?...
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

J. In your opinion, has much space been made available in accordance to UN and
   international communities call for women's political participation in Sierra Leone?
   a) Yes ☐ b) No ☐ Please kindly explain the reasons for your selected option………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

   11. How would you rate the success of your organisation's programmes? Please tick.
   a). Very high ☐   b). High ☐ c). Low   ☐   d). Very low ☐   e). Failure   ☐
   Please kindly explain your chosen option…………………………………………………….
   …………………………………………………………………………………………………

   Any other important comment(s)?...

I thank you very much for your kind participation in this survey.

Section B

Views of target beneficiaries on LWCSO's peacebuilding programmes/activities

Please answer the following questions carefully.
1.Name?..
....

2. Marital status: a). Married ☐ b). Single ☐   c). Divorced ☐ d). Separated   ☐
e).Widow ☐   f). Other (specify)……………………………………………………………..

3. Occupation…………………………………………………………………………………

4. Name of place (Town or Village) and region…………………………………………………

5. Which of the three above mentioned civil society organisations have implemented a
programme(s) in your community, town or village?
   Please tick the appropriate box.
   a). WIPNET   ☐   b). MARWOPNET ☐ c). 50/50 Group   ☐

6. What is your relationship with the chosen organisation?
   a). An official☐ b). Employee/agent ☐ c). a beneficiary   ☐
   d. Other (specify)……………………………………………………………………….

7. Was your community consulted or involved in deciding which programmes were needed?
a). Yes ☐ b. No ☐
If yes, please explain how……………………………………………………………………

8. Which specific programme(s) were implemented in your community, town or village?
a). Radio/awareness programme(s) ☐ b). Advocacy   ☐ c). Humanitarian assistance ☐
d). Development project(s) ☐   e). Other (specify)…………………………………………..
Please kindly name the programme and explain its implementation process………………….
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Were/are these programme(s) successful?   a). Yes ☐   b). No☐
Please kindly explain your chosen option…………………………………………………….

10. How has/is this programme(s) or activities contributed or contributing positively/
negatively to improving your life? Please
explain……………………………………………………………………………………….

11. Has any of these programmes contributed to your or women's empowerment? a). Yes☐
b). No ☐   Please explain your response……………………………………………….......

12. How has/are these programme(s) or activities positively/negatively contributed or contributing to improving women's lives your community, town or village?.................................
………………………………………………………………………………………………....

13. How has/are these programme(s) promoting women's issues in your community, town or village and hence Sierra Leone? ……………………………………………………………...
    …………………………………………………………………………………………...

14. What in your opinion was/ is not right with the programme and explain how it could be handled?...
....
………………………………………………………………………………………………
I thank you very much for your cooperation.

Section C

Questions for stakeholders: GoSL Officials, UN/ PBC/PBF, HRCSL, MSWGCA, INGOs, CSO, NGOs, Gender Experts, Citizens & Civil Servants etc.
1.Name……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Gender? a. Male ☐ b. Female ☐   c). Other (specify)……………………………………

3. Which organisation/ institution do you belong/work for? Please tick below.
 a. UN Peacebuilding Commission ☐ b). International community/NGOs ☐ c). Human Right Commission of Sierra Leone ☐ d). Civil Society group ☐ (specify)…………………..
d). Government/Gender Ministry ☐ e). Other (specify)…………………………………….

4. Which position do you hold in your Organization?...
    …………………………………………………………………………………………...

5. Is your organisation involved in the peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone? a). Yes ☐
b). No ☐   If yes, please kindly explain how…………………………………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………
6. Are the contributions of your organisation helping to promote women's issues, rights, empowerment and general participation in Sierra Leone? Please tick one. a).Yes ☐
b). No ☐
If yes, please explain………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

7. What is your organisation's policy/views on gender parity/equity in Sierra Leone?...............
    …………………………………………………………………………………………..
8. How would you evaluate local women's civil society contribution to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone?
 a). Very good ☐   b). Good ☐ c). Poor ☐   d). Very poor   ☐

Please kindly explain the reasons for your option………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Are the activities of local women civil society contributing to the development of civil
 society generally in Sierra Leone?
a). Yes ☐   b). No ☐   Please kindly explain your choice of option below.
……………………………………………………………………………………………..

10. Do you think local women's civil society organization involved in peacebuilding are getting
the needed political space and support from government and the international community?
 a).Yes ☐   b).No ☐   c). I don't know ☐
    Please explain……………………………………………………………………………….
 11. What in your opinion are some of the obstacles to local women's participation to the
peacebuilding process in Sierra Leone? …………………………………………………………..

12. How can this/these obstacles be dealt with for a more peaceful Sierra Leone?.....................
…………………………………………………………………………………………….....

I thank you very much for your cooperation.