

# International Journal of Gender Studies (IJGS)

**EFFECT OF WOMEN'S PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND MITIGATION OF  
ELECTORAL CONFLICTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **EFFECT OF WOMEN’S PEACE BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND MITIGATION OF ELECTORAL CONFLICTS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To evaluate the effect of women’s peace building activities and mitigation of electoral conflicts in Nairobi County, Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study used descriptive research design. The study focused on the individual women who were involved in peace building activities. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and FGDs. In total, the researcher conducted 17 FGDs, consisting of 8-12 people. A total of 386 respondents filled the semi structured questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents to fill the questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used to select the members to participate in the FGDs. IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 22) was used to analyze quantitative data. Percentages, frequencies, figures, bar charts, pie charts and tables were used to present results. Qualitative data was analyzed using coding and thematic analysis. Results were presented in form of themes and verbatim.

**Results:** Conflicts mainly take part where there is mismatch in the goals to be achieved, conversely, the mismatched goals are realized and hence introducing conflict, which is equivalent to actors in pursuit of incompatible goals. Women play a crucial role in addressing electoral conflicts. From the findings, the peacebuilding activities that women in Nairobi County have participated in since 1992 are: having dialogues, providing advice, compassionate role, warning people of imminent violence, public sensitization and civic education, peace talks, stopping rumor spreading, and offering psychosocial support.

**Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy:** the government should educate women on rights and capacity of mind to bring positive change have an impact on the resultant influence in the community transformation. Women and youths should be encouraged, trained and empowered through attending peace seminars. Civil society needs to be fully involved and information on resolutions widely disseminated in effort to educate the society at large.

**Keywords:** *women peace building, electoral conflicts, conflict mitigation*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

Peace building refers to measures aimed at reducing risk by solidifying multi-level national and international capacities and laying proper and sustainable foundations for peace and progress while electoral conflict is any conflict that occurs during the pre-election, election, and post-election period. There has been a significant shift in the nature of international conflict. Intrastate confrontations have emerged to be the major threat to global and regional peace since late 1980s. According to Berwind (2012), internal conflicts and conflicts within borders have replaced the ideological conflicts such as the cold war. These conflicts are usually nurtured out of cultural and ethnic tensions, struggle for power, and tribal and religious rivalries. Countries that are caught in these forms of conflicts have been pushed to the economic margins, as they are unable to find accommodation in the contemporary global economic dispensation (Boege, 2006). The nature of the conflicts also demands internal mechanisms for conflict resolution and peace building by locals. Peacebuilding is becoming increasingly important in preventing continuing hostilities. The peacebuilding missions have focused on security and governance in preventing the volatile areas from erupting into full-fledged conflicts.

Through the United Nations (UN), the international community has time to time developed political frameworks of mediation and diplomacy to help countries resolve and prevent conflicts in a peaceful manner. Such measures prevent the destruction of property and suffering of humanity stemming from violent activities (Annan, 2005). As argued by a number of conflict management scholars like Anderlini (2007) and Adan and Pkalya (2006), conflicts are sometimes considered normal part of life; but its impact on the society is normally disastrous. As such scholars further opine, it is such abnormal levels of violence that calls for laborious peacebuilding activities that should lead to long-lasting coexistence.

While peace activism brought women and men together, it is also true that the peace movement was among the most "feminized" social movement, with numerous women participating (Cockburn, 2007). Women have historically been viewed as weak war victims. Only in the 90's did women play different roles in military conflicts, challenging liberal views which presented men as active agents of violence and women as passive casualties. In fact, considering the truth at the core of wars since the end of the Cold War, the concept that there is no longer any separate (feminized) civilian and (masculinized) military holds (Giles & Hyndman, 2004). Women are victims of war ramifications, but as Lithander emphasizes, "the image of women as victims is paralyzing, and the diversity, wealth, or driven by groups of women who oppose war and rely on mutual solidarity are not respected in order to offer alternative views of reality.

Around 52 percent of the general population in Kenya is composed of women. They therefore constitute a vital national resource which can contribute to positive social change with its ideas, creativity and concern about social cohesion (Sewak, 2005). In reality, women play a major role in the survival of society. Women contribute, like men, to social political and economic growth. The reality that most people are in the informal sector where participation is difficult to quantify is however hard to recognize their commitment. Women's issues have become influential on the

global agenda in the past few decades. Women's issues are important topics for worldwide gatherings and conferences. New laws to improve women's lives have also been introduced. All this is optimistic and underlies the fact that women do not have the same position as men in all human societies.

In Kenya, women have taken a different effort to create harmony and encourage community development, since the victims of violence are the worst, but the least trained. For starters, a group of women started discussing the dispute during their natural-market day in Wajir, a city hit in a war of livestock plundering, and why the local players refused them in times of crisis (Rono, 2013). In the end, the discussions led to a peace process. Then they formed an organization that aims to bring people to know that Wajir needs peace and stability. Then the Civil Society Organization (CSO). The Wajir Committee for Peace and Development (WPDC) was subsequently officially formed and called the CSO (Rono, 2013). The Committee has promoted stability and community development in Wajir. This was obvious even when women in the WPDC managed, in the north-eastern, including Wajir (Tongeren, 2013), to promote peace-keeping during a violent elections in Kenya in early 2008.

Apart from cattle rustling, other conflicts experienced in Kenya include ethnic, political, and land conflict among others (Conflict Mapping, 2011). Nairobi, being the capital city of Kenya, normally experiences these conflicts, especially ethnic, land disputes, and political violence. Internal conflicts demand the input and contribution of a class of people that are an integral part of societies in conflict. The causes of the conflict and the effects are more real to the most affected. The situation has provoked women to be more involved in peacebuilding to avert the damages of an ensuing conflict partly because they are the most affected and also because they have a role as guardians of their societies (Kamola, 2015). It is against the above backdrop that the study examined effect of women's peace building activities and mitigation of electoral conflicts in Nairobi County.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

After 2007 general elections in Kenya, most of the violence was experienced in the Rift Valley, Naivasha, and Nairobi. In 2017, Nairobi experienced more violence than any other region, for more than 33 people killed by the police during anti-IEBC protests property worth millions destroyed (Kenya Elections, 2017). In all these situations, there have been women peacebuilding initiatives aimed at restoring sanity; but one wonders whether these activities have been effective in addressing repetitive electoral conflicts. It is upon this problem that the study sought to examine effect of women's peace building activities and mitigation of electoral conflicts in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To evaluate the effect of women's peace building activities and mitigation of electoral conflicts in Nairobi County, Kenya

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Conflict Theory**

The study was also guided by the conflict theory as proposed by John Galtung (1973). Although many scholars such as Karl Marx, Weber, and Coser took part in the development of the conflict theory, the study adopted Galtung's framework because of how it expounds on the origin of conflict in the society. According to Galtung (1973), conflicts mainly take part where there is mismatch in the goals to be achieved, conversely, the mismatched goals are realised and hence introducing conflict, which is equivalent to actors in pursuit of incompatible goals. In this case, actors include both men and women interested in participating in peacebuilding activities (Confortini, 2006). Their goals are incompatible in such a way that while men seek to maintain the status quo by being considered as the main people behind peacebuilding activities, women are trying to break the status quo to make their activities recognized and acknowledged. Galtung (1973) develops his conflict theory on the idea of contradiction and incompatibility which is built in his overall ideas. According to these ideas, there are goals to be achieved; when the set goals are realised, then the general outcome is referred to as goal -consumption (Galtung, 1973). Therefore, when the units are sets of individuals and the variables set as goal- dimensions, conflict is described as the area of contradiction where the acceptability is located in the region of incompatibility.

There are two key subdivisions of incompatibility goals namely; the interest and values which are further categorised into two main subtypes of conflict; conflict of interest which is also known as structural conflict and value conflict also called actor conflict Galtung (1973) .The difference is not always exhaustive or exclusive in most cases, conflicts are a combination of the two. Galtung (1973) in his work states that there are two important sections of the conflict theory whose meaning are defined differently, to start with is conflict transformation theory that states how conflict of interest can be turned into conflict of manifest values. Secondly, Conflict manifest theory is assumed to lack an independent life and hence unstable although at some level it changes into manifest form as conflict of value (Confortini, 2006). Definitely, constant facts in life such as penetration, latent conflicts—exploitation, penetration, fragmentation reflect precise information of specific conflict in but that persistence is for each specific conflict in an unbalanced equilibrium. There are also other facts of life namely; Consciousness-formation and organization, individual and collective.

According to Galtung (1973), conflict does not just exist, there are goals that people are focusing to achieve by engaging in conflict and this is realised through different ways depending on the circumstances. The fact that there different ways people can engage in conflict paves way for negation and different levels of conflict whenever conflict arise. In the current study, the insistence of women to be recognized as significant peace builders has resulted in policies and frameworks that provide opportunities for their inclusion into the peacebuilding processes, from grassroots level to a higher level.

Conflict theory was widely criticized for focusing on transition and social stability indifference. Some critics agree that societies are in a state of constant transition, but they emphasize that much

of the reform is minor or progressive rather than radical. In most other capitalist modern democracies, for instance, a Communist revolution was avoided and elaborate social service systems were introduced instead. While conflict theorists often concentrate on social change, in fact they have come up with a theory to illustrate social cohesion and stability. In the prospective of conflict, power and reward disparities are integrated into all social systems. Persons and groups benefiting from any specific structure seek to ensure their preservation. For instance, the affluent will fight against efforts to expand access, of example, affirmative action and public financing, in order to retain their preferential access to higher education.

### **2.1 Effect of women's peace building activities mitigating electoral conflicts**

Women play a crucial role in addressing electoral conflicts. It is possible that inclusion of women in negotiations can change the dynamics of reasoning due to the introduction of gender issues thereby increasing the chances of finding a solution to a conflict. Women are more flexible, creative, and cooperative while bargaining as compared to their male counterparts who are seemingly competitive at negotiations table (Eckel et al. 2008; Boyer et al. 2009). The outcomes of negotiations are sometimes determined by genders stereotyping. This was demonstrated by the experiment conducted by students when imitating the peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The experiment asserted that female negotiations are deemed more trustworthy than those of their male counterparts (Maoz, 2009). The study further revealed that in nearly every country and region of the world, there has been progress on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, although this progress has been uneven and the gains remain fragile. A great challenge facing the world today is the growing violence against women and girls in armed conflict. In today's conflict, they are not only the victims of hardship, displacement and warfare, they are directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies, and assault as deliberate instruments of war. Women are deeply affected by conflicts, which they have had not necessarily been involved role in creating the existing rivalry and conflicts.

In El Salvador, women in peacebuilding Women's support for peace in El Salvador went from high-level negotiations to grassroots movements (Blumberg, 2006). During the war, for example, some refugee women helped in organizing repatriation, and went back home with their communities (McCracken & Simon, 2012). As Maria Esperanza Ortega, a participant in this, states "the goal was to accompany people, the refugees, as they returned to their places of origin and began the process of struggling for respect for human rights. So that we would be allowed to live in our places of origin, that we not be seen as military targets" (McCracken & Simon, 2012, p. 71). Additionally, women organized to rebuild the country after the war, and continued to organize today in order to access their rights. Women were fully involved in the Salvadoran peace negotiations. "High-ranking women in the FMLN and government participated in all phases of negotiations..." (Conway & Martinez, 2004). Nevertheless, the negotiations lacked a gender component and former combatants failed to address women's needs. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that the paperwork of the accords did not mention women (Conway & Martinez, 2004). Although women were unable to include a gender perspective, they still had an impact on the negotiations as they pushed for inclusion of civil society.

Myanmar is in the midst of transition. The rise to power of the National League for Democracy (NLD) opposition group and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi – followed by a cease-fire between the government and several ethnic armed groups – marked the easing of tensions in a nation that had been closed off from the world for half a century (Janise, 2005). Amidst these changes, women in Myanmar seek to play a role in building peace. Women in Myanmar have participated directly in various peace mechanisms, albeit in small numbers; they have collected and disseminated information on the peace process and the conflict’s effects on women; they are engaged in efforts to build the capacity of women leaders; and advocated for women’s participation in the peace process and for the protection of women in conflict (Janise, 2005). Women find the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) helpful to mobilize for women’s participation in the peace process and to advocate for women’s rights. However, women’s use of the NSPAW has otherwise been limited. Barriers include disconnect between the plan and grassroots women’s organizations, and the splintered nature of the women’s movement. The field interviews suggest that women utilize other tools that they find to be more effective – in particular leveraging international frameworks and norms, gender quotas, and interpersonal relationships – to boost women’s participation in the peace process and to promote gender-sensitive policies (Ibarra, 2006).

Peace building is a markedly complex undertaking, which involves a multitude of diverse actors—including women. Much of the existing literature on women’s involvement with attaining and maintaining peace discusses the possible roles of women in peace building, such as grassroots organizing or involvement in reconciliation (Gareth, 2006).

Further the women have also helped to organize the relief assistance to the vulnerable places. The efforts of assistance made by women have not been easy, this since there have been resistance towards their help where they have faced threats and restrictions by certain groups who want to limit the participation of women in the public sphere (Heinze & Baabbad, 2017). Even though women are limited in the areas of which they can engage in, the women participating in the study by Heinze & Baabbad (2017) did point out that they do engage in several activities in order to have a positive impact on their communities. For example, women do help and work with promoting school and the enrolment rate amongst the youths, they also work to achieve better security from the threats that are present in the community.

One way that women and their rights are mentioned is concerning how women will gain and be recognized as equal citizens by having access to and control over land. To further evolve this and ensure women’s rights and their equal citizenship it is written that they “...need to ensure that the new Constitution deepens our democratic values and principles and the protection of the equality of all citizens, particularly the enhancement of full citizenship and equality of women”. Here, one can see that women’s role as equals is considered in the Zimbabwean peace agreement, further, the peace agreement also mention the need for women in the political sphere where they outline “Acknowledging the need for gender parity, particularly the need to appoint women to strategic Cabinet posts”. The peace agreement does not give clear examples on how the inclusion of women will be conducted or how many women will be appointed to the strategic posts creates the possibility for women to only get a small representation.

Documentation projects have also generated information for advocacy and lobbying work. Women have also been active in forming or joining community-based organisations and local NGOs intended to address the consequences of the war by promoting reconciliation, reintegration and regeneration (Ntahobari & Ndayiziga, 2003). For example, women worked with elders and traditional leaders to establish a reception centre for ex-combatants from 1989 – 1990. This initiative ended when the government began transferring returning combatants from the camp to Kampala, a move which created so much anxiety that many of those who had previously surrendered disappeared back into the bush to continue fighting. Women have also been active in psycho-social programmes, particularly those focusing on the rehabilitation of returnees and supporting rape victims and amputees (Ntahobari & Ndayiziga, 2003).

In addition to peacebuilding at the community level, Acholi women have played a direct role in efforts to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Women representatives were among those involved in the 1994 delegation led by the government's Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe – herself an Acholi woman – to negotiate with the LRA (Bekoe, 2010). This initiative fostered a cessation of violence for almost six months before it collapsed. Despite the fact that Acholi women have demonstrated both their motivation and capacity to be involved in peace initiatives, they continue to be marginalised from many of the official initiatives to address the war. They have not had a role in recent negotiation processes and, despite appeals, have not been appointed to such bodies as the Amnesty Commission. There is a general assumption that women MPs are representatives of the wider grass-roots women's organisations, but in reality the links are inadequate. The conflict and particularly the population displacement have undermined many traditions of social support.

Despite having important roles and responsibilities in Bougainvillean culture, women have struggled to participate directly in the formal political peace process, which has been dominated by men (CARE, 2010). However, our different forms of support for a negotiated solution to the conflict, often expressed from the sidelines at official meetings or through discreet lobbying of the different parties, have maintained vital pressure on the men to continue to search for peace. During the Sandline affair, a delegation of three women travelled to Port Moresby, where we met up with other Bougainvillean women. Together we produced a written petition that was presented to the Prime Minister's First Secretary, urging the government not to involve Sandline and to instead seek a peaceful settlement of the conflict. An official delegation of leaders of women's organisations played an important role at the Burnham talks in New Zealand in July 1997. This was because Daphne Zale, Marilyn Havini and I, who had all attended the 'Bougainville Women Speak Out' Forum in Sydney, Australia were able to speak with a united voice about our quest for peace (El Bushra, 2012).

In Burundi, conflict mediation as a whole is the responsibility of women. They are the educators of peace in community development. Time to time cases of conflicts was common in the traditional Burundi society even though the structure and organization of the society only encouraged peaceful coexistence and peaceful cohesiveness. There were conflicts between families, within families, between individuals, or between inhabitants of various territories (Ntahobari & Ndayiziga, 2003). In managing the conflicts, the traditional society Burundi had well-organized



regulatory machinery which had a strategic place for women. Women were given the roles of giving advisory behind the scenes especially when her husband was the matter and played an active part in ensuring social harmony, community development enhancement, and strengthening solidarity (Ntahobari & Ndayiziga, 2003). Generally, women seemingly play a role which is the leading substantial role, though more obstructive too in their circle as well as those of their families.

In the Kenya post-election violence of 2008, women played a major role in facilitating the surrender of farms that perpetrators occupied forcefully in retribution to beacon demarcations and re-establish land, homesteads, land boundaries among other marker. Some elderly women were also included in the council of elders to help in the negotiations for the return of IDPs. Furthermore, women were involved in the psychosocial counselling of the victims who felt neglected, discriminated, and abandoned by the relevant authorities including state government.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive research design. This study was conducted in Nairobi County of Kenya. Nairobi was selected because it is a hotspot to electoral violence. The study focused on the individual women who were involved in peace building activities who are, 34 women groups who were engaged in peace activities, IBEC officials in Nairobi (6) sub county police commanders, youth groups, (6) sub county administrators and local and international peace organizations. This study used purposive sampling to select IEBC officers, senior police officers, local organizations peace leaders, international organizations peace leaders, and sub-county administrators. Snowballing was used to select individual women peace builders. simple random sampling was used to select youth groups and women groups. The study used two methods of data collection: primary and secondary data collection. For primary data collection, the study gathered data from the participants selected. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and FGDs. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from individual grassroots women who played a significant role in the peacebuilding process between 1992 and 2017. The instrument had clear questions based on a 7-point Likert scale. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data from the key informants, who included the IEBC, police, local and international organizations peace leaders, and sub-county administrators. The questions were open-ended in nature to give the respondents room to offer as much information as possible. The researcher did a pre-test of instruments through a pilot study in Nairobi County. To ensure reliability, the researcher carried out a pre-test of instruments within Nairobi County: Kayole, Umoja II and Kawangware. The International Business Machines (IBM) Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 22) was used to analyze quantitative data. Percentages, frequencies, figures, bar charts, pie charts and tables were used to present results. Qualitative data was analysed using coding and thematic analysis. Results were presented in form of themes and verbatim.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Response rate

Out of the 300 targeted participants who were issued with complete the questionnaire, 255 duly filled and completed the questionnaire while 45 failed to respond to all questions in the questionnaire. Out of the expected 25 interviews, the researcher managed to conduct 19 interviews, which was 76%.

*Table 1: Reponses rate*

	Respondents	Response Rate (%)
Quantitative Survey	255	85
Interviews	19	76
FGDs	17	85

### 4.2 Demographical information

#### Education Level

For proper analysis and interpretation of findings, the study determined the education levels of the participants. Those who attained secondary school education formed the majority (43.9%) while those whose highest level of education was primary school formed the lowest percentage (22.4%). Those who attained tertiary education stood at 33.7%.

*Table 2 Education level*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	57	22.4	22.4	22.4
Secondary	112	43.9	43.9	66.3
Tertiary	86	33.7	33.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

In Kenya, civic education is stressed at a secondary level, which means that most Kenyans understand the role of elections and what they are supposed to achieve. Besides, education helps people develop mitigation measures and resilience in case of violence. Although higher education does not mean absence of violence, education helps people to understand the importance of maintaining peace during elections.

### 4.3 Effect of women's peace building activities in conflict mitigation

In most electoral conflicts, there is normally the occurrence of violence as warring groups try to put their points across. With a high number of women reporting suspicious activities, they played a huge role in preventing electoral and post-electoral conflict. Besides, the findings show that naturally, women would do anything to ensure that all violent plans are thwarted before they are actualized.

**Table 3: Women's peace building activities**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somehow Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Somehow Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I reported suspicious activities to the police before the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	7.5	8.2	31.4	0.4	32.2	8.6	11.8
My activities helped to reconcile fighting groups of people in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	4.3	3.1	5.5	2.4	42	25.9	16.9
I advised people against planning for any form of violence in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	2.7	3.5	1.6	2.4	40	17.6	32.2
My advice to other people helped stop ongoing violence in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	3.9	3.9	1.2	2.4	39.2	21.6	27.8
My advice to other people helped prevent future violence in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	2	4.7	3.5	7.8	31	31.8	19.2
My activities were considered important by the rest of the society in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	4.3	6.3	8.2	3.9	39.2	18.8	19.2
I was recognized for my effort in preventing/stopping violence during the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	10.2	7.1	25.9	3.5	20.4	17.6	15.3
I played a big role to alleviate violence in the 1992/1997/2002/2007/2013/2017 election	8.6	4.7	15.3	2	27.1	9	33.3

When participants were asked to state whether their activities had helped to reconcile fighting groups of people in the previous election(s), 4.3% strongly disagreed, 3.1% somehow disagreed, and 5.5% disagreed. On the other hand, 42% agreed, 25.9% somehow agreed, while 16.9% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 84.8% of the participants agreed that their activities had helped to reconcile fighting groups of people in the previous election(s). Just like in other parts of the world, like Uganda, Nepal, and Sudan, women in Kenya take a frontline in ending conflict and advocating for peace.

From the findings, 2.7% strongly disagreed, 3.5% somehow disagreed and 1.6% disagreed. On the other hand, 40% agreed, 17.6% somehow agreed and 32.2% agreed. Cumulatively, 89.8% of the people agreed to offering advice other people against planning of violent activities in the election(s) they took part in.

Among the respondents, 3.9% of the participants strongly disagreed to this, 3.9% somehow disagreed, and 1.2% disagreed. On the other hand, 39.2% of the participants agreed to this, 21.6% somehow agreed, while 27.8% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 88.6% of the participants agreed that their advice to other people helped stop ongoing violence in the previous elections. When asked if their advice to other people helped prevent future violence in the forthcoming election(s), 2% strongly disagreed, 4.7% somehow disagreed, and 3.5% disagreed. On the other hand, 31% agreed, 31.8% somehow agreed while 19.2% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 82% of the participants agreed to this.

From the findings, 4.3% strongly disagreed that their activities were considered important by the rest of the society in the previous election(s), 6.3% somehow agreed, while 8.2% disagreed. On the other hand, 39.2% agreed, 18.8% somehow agreed, while 19.2% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 77.2% of the participants agreed that their activities were considered important by the rest of the society in the previous election(s).

The effects of women's peacebuilding activities was also measured by assessing if their effort was recognized in preventing violence. Among the survey participants, 10.2% of the participants strongly disagreed, 7.1% somehow disagreed, while 25.9% disagreed. On the other hand, 20.4% of the participants agreed, 17.6% somehow agreed while 15.3% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 53.3% of the participants agreed that they were recognized for their effort in preventing/stopping violence during the previous election(s). The findings, therefore, support the assertions by McCarthy (2011) that women are agents of change and possess unique and strategic abilities to considerably resolve conflicts non-violently. The researcher sought to know the significance of the role individual women had played in the previous elections. Among the survey participants, 8.6% of the participants strongly disagreed that they played a big role in the previous election(s), 4.7% somehow agreed while 15.3% agreed. On the other hand, 27.1% agreed, 9% somehow agreed while 33.3% strongly agreed. Cumulatively, 69.4% of the participants agreed that they played a big role in the peacebuilding efforts by alleviating violence in different electioneering periods. The findings were similarly asserted that female negotiations are deemed more trustworthy than those of their male counterparts (Maoz, 2009). Individual women and women groups managed to quell down the storm created by the youths as they were viewed as mothers (Kamola, 2015).

Through the government, women can influence legislations that will root for their recognition and inclusion in the peacebuilding process. From the current study, most peace organizations (both local and international) and government bodies reported that their organizations were well-balanced in terms of gender, except for the police whose proportion of women to men is very low.

When women are included at the negotiating tables, they normally advocate for peace. Sometimes this pressure leads to their inclusion in the negotiation processes. Including women is important because they“...affect the process dynamics, relations, and ways in which negotiations are conducted. But perhaps most importantly, they come to the table with a more holistic understanding about the actual purpose of the talks and the centrality of interdependence” (Anderlini, 2007).

Similar results were found by Bacon (2015). International and national actors involved in peace processes are more and more advocating for this notion of peace by incorporating the society at large. More often than not, women, search for a holistic notion of peace. They advocate for inclusion of everyone, for the end of violence in society, for a shift in social structures, for a change of the structural causes of conflict. Therefore most observers concluded that women should be included in future peace processes as a strategy to strive for peace more easily.

Bronwyn (2003) found contrasting results with this study and noted that irrespective of the importance of women in conflict and in peacebuilding, women continue to be excluded. This tendency has to be shifted, because “regardless of whether women have a positive or negative impact, they like men, have a right to participation; it is a given”. During negotiations, the future of society is being discussed, and as part of society, their future should not be discussed without them.

## **5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1 Summary**

This study sought to find out the effect of women peace building activities on electoral conflicts In Nairobi County, Kenya. Although the quantitative study comprised only female participants, the qualitative study included also male participants for the sake of getting key information. From the findings, the peacebuilding activities that women in Nairobi County have participated in since 1992 are: having dialogues, providing advice, compassionate role, warning people of imminent violence, public sensitization and civic education, peace talks, stopping rumor spreading, and offering psychosocial support. The effect of women peacebuilding activities on electoral conflicts include alleviating violence, reconciling fighting groups, effective peacebuilding advice, influential input, and representation in peace organizations and government.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

Contrary to a popular belief, the study has revealed women’s peace building activities have a positive impact in mitigating electoral conflicts in Nairobi County. The main peacebuilding activities carried out by women in Nairobi County include initiating dialogues, providing advice,

compassionate role, public sensitization and civic education, and peace talks. Other activities include warning people of imminent violence, stopping rumour spreading, and offering psychosocial support. Through dialogues and advice, women are able to convince the perpetrators of violence to desist from such plans as violence destabilizes the society. From the fact that most perpetrators are normally the youth and are influenced by the politicians, women, mostly through their group activities, convene forums which help the youths realize the importance of a peaceful society. Women not only help in preventing electoral conflicts but also play a crucial role during and after conflict.

Women also play a compassionate role towards helping the wounded and the displaced. They not only take them to hospitals but also accommodated them in their homes. Apart from just sensitizing the public on the importance of peace and why they should desist from the violence, women take further steps towards restoring broken societies. Just like their counterparts in Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, women in Kenya offer hospitality to those who have been affected by the electoral chaos. They not only take them to the hospitals for treatment but they also offer them accommodation and food. Therefore, this compassionate role makes women important agents in the peacebuilding process.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- Educate women on rights and capacity of mind to bring positive change have an impact on the resultant influence in the community transformation.
- Women and youths should be encouraged, trained and empowered through attending peace seminars.
- Civil society needs to be fully involved and information on resolutions widely disseminated in effort to educate the society at large.

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