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Women, CSOs and Post-Election Peace Initiatives: *The Case of the Ark Foundation Ghana*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of women's groups and CSOs in post-election peacebuilding. The main objective of the study is to demonstrate how women's groups contribute to peacebuilding. Moreover, it is to show the importance of local initiatives targeted at post-election peace. Aside being a measure of democracy, post-election peace is necessary for the protection of lives and the promotion of community relations. To meet these objectives, the study draws on ten (10) semi-structured interviews and several visits to the Ark Foundation, the women's group of interest in this study. The concepts of local, multi- track peacebuilding and civil society have been used as the framework for analysis.

The study findings indicate that achieving peace is a joint responsibility that needs the involvement of all stakeholders in a society. Women's groups, which are a part of grassroots organisations, are also seen to contribute immensely to consensus building, using their middle-level placement in the society as a means of working with both top and bottom levels. The triple role of women, is also seen to be a factor motivating women to work for peace, thereby making them a necessary part of sustainable conciliation.

Analytically, the study gives credence to the on-going debate about the need to include women and other non-state actors in peace work like post-election peace, and how their involvement could lead to more sustainable results. The study further contributes to the understanding of why women work for peace. It also gives credence to the idea that peacebuilding is a multi-track venture, requiring the contributions of stakeholders at all levels of society. Finally, the study contributes to the importance of including local perspectives in peacebuilding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to God for His wonderful grace and help in completing this work.

I am grateful to my supervisor Dr. Percy Oware for his contributions, suggestions, and guidance which helped me to come up with this study.

I also thank my family and all those who in one way or the other assisted me to produce this work.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God who helped me to complete it.

I also dedicate this to my family for their support and care.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASUDEV - Action for Sustainable Development

AVP - Anti-Violence Program

CABA - Capacity Building and Advocacy Programme

CADA - Centre for African Democratic Affairs

CRC- Crises Response Centre

CSIS- Centre for Strategic and International Studies

CSO- Civil Society Organisation

IEA - Institute of Economic Affairs

ILO – International Labour Organisation

NDC – National Democratic Congress

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

NPP – New Patriotic Party

STAR-Ghana - Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in Ghana

SIRD – State Institute of Rural Development

UN- United Nations

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

VAWC - Violence against Women and Children

WANEP - West African Network for Peacebuilding

WLHRI - Women's Law and Human Rights Institute

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1.1 Introduction

Besides being parties to conflicts, as both victims and perpetrators, women have recently developed powerful voices in opposing conflicts (Kuehnast, 2011). For sustainable peace to prevail in any society, there must be full participation of both men and women. When women are left out, sustainable peace is at risk. In efforts to build peace, women are often the most competent but also the most marginalized and underrepresented. Women are well-equipped with the capabilities and commitment needed to make significant contributions to peacebuilding but their potential is hardly noticed or utilised (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2012).

One may ask that if women are so important in building peace and constitute over half the population of the world, why are they not included in peace work in the public sphere? With this question re-echoing in the minds of international leaders, the United Nations Security Council adopted the Resolution 1325 in 2000 to enforce women's participation in formal peace negotiations (UN, 2002). Although women are active in building peace at the community levels, they are often reluctant to be part of formal peace building activities. The Resolution 1325 is thus meant to ensure that women are well represented at these peace efforts, and protect women's rights and interests. The aim is to remove all barriers preventing women from active peace processes (Anderlini, 2007).

Women around the globe are consequently beginning to organise themselves into civil society groups to pursue peace and ensure its sustainability. A good example is the case of Liberia, where women organised themselves to help to oust the former warlord and president. They mobilised the general population for peaceful elections, and Ellen Johnson- Sirleaf was elected as President (McCarthy, 2011). This clearly showed how women could contribute to formal peace processes, post-conflict societies. Ghana, having seen how the Liberian women organised themselves and being so close to Liberia in terms of geography, was impacted positively. Many women groups saw the need for their active participation in peace processes during the country's 2012 general elections which was labelled as conflict-prone. This study therefore explores the activities of women groups in Ghana, with special focus on the Ark foundation, which was particularly active in peacebuilding during the election period. It also examines the contributions of the group and seeks to add to existing literature on women and peacebuilding.

1.1.1 Peacebuilding as a Shared Responsibility

It is generally held that states have the highest responsibility in ensuring peace and security. This has been their role to a large extent, and not considered to be the job of its citizens. Every country has its own security agencies, the police, military, law enforcement agencies, etc., who ensure that peace prevails in the country. States are said to fail when they are unable to provide these political goods to their society and lose legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens. The responsibility as such falls partly on the civil society (Helman & Ratner, 1992). This is however not entirely desirable as the states seek to establish institutional securities and an expected set of rules for the expansion and transmission of resources, and not for individual gain. An absence of state functionality confines the representation of citizens, making institutions less responsive and less capable of formulating and implementing policies. As conflict can worsen existing cleavages in civil society, as with ethnic polarization, it is best that the state is able to ensure peace and not leave it to the civil society (Paffenholz, 2010).

Most states in the world approximately are in a "weakening" process, especially those in Africa and other developing countries. This is why there is a need for civil societies to get involved with peace building processes. Local peace committees in many countries affected by conflict, for example, have had an impact on the local communities by reducing violence, helping solve problems in the community and encouraging the local people to become peace builders (Tongeren, 2013). These actions are particularly important as they start at the local levels, and thus represent and deal directly with the people involved. Among these committees are women peace groups and CSOs advocating for peace at the local societal levels.

The state's ability to make security available for its citizens can also influence civil society at large. There is therefore a growing acknowledgement that the state should not be the only body of security but must also take into consideration the security needs of communities and individuals. When states are incapable or unwilling to provide for the security of citizens, the role of civil societies is threatened. Basically, civil society is often seen as the good society, contributing to peacebuilding in a positive way without a doubt (Paffenholz, 2010).

Peace cannot be forced by outside forces, military or otherwise, but rather must be encouraged through patient, flexible approaches carefully adjusted to the domestic political context (Donais, 2012). This is what women peacebuilding groups springing up have been doing. There

are a lot of NGOs also who have adopted this style of peacebuilding, and are working from the community level to ensure peace and security.

1.1.2 Women's Groups and Peacebuilding

Women's voices are the first to be heard in the support of peace work and its dissemination to the general public at most times, but women hardly are able to gain a place at discussion boards once these peace talks begin. This has been partly attributed to the limited number of women in government, women's unwillingness to participate in political activities and the poor nature of organizing peace negotiations. The Resolution 1325, which was adopted by the UN, is aimed at addressing these issues in order to further empower women in peace work. With this provision, women continue to make great and significant contributions to peacebuilding procedures although they are underrepresented (Anderlini, 2007).

Women groups have been particularly active in post-conflict peacebuilding processes all over the world, with success stories from Cambodia, Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, etc. In Northern Ireland, women were able to achieve strength through unity and consensus building by developing forums and networks. In Sierra Leone also, women peace campaigns used non-partisan and non- violent ways, like prayer meetings, to help bring an end to a protracted civil war (Accord, 2013). Currently, there is an understanding that peacebuilding is a shared responsibility (UN, 2004). As such, many women have taken up this responsibility by working together to advocate for peace. Women peace efforts are also becoming increasingly very obvious, as they have been doing a lot to help reduce political tensions and bring warring factions to negotiation tables (Anderlini, 2007).

In advocating for peace, women groups have been well-known to take a non- partisan, unified and consensus- based approach at most times. This ensures that their composition is varied and represent all groups in the society as much as possible (Accord, 2013). By working together in these groups, they are able to send a message to their male counterparts, who are usually in the conflict, that although they have different views and affiliations, they can still live together peacefully. This is usually effective in influencing the people at the local level and gradually works its way up the ladder to the national level (Anderlini, 2007). This can account for why there is increase in the participation of women in peace building in recent times.

It has been found that women's efforts can widen the scope of peacebuilding significantly. First, they promote agreement and inclusion as an important policy. Secondly, they are able to achieve peace beyond the negotiating table. Through their "Triple Roles" in the home and community as mothers, wives and elderly women, they work to further promote peace (Anderlini, 2007).This is very useful to the international community at large as it means peace is achieved and continually worked at to make it sustainable.

Women have helped in ending violence, and lessening its consequences in a variety of ways by providing humanitarian relief, generating and facilitating the space for negotiations through advocacy, and employing influence through cultural or social means by building on generally accepted norms and beliefs about peace and unity. They have also been able to lead civil society and resolution activities. In Bougainville, individual women used their position in the family to negotiate peace in their communities and managed to use their influence to act as middlemen with the opposing groups to maintain positive dialogue. In northern Uganda also, women worked together to recover cultural institutions and prepare the community for reunion ad reintegration of armed groups through prayer meetings, educating people in peace and songs and storytelling (Accord, 2013).

1.1.2.1 Women Waging Peace in Ghana

Women's active participation in the 2012 elections indicated that women in Ghana saw peacebuilding as a mutual responsibility that needed their inputs. In November 2011, STAR-Ghana, a multi donor pool agency sent out a call for proposals on the theme "Consolidating Ghana's democracy through transparent, free and peaceful 2012 elections: The Role of CSOs and other Non-State Actors". This call saw many civil society groups submitting their proposals on how the country could have a peaceful election. Many women who headed such organisations, or were members of civil society groups, saw this as a great opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities with regards to reducing political tension and preventing electoral violence[1].

Organisations like "Action for Sustainable Development" (ASUDEV), "Ahenbronoso Care Foundation", "Choice Ghana", "Partners in Participatory Development" (PAPADEV), "Ark Foundation", "West African Network for Peacebuilding, Ghana" (WANEP-Ghana) and over

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[1] STAR-Ghana Newsletter; http://www.starghana.org/

100 others were part of organisations who put in proposals to work for peace before and during the election period. Out of over 200 applications, only 45 of these organisations were sponsored by STAR Ghana to implement their projects to support state agencies in their peace work.

WANEP, for example, organised women from the Northern Region of Ghana to embark on a peace march. This region has been noted to be a conflict-prone area especially during election periods (Draman et al, 2009). The women did not feel intimidated by their environment but went out boldly declaring the need for peace. As contribution towards peacebuilding during the 2012 elections, the Ark Foundation also came up with a project it dubbed "The Nuisance Project". This project had a general objective of ensuring that young women had a podium whereby they could engage peace advocacy and public actions. This was aimed at working for peace before, during and after elections 2012[2].

The 2012 election period really saw women working for peace alongside their male counterparts and government agencies. Other religious bodies and church groups, which were not sponsored by STAR Ghana or other donor bodies also worked for peace. The media saw a lot of these women using their platform to voice their concerns and needs for the election period. A prayer night for instance, was organised by Women's Aglow, a religious group, where many women met to pray for peaceful elections[3].

1.2 Problem Statement

The study seeks to highlight the work of the Ark Foundation, and how their activities before, during and after the 2012 elections contributed to post-election peace in Ghana. It is about how women's organisations work to promote peace, alongside state agencies. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the factors that motivate women to work for peace, and the reflections of some female peace activists about their contributions to post-election peace alongside their goals. It also seeks to highlight the specific activities the female activists carried out before, during and after the 2012 elections of Ghana.

Shedding light on the activities of the Ark Foundation together with its volunteers, will reveal what women's combined and individual efforts can achieve, and the positive impact it can have on elections, which is a measure of democracy. Sustainable peace and national development

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[2] STAR-Ghana Newsletter; http://www.starghana.org/
[3] Graphic.com.gh

can only be attained when all representatives of the society, including women, participate in peacebuilding activities (UN, 2002)[4]. It is thus obvious that enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding is very necessary, given the recognised importance of their efforts[5]. However, many countries are still struggling to ensure the enforcement of basic provisions that could encourage women to participate in peacebuilding, yet women's leadership and contribution in peace and security is both a moral responsibility and a right which goes beyond them (Tamoka, 2012). Hence, through the individual reflections of the female peace activists, the study seeks to be a tool for understanding the essence of involving women in formal peace work.

1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

- What are the objectives of the Ark Foundation? Or what does it actually do?
- What is the background of its female peace activists?
- What did the organisation do before, during and after the elections in local communities?
- How did its activities focus on post-election peacebuilding?
- What were the female peace activists' reasons for working with the organisation?
- What did the peace activists do specifically before, during and after the elections to foster peace in their local communities?
- What are their reflections about their activities vis-à-vis their goals?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study brings together important information about women's work in peacebuilding and how their activities have impacted societies. The review of the Ark Foundation and its activities during the Ghanaian general elections also portrays how women can contribute to peacebuilding even during election periods. The factors motivating women to work for peace are also highlighted, thereby contributing to the understanding of why women work for peace. The study moreover highlights peacebuilding as a shared responsibility that requires the contributions of stakeholders at all levels of society. In this way, it creates awareness on the need to involve all stakeholders when planning and working for peace. The advantage of doing

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[4] www.unwomen.org
[5] Ibid

so is realising a form of peace that is sustainable. As the objective of peacebuilding is to ensure that violence is never an option to settling disputes, it is important to have in place measures that are restorative, and accepted by all stakeholders in the society.

Additionally, the importance of including local perspectives in peacebuilding is presented in the study. Local actors are important stakeholders in peace work, as they are part of the local communities and know exactly what the needs of the community are. Including them means having access to first-hand information that is useful in planning sustainable peace. Local ownership is also willingly exercised by the local people when peace work is planned to answer the needs of the community. The study therefore serves as a guide for effective peace work.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The study is organised into six chapters, as such:

Chapter 1: Background to the Study

This section provides a general introduction to the study. It also outlines the research problem, research questions, motivation for the study and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Post-Election Peace and Democracy

The chapter focuses on peaceful elections and democracy. It is specifically about Ghana's efforts at peaceful elections and the state of its democracy. The Ark Foundation, which is the case study, is also presented. This chapter further details the context of the study and provides insight on the work of the Ark Foundation.

Chapter 3: Methodological Approach

This focuses on methodological issues, especially the study area, data collection methods, sampling techniques and field experiences.

Chapter 4: Conceptual Approach

This chapter attempts a conceptual approach to women's groups and peacebuilding. It particularly discusses the concepts of local ownership of peacebuilding and civil society. The multi-track nature of peacebuilding is also discussed, further portraying the need for all stakeholders in the society to be part of peacebuilding processes.

Chapter 5: Data Presentation and Discussions

Data gathered through interviews conducted during fieldwork will be presented in this chapter. By analysing the informant's narratives through the conceptual framework provided in the previous chapter, this chapter presents peacebuilding initiatives by women and the factors mobilising them to work for peace.

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion

This chapter summarises the study findings and how they relate to other situations with similar underpinnings. It also gives some analytical contributions to the study subject and the concluding remarks on the study.

CHAPTER 2: POST-ELECTION PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on peace and democracy. Ghana's state of democracy and efforts at peaceful elections are specifically discussed. It also looks at infrastructure for peace, as well as how civil society organisations contribute to peace during election periods. Finally, it presents the Ark Foundation, the case study, and its activities before, during and after the 2012 elections in Ghana.

2.1.1 Peaceful Elections and Democracy

Peaceful elections have been noted to be a measure of democracy in a country (Kuhne, 2010). As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, democracy is "a form of government in which people have a voice in the exercise of power, typically through elected representatives". Democracy is most obvious through elections, where the citizens of a country can select their own leaders. Holding elections alone does not qualify a country to be democratic, but involves all aspects of its government and political system. As noted by Robert Dahl (1971), democracy is not merely about free and fair competitive elections, but also how people appreciate the value of elections given the freedom they enjoy. This includes having access to other sources of information and the existence of systems to ensure government policies are based on the preferences and the votes of the people (Dahl, 1971).

Democracy is not merely about the rule of the majority but requires that there is political freedom to engage in deliberations and sovereign decision making. Some components of democracy commonly accepted include "multi-party electoral competition, freedom of association, freedom of movement, independent media, and the rule of law" (Roberts, 2011)[6]. Democracy has been distinguished to increase the possibility of peace in a country and also with other countries. It has also been noted to reduce the chances of political repression and to increase the likelihood of economic growth and stability. Multi-party elections is no doubt a very essential prerequisite of democracy. Credible elections can validate the status of a country internationally. Nevertheless, there are many examples of elections that are far from credible and have resulted in very serious conflicts all across the globe (Salehyan & Linebarger, 2013).

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[6] http://www.forcedmigration.org

Of much interest is the recent trend in elections held in Africa following the wave of democratisation between the late 1980's and early 1990's (Hauck, 2000). In the course of this period, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa adopted constitutional democracy which included routine elections, without first building state institutions that were effective enough to harness the benefits of democratisation. This led to the delay of institution-building and thus resulted in preparing the grounds for the inability of many of these countries to adequately control violence related to elections (Matlosa et al, 2009).

The violence related to elections that has seemingly dominated the transition to democracy in most of these countries can be attributed to systematic and structural causes. It is not merely about the validity of the rules governing elections. While violence results from the uncertainty of the validity and transparency of the rules governing elections, violence related to elections signifies the inadequate nature of democratic institutions. This is especially in relation to the setting up of effective institutions to resolve conflict and ensure organised competition (Matlosa et al, 2009).

Aside problems with the quality of state institutions, violence following elections are also indicative of broader societal and political problems. Although the violence may reflect the instability of the establishment of competitive rules, without an international effort to control election violence, instances of violent contest over elections are likely to increase (Matlosa et al, 2009).

Democracy should ideally serve the two purposes of representation and conflict resolution. However, it can and should play the role of providing an option to violence in elections by ensuring that the selection of political leaders becomes a routine procedure and is driven by societal development (Leonard, 2010). Careful preparation towards elections is often needed to ensure peace. This means the appropriate state institutions should work effectively together to solve the issues of violence during elections (Leonard, 2010).

2.1.2 Ghana's Attempts at Peaceful Elections since 1992

Ghana returned to multi-party democracy following over three decades of military interventions, political instability and authoritarian governance. Parliamentary and presidential elections have been held in 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012. The elections have been observed by both local communities and international observers as continual progression over previous ones (Yeboah,

Quartey, & Bame, 2011). Aside this, Ghana has also witnessed the peaceful transfer of power between two political parties[7]. This can be counted as great success especially in a sub-region dominated by violent elections and political instability (Ayittey, 2012).

What are the factors that make Ghana different from the other countries in the African Region, and what has accounted for its democratic success? According to Ayittey (2012), certain factors have accounted for this success. He identifies the first one as the existence of a media which is free, with particular reference to the print and broadcast media. The increase in FM radio stations in Ghana has been able to provide a valuable tool in holding the government accountable, exposing problems and ensuring transparent elections. Also, Ayittey (2012), identified the existence of vibrant and vigilant civil society groups as another factor. This has been made possible by the evolving political culture of freedom of association, expression and movement. CSOs continue to promote a wide range of issues centred on good governance, democracy and the need for peaceful elections.

The third factor he identified is the maturity displayed by political leaders in Ghana, especially in the 2008 general elections. Although the election results were very close, and the margin very small, the losing candidate accepted defeat graciously. This maturity was also demonstrated in the 2012 elections, where instead of violently boycotting the election results, the losing party decided to settle the matter in the Supreme Court of Ghana (Atta, 2012)[8].

There is a high level of awareness and a certain pride in the progress in terms of democracy among Ghanaians. So far, the country has held six successful elections. This indicates that the democratic system is gradually being institutionalised, and political leaders respect the rules of democracy as well as the provisions of the constitution of the country. The constitution is widely respected and its articles generally considered to be the foundation of the country's evolving democratic system (Meissner, 2010).

The security forces have also contributed to the consolidation process of Ghana's democracy. The security bodies of Ghana are made up of the military, police, immigration, prisons and fire service. Together, they work to ensure peace, especially in during elections. The police force, for example, was able to detect around one thousand potential points of conflict in the country

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[7] https://www.ndi.org/ghana
[8] http://www.ghanaweb.com

before the 2012 elections. Most of these places were polling stations in Accra, which is the capital of the country and as such has the most varied voters. Patrol teams were deployed to these places and more to ensure that there was constant monitoring of the behaviour of the electorate (Aning & Lartey, 2013). The presence of the security forces especially at the polling stations, helped prevent misconduct such as ballot box snatching, shooting incidences, and vandalism of property on the voting day. This ensured that the voting process went on smoothly. People were free to cast their vote as they wished. (Aning & Lartey, 2013)

2.1.2.1 Electoral Irregularities and Violence

Although Ghana is consolidating its democracy, there are still some weaknesses in its electoral system (Aggrey-Darkoh, 2013). For instance, elections are still marked by irregularities and pockets of violence. Election violence, though minor, is reported in almost all general elections conducted in Ghana since 1992. Election violence of any type is deplorable given the country's democratic credentials. There is therefore the need to identify the possible causes of this violence so an end could be put to them.

One significant source of violence in Ghanaian elections has been the use of "macho men"[9] by politicians. They are usually deployed in areas believed to be the strongholds of opposition parties to intimidate voters. They have been associated with stealing ballot boxes and lynching voters (CADA, 2012). These macho men are usually unemployed young men who indulge in body building in order to find jobs as security men or land guards. Due to their state of joblessness, they easily fall prey to politicians who need people for shady activities during elections (Amankwah, 2013). Macho men have been associated with a lot of election violence and have become common topics in political discussions.

Another source of electoral violence in Ghana is the weak state of institutions that supervise elections. Institutions like the Police Force and the Electoral Commission are often not wholly capable of performing their duties during elections. Political parties and their supporters thus resort to various ways to protect their votes and interests. Violent clashes between opposing parties are usually the consequences at polling stations (Ayittey, 2012). Institutions to ensure peace and security during elections need to be strengthened to foster trust in their competencies (Arthur, 2010).

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[9] Strongly built men who serve as body guards to politicians

The influence of money in elections has also been identified to be a major challenge that continues to work against the democratic nature of elections. Political campaigns have become money sharing grounds where politicians solicit votes with money. Besides giving out money during campaigns, they promise to give even more if they win the elections. This has the tendency of influencing people to vote without policy considerations. There is thus the need for a transparent system of financing electoral campaigns as a means of promoting participation in elections and also the respect for representative democracy (Aggrey-Darkoh, 2013).

2.2 Infrastructure for Peace

According to Tongeren (2013), planning peace is very possible and in most instances where violent conflict has erupted, prevention was possible. When it comes to societies where there is the possibility of conflict and instability, there is the need for cooperation between all stakeholders in peacebuilding. There is also the need for mechanisms and structures that can promote this cooperation. These mechanisms have the ability of providing a platform for all peace actors to engage in dialogue. They also engage the actors to adopt a system of conflict prevention that is based on mediation and non-violence. These mechanisms and structures are what is referred to as infrastructure for peace (Tongeren, 2013).

In working with this approach, institutional mechanisms that are applicable to the society are set up at the local, regional and national levels. The mechanisms are usually founded on Peace Councils at the various levels, which is composed of individuals, who are well respected and knowledgeable, in handling political differences and conflict transformation. At all levels, peace infrastructure are deemed very necessary, but some governments are too weak or may not be interested in putting them in place (Tongeren, 2013).

The importance of infrastructure for peace cannot be overemphasized. Currently, over 1.5 billion people living in the world are affected by war and violence, whilst 526,000 people lose their lives as a consequence of conflict. The costs of armed conflicts are high, including the imposition of economic burdens on governments that can hardly afford them, and continues to raise the poverty margins in these countries. In preventing violence, not only lives are preserved but other unnecessary costs are eliminated. It is far less expensive to prevent conflicts than it is to recover after an armed conflict (UNDP, 2013).

In order for societies to be well insulated from violent conflicts, there should be different groups of actors who interact positively together to tackle potential sources of conflict and tension.

This could be religious, economic, political, ethnic or even about the unequal distribution of wealth. It is thus important to have an effective state, with functioning institutions at the local and national levels who are able to work together to curtail challenges in a peaceful way (UNDP, 2013).

2.2.1 Components of Infrastructure for Peace

Infrastructure for peace consist of peace councils working at the national, district and local or community levels, with main stakeholders like leaders of civil society groups. Leaders of CSOs are seen to be respectable and able to bridge political divides as they are non-partisan organisations. They are thus an important component of peace infrastructure at all three levels. Another component of peace infrastructure are national peace platforms. This is where relevant actors and stakeholders can partake in consultations, collaborations and management of peace issues. A peacebuilding unit with the government is another important component of peace infrastructure. This can be a government bureau, a ministry or a department for peace building (Tongeren, 2013).

2.2.2 Contributions of Civil Society Organisations

Civil society groups continue to play very important roles in peacebuilding all over the world. Many have stepped up to rebuild communities that have been affected by war, and conflict. A lot are also working in the area of human rights to ensure respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens. In Ghana, the story is no different. CSOs have risen to take up important roles in many sectors, including conflict prevention before, during and after elections. Their active participation in the 2012 general elections confirmed their importance to the democratic development of Ghana (Arthur, 2010).

Through the activities of some CSOs, the level of political discourse was raised before the elections. This took place in the form of presidential debates, which focused on the elections campaigns and non-partisan policy issues. One such organisation was the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). These debates furnished the media with information about the plans of the various political parties and also gave the general public the opportunity have enough information to make the right choices (Aggrey-Darkoh, 2013).

STAR- Ghana, a multi-donor pooled funding agency, also sent out calls for proposals in November 2011 on how CSOs could help consolidate Ghana's democracy towards the 2012

elections. Many CSOs responded to this call and that indicated the willingness of such organisations to help promote peaceful elections in the country[10]. CSOs made tremendous contributions to the peace achieved in the country's elections. They were particularly active in ensuring that political parties refrained from unhealthy talk that could trigger conflict and violence between their supporters. Some of these organisations held durbars in conflict-prone areas before the elections to sensitise the inhabitants on the need for peace in elections (Aggrey-Darkoh, 2013).

In spite of the respect Ghana has earned with regards to democracy, key stakeholders in the country still deemed it important to initiate peacebuilding activities before, during and after the elections (Aggrey-Darkoh, 2013). The contributions of all these organisations were very remarkable and the whole country benefited from their efforts. The country was thus able to pull off another election peacefully despite the many tensions that surrounded the whole process (Arthur, 2010).

2.3 The Ark Foundation Ghana[11]

The Ark Foundation Ghana is non-profit organisation working for the rights of women and children in the Ghanaian society. It is advocacy based, and founded on Christian principles of love, mercy and justice. The organisation works with the principles core to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948. These include equality, dignity and social justice for all women and men. The Ark Foundation works to respond to the needs of women and to ensure that the rights of women and children are promoted through advocacy and general education of the public. Training and service delivery are also employed to ensure maximum respect of these rights. The organisation thus aims at both women and children, as well as decision makers and the government.

Like many other CSOs in Ghana, the Ark Foundation Ghana was established to respond to a situation that needed prompt attention. In a country still young in democracy and development and with many needs, fundamental human rights issues are easily ignored. The director of the Ark Foundation, Mrs. Angela Dwamena- Aboagye, having seen how women were marginalised in the society, decided to set up the organisation in 1995. She saw the need for a support system for women and the Ark Foundation was born to meet this need. The Ark symbolises a place of

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[10] STAR-Ghana <newsletter; http://www.stsrghana.org/
[11] Information gathered from fieldwork and website of Ark Foundation; *www.**arkfoundationghana**.org*

refuge and strength, and has its roots in the biblical ark which is a seat of love, mercy and justice. The organisation is currently located at Haatso, a suburb of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. It has 7 core staff and 7 project staff.

2.3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the Ark Foundation can be summed up in three parts. Firstly, to ensure that the rights of women and children, as well as those vulnerable in the society, are given the needed respect. This is done through advocacy, public education and training. Secondly, the organisation works to disable systems and behaviour that works against women, children and the vulnerable by dehumanising them. The organisation seeks to achieve this through policy advocacy, public education and working with CSOs that are active and have related goals. Finally, it works to make available support services to their target group that have been subject to any form of rights violation.

2.3.2 Activities

The Ark Foundation runs two main programmes, and it is through these programmes that the organisation works to achieve its objectives. The first programme is the Capacity Building and Advocacy (CABA) Programme. This program is composed of the Women's Law and Human Rights Institute (WLHRI) and the Monitoring and Advocacy (M&A) Unit. The WLHRI carries out capacity building programmes through training, research and advocacy on areas of women's issues including their rights, leadership roles and social development. The development of young women is the special focus of this programme. The Monitoring and Advocacy Unit carries out regular monitoring of the state's responsibility with regards to the enforcement of the rights and development of women and children, to campaign for measures of positive change.

The second major programme run by the organization is the Anti-Violence Program (AVP). This is also made of the Crises Response Centre (CRC) Project and the Community Awareness Project. The CRC has four service sites – the Legal Centre, Crises Centre, Shelter and Counselling Centre. The Anti-Violence Programme mainly works on issues involving violence against women and children. It responds to this problem by providing integrated services and support to victims. The programme also carries out community outreaches and educational forums on violence against women and children, including sexual and gender-based violence.

The target groups for this programme are schools, churches, identified professional groups and local communities.

2.3.3 Contributions to Post-Election Peace

The Ark Foundation, like many CSOs in Ghana, saw the need for peace during the 2012 elections period as a shared responsibility. Thus having obtained a grant from STAR-Ghana, the Ark Foundation set out to implement a project dubbed *"The Nuisance Project-Young Women Speak Peace to Power"*. This project was aimed at providing young women a platform, where they could engage in advocacy and public actions, to raise the responsiveness and accountability of key stakeholders in preserving peace before, during and after the elections period.

The objectives of the project also included getting Ghanaian leaders to stand for peace throughout the election period, training young women to engage in dialogue and action, sensitising the general public about the dangers of conflict. It was also aimed at raising awareness of women's role in avoiding violence during elections and ensuring peace throughout the election period. The Nuisance Project further consisted of many activities and programmes all aimed at achieving the objectives of the project. The target group was the whole country, but the activities were mainly carried out in the Greater Accra, Eastern, and Ashanti Regions of the country.[12]

2.3.3.1 Activities Carried Out

- **A Thousand Leaders' Petition**: This involved the drafting of a petition on the importance of all actors committing to peace. The aim was to get 1000 signatures from leaders from sectors and institutions which include political, religious, security, traditional authorities, activists, judiciary and Members of Parliament commit to ensuring peace.
- **Quiet Peace Vigils**: These involved organising women and other members of the public, to communicate the need for maintaining a violence free election through songs.
- **Banner Line Hangings**: Banners capturing messages from young women speaking peace were hanged at vantage locations in Accra, Kumasi and Koforidua.

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[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-VdR-AzrzA – Video on the Nuisance Project

- **Three-Day War Library Photo Exhibition**: This took place in Accra and exhibited pictures depicting conflict zones and the effect of war on people. Speakers from Liberia and Ghana spoke about the need to maintain peace during the launch of the exhibition. There were free 4 movie sessions for the public, each afternoon of the event. Mini exhibitions were also held alongside each activity that was executed.

- **Grandmothers Speak Peace Documentary**: This captured messages from 20 grandmothers who spoke on the need to maintain peace. This was then broadcast on television.

- **Inter-Generational Women's Peace Forum**: These took place in Accra and Kumasi and brought together grandmothers, mothers and young women who dialogued on issues of peace and its benefits to society. The discussions also touched on their expectations of various actors in the political and electioneering arena. These were then captured in a communiqué and presented to the relevant actors.

- **"Azonto for Peace" Street Dance Competition:** This involved capitalizing on the latest dance craze in Ghana called the "Azonto". Young females and males in areas, which were identified as hot spots and vulnerable to conflict during elections, were brought together to engage in an "Azonto" competition. Peace messages were shared during this activity.

- **Polar Ball** (dancing with political heavy weights): This ball, which is a positive twist on the negative concept of polarization, involved political heavyweights from the different political parties and divides, committing to dance for peace. Peace messages were also taken from the invitees.

- **Training Programme for 30 Young Women**: This capacity building training was for thirty young women selected to assist in the execution of the project. They were trained in peace and non-violent engagement strategies so their cumulative efforts will result in visibility and acceptance of women as critical actors in the peace processes.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on peaceful elections and democracy. Ghana's state of democracy and efforts at peaceful elections have been discussed and also some irregularities associated with elections in the country. Infrastructure for peace in the country have also been explored, as well as how Civil Society Organisations help in contributing to peace during election periods. Finally, the Ark Foundation, a CSO has been explored and the activities it carried out under its Nuisance Project to contribute to peace before, during and after the 2012 elections in Ghana.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on methodological issues particularly the selection of the study area, selection of informants and the type of data collection tool employed. It also looks at the field choices and how the interviews conducted played out. As a fieldworker, I equally reflect upon how my familiarity with the area and interest in the research objectives could have influenced the objectivity of the data collected.

3.2 Study Area

Accra, the capital city of Ghana, was where the fieldwork was carried out. Accra is the biggest city in Ghana, with an estimated urban populace of 2.269.143 million as of 2012[13]. It is likewise the capital of the Greater Accra Region and of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. The area furthermore serves as a commercial and industrial centre of the country, and thus attracts people with diverse occupational interests. The city is home to many organisations and serves as the headquarters for many large institutions including public ones. This is probably why the Ark Foundation is also located in this area, bettering its chances of survival and cooperation with other organisations. Accra was chosen as the study area mainly because that is where the Ark Foundation is situated. Since this is a case study, a lot of the research activities were carried out at the premises of the organisation.

Accra, although home to many large organisations, is also a city with vast unequal distribution of wealth. This could be attributed to unequal employment opportunities that has led to vast differences in social status, and is much evident in housing facilities. Many slums can be found close to well-planned apartments and houses which intensifies and amplifies the social differentiation (Grant & Yankson, 2003). These slums have been tagged "Zongos", and are usually overpopulated with poor sanitary conditions[14].

Many of these slums have become conflict-prone areas in Ghana, with a vast majority of the inhabitants being unemployed. Some of such conflict-prone areas include but not limited to areas like Chorkor, James Town, Nima, and Teshie, where there are a lot of unemployed youth

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[13] "Ghana". The World Factbook. Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved 18-12-2014.
[14] http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=123154

ready to engage in any form of misconduct. These youth have become the weapons of many politicians, who find it profitable to have them engage in demonstrations and other inappropriate activities. This peculiar situation finds expression in the "Greed and Grievance Theory" by Collier and Hoeffler (2004). The theory states that rebellion increases when the cost of recruitment is very low.

One common electoral violence connected with the slums in the Accra area and the unemployed youth is the concept of "macho men"[15], which has come to dominate Ghanaian elections (CADA, 2012). These macho men are known for their unruly behaviour at polling stations during elections. Most of them carry out the orders of politicians without giving thoughts to their actions due to their state of joblessness (Amankwaah, 2013). This makes the area of Accra very appropriate for peacebuilding activities and also, the base of organisations working for peace like the Ark Foundation of Ghana.

3.3 Field Access

In conducting research, one important step is gaining access to the research field. When the research topic requires an in-depth study, ample time is needed to plan. Depending on the kind of case or topic being studied, gaining access can vary to a great extent (Johl & Renganathan, 2010). It is also important for the researcher to plan how to gain access, especially in an unfamiliar setting. As I was working with an organisation, I needed to plan how I would gain entry and collect the information needed. I had not interacted with any representatives of the Ark Foundation prior to my research. This meant I had to find out more about the organisation.

Before arriving on the research field, I sent an email to the director and made phone calls to find out the best time I could visit at the organisation. One aspect of gaining access is convincing people whom a researcher has decided to work with (Feldman et al, 2003). I thus had to ensure that I made my purpose clear and introduced myself as a student researcher interested in working with the organisation. The process was made easy due to my familiarity with the culture of the people and Ghanaian organisations. Also, since I was researching on the achievements of the organisation with regards to the 2012 elections held in Ghana, I was welcomed and given the information I needed. This could probably have been different if I was

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[15] Ibid, page 12 of Chapter 2

researching on a topic deemed as awkward or sensitive to the organisation (Okumus, 2007; Johl, 2010).

After I had gained the confidence of the organisation, I was given a list of young women they had worked with, whom I could contact for interviews. Finding informants for my interviews was made easy once the participants knew I was working with the organisation. Many of the young ladies were responsive, and consented to being interviewed.

3.4 Informant Size and Selection

As suggested by Rubin & Rubin (2005), selection of informants should be based on how knowledgeable they are about the topic being studied and their willingness to talk. The informants comprised the director of the Ark Foundation and staff of the organisation. It also included the young women who participated in the Nuisance Project during the 2012 general elections held in Ghana. Members of the general public were also part of the target group as they served as an audience for the activities of the organisation during the election period.

3.4.1 Informant Size

According to Rubin & Rubin (2005), in conducting interviews one should interview as many informants as possible until the two tests of completeness and saturation are passed. Completeness is when an interviewer can conclude that what he continues to hear gives a total sense of meaning of a concept being investigated. Saturation is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges (Given, 2008). One can then stop interviewing new informants at the point he can clearly see that he has achieved these two tests.

In conducting my interviews, I had a total of 10 informants. This included 3 staff members of the Ark Foundation[16], and 7 of the 31 young women who participated in the Nuisance project. With the staff members, I interviewed the assistant to the director, the administrative secretary, and a social worker. The 7 young women interviewed are all working at other places and had merely volunteered their services during the implementation of the Nuisance Project. As I interviewed key informants, I was able to gather rich data very quickly. My informants were well-informed and were able to give me the answers I required.

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[16] One of the three staff members was a representative of the director as she was out of the country on an official visit

3.4.2 Informant Selection

In selecting the informants for this study, non-probabilistic sampling methods were used. This is where selection of the sample unit is based on assumptions, and some members of the population have no chance of being selected (Chaturvedi, 2013). Purposive sampling[17] and opportunity sampling[18] were the two main methods I used. Based on my objectives and research questions, the type of informants to be selected was very clear. I began with the purposive sampling method, where I identified the first group of respondents, which comprised of the director and staff of the Ark Foundation. Upon arrival at the organisation for the data collection, I proceeded to employ opportunity sampling technique to interview four of the staff members who were available during my visit.

I used opportunity sampling because I had to make do with the sample unit that was readily available. In interviewing my second group of participants, which was the young women, I used opportunity sampling to select the seven whom I interviewed. I had to first make phone calls to these young women and find out if I could interview them. The number of young women interviewed was based merely on availability, but was still enough to provide me with all the information I needed about their involvement with the Ark Foundation during the general elections of Ghana.

3.5 Data Collection Tool

The main tool used to collect data was interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with a total of 11 informants.

3.5.1 Qualitative Interviews

Interview is a method of data collection, information or opinion gathering that specifically involves asking a series of questions (Jupp, 2006). Ordinarily, an interview speaks to a gathering or dialogue between individuals where individual and social communication take place. Interviews are commonly connected with both quantitative and qualitative social research and are regularly utilized together with different techniques (Jupp, 2006). Interviews in qualitative

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[17] The researcher chooses the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study (Chaturvedi, 2013).

[18] A type of nonprobability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand (Chaturvedi, 2013).

research try to portray how people understand things from their own viewpoints. It allows one to explain situations from how it was experienced.

Interviews have emerged as one of the most common methods of obtaining data in qualitative research. Interviews explore the unique aspects of the case in great detail, more so than would be typical for a phenomenological interview (Atkinson & Delamont, 2012). This method of data collection permits people to talk about situations in their own words and from their points of views, and it involves happenings from everyday life. The advantage of the interview is that it makes the subject the focus and captures most of their perceptions (Kvale, 1996). Interviews as a method for generating qualitative information incorporates a scope of interviewing strategies, at times referred to as 'structured', 'semi-structured' and 'unstructured' interviews (Arksey & Knight, 1999). The type of interview selected will depend on the type of research being carried out and the type of data that is needed.

I conducted interviews because it is certainly the most common way of obtaining data in qualitative research. Qualitative interview procedures are by and large utilized by social researchers in order to assemble data around a specific theme in a manner that permits the gathering of "rich" and definite information (Kvale, 1996). As I sought information concerning peace efforts by women's groups in the 2012 general elections, the best tool to help me achieve my goal was the interview.

Interviews in qualitative research try to portray how people understand things from their own viewpoints. It allows one to explain situations from how it was experienced. Interviews permit people to talk about situations in their own words and from their points of views, and it involves happenings from everyday life. The advantage of the interview is that it makes the subject the focus and captures most of their perceptions (Kvale, 1996)

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are the most common method of data collection used in qualitative research. This type of interview is structured around a set of questions that are open-ended, and determined ahead of the interview. During the interview, it is very common to have other questions coming up, and this adds to the richness of information collected. With this type of interview, the researcher is able to probe deep into issues and find suitable answers for predetermined questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

This study is about how women groups contribute to post-election peace and how the Ark Foundation contributed to peace through its activities. With the semi-structured interviews, I was able to talk about the topic in detail and ask follow-up questions when there was the need. Also, I was able to ask new questions that were prompted by the informants' answers and this contributed to the richness of the data I collected. I was also able to find first-hand information about people's motivations for taking part in the peacebuilding activities. One major advantage I experienced with the semi-structured interviews was the friendly and relaxing atmosphere during the interviews. All the interviews were conducted with ease. It was very easy to record the interviews as well. I could ask my informants to repeat parts of their answers I had not captured.

For this research, semi-structured interview was the best method of data collection given its many advantages and usefulness elaborated. I sought people's own experiences and thoughts during the election period. As the subject of elections could be quite a sensitive topic, I conducted semi-structured interviews which made my informants comfortable and relaxed during the interviews. Also, I was able to guide my informants without necessarily making them feel pressured to give me certain information.

3.5.3 Conducting the Interviews

Interviews with my first group of informants that comprised of three staff of the Ark Foundation, were conducted at the premises of the organisation. I was able to complete my four interviews in two trips to the organisation. I conducted the first two interviews on my second visit to the organisation. I spoke to the administrative secretary and a social worker. The third interviews was with the deputy director. She had her own office so I was able to conduct one-on-one interviews. The atmosphere was relaxed generally and I was able to conduct the interview with no tension whatsoever.

With the exception of the interview with the deputy director, the other two interviews lasted between twenty to thirty minutes. With the deputy director, the interview lasted over an hour. This was because most of the questions I asked needed extensive explanations. I also received paper documents regarding some of the questions. I received a Compact Disk (CD) and other media files on the activities of the organisation. At one point, the deputy director had to invite a project manager to answer some questions concerning some activities. Overall, the interviews were very fruitful and I received answers to all my questions and even more.

The interviews with the seven young ladies were very much different and demanded more time and resources. Two of the ladies were living and working outside Accra, and the other five who lived in Accra were widely dispersed. I was able to interview all seven within a period of 2 weeks. I first had to make phone calls to all the 31 ladies who took part in the "Nuisance Project" and introduce myself and my project. I was able to get appointments with 8 to meet them for interviews. One later declined due to time constraints so I had to work with the seven that were left.

In the first week of my interviews, I was able to interview five ladies. I met four at their work places. Fortunately, they all worked in the Accra city centre. I spoke to two ladies during their lunch breaks, and three invited me to their offices. All the interviews went well and the ladies appeared very comfortable to share their experiences and motivations. I met the fifth person at her home during the weekend. This particular interview lasted almost two hours as it turned into a friendly visit. My informant was very cordial and passionate, and talked at length about her motivations. I left her house full of many answers, and even amended the interview questions slightly to prepare for the other two interviews that were yet to be conducted.

During the second week, I interviewed the last two young ladies. Both lived outside Accra, so I had to travel to meet them for the interviews. I met both at their workplaces and the interviews were also conducted with ease. Each last close to thirty minutes and I was able to get answers to all my questions. As a whole, all the interviews played out well. My informants were very responsive and showed enthusiasm about what they had done to contribute to pace in the country. All the young ladies hoped to be a part of peacebuilding activities targeted at the upcoming elections of Ghana in 2016.

3.6 Field Reflections and Challenges

In carrying out my interviews, I came across two issues that could affect the quality of data I collected. These were the insider and outsider dichotomies and the issue of gatekeeping. I now proceed to define these issues and show how I experienced them during the fieldwork.

3.6.1 Insider-outsider Issues

Insider research is defined as research that involves working with a group of people which the researcher is a member of and share a common identity, language and empirical base (Dwyer &

Buckle, 2009). The position of the researcher as an insider or outsider is not fixed or one-sided. Being an insider or outsider is a fluid position. Initially, a social researcher may be an outsider to a specific group, but as more time is spent with the group, the researcher starts becoming more of an insider. A researcher could also be an outsider when it comes to some aspects of a person's life but not others (Rabe, 2003).

Based on the definition and attributes of the insider and outsider positions in research, I found myself as an insider researcher to my chosen topic given the following experiences. As a researcher, my study explored how women groups contributed to peacebuilding during the 2012 elections of Ghana. This was a research carried out in my own country where I am very conversant with issues of everyday life and was present during the election period. I therefore share many characteristics with my research group and identify with their needs and concerns. According to Dwyer & Buckle (2009), this qualifies me as an insider as the informants and I shared the same language, gender and interest in peaceful elections.

3.6.1.1 Fieldwork in my Cultural Backyard

In researching in my own cultural background, these were some of the advantages that I enjoyed and also contributed to my ability to get answers to my questions. Nevertheless, insider research although with many advantages, also has its disadvantages. The status of the researcher as an insider most of all affects the objectivity of the data collected (Unluer, 2012). This is what determines the quality of information gathered, as the results should not be biased in any way, but be a true reflection of the topic being studied.

Familiarity in terms of the society being researched can lead to a loss of objectivity. The researcher stands the risk of making some assumptions that may be wrong unconsciously, based on his knowledge (Unluer, 2012). During the fieldwork, I realised that this was my situation and I had to work hard to let go of my own assumptions. I was interviewing about the 2012 general elections of Ghana, and I had my own part of the story. As I spoke with different people, I realised they saw things differently and I was challenged to think they were wrong. Another big challenge to my being an insider researcher is that I might have overlooked certain important information because I was very much aware of the topic being studied. It is a problem when the researcher does not receive or even see important information (Unluer, 2012). This means that certain details that are important may be left out, and unnecessary details included based on the researchers judgement.

3.6.1.2 Same Gender Interviewing

During my interviews with the young ladies, I found myself as an insider researcher as I am a lady also and share certain characteristics with my interviewees. One major advantage I enjoyed being a fellow female was the rapport that was easily achieved with my informants (Williams & Heikes, 1993). The young ladies warmed up to me easily and were able to share their experiences freely. Most of them used the phrase "you are also a woman and so understand" in answering some questions. My being a female meant they could be themselves and still feel comfortable and accepted. This gave me the opportunity to hear their real motivations for taking part in the election peacebuilding project.

Furthermore, as a female interviewing female peace activists, I could identify with their concerns and why they wanted to promote peace. Usually, it is women and their children who suffer most in times of violence and wars. This fact was very vivid in my participant's minds as well as myself. This overly justified the whole idea that women should work for peace as a means of safeguarding their own lives.

3.6.2 Issue of Gatekeeping in my Research

Gatekeeping is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination. It denotes largely to the manner in which information is controlled as it travels through a filter or gate and it is connected to the exercising of various kinds of power. Gatekeeping is ever-present and a broad phenomenon, which can be detected in many activities that occur daily. (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009).

Gatekeeping can impact the research process in many ways. As my research is a case study, I needed access to a particular organisation, which is the Ark Foundation in Ghana, and their activities. In order to gain first-hand information, I needed to visit the organisation and solicit their help for my research. This really helped me get access to very important information about their activities and how they helped contribute to the peace Ghana enjoyed after its elections. In interviewing the young female peace activist, I had to go through the organisation so they could direct me to them. I was given a list of the young women who worked with the Ark Foundation during its peace building processes. This meant I had to work with young women that the organisation had suggested, and here again, the issue of gatekeeping comes in. there is the tendency that the organisation introduced me only to safe informants (Broadhead & Rist, 2010).

3.6.3 Ensuring Objectivity

In social research, objectivity is a rule drawn from positivism that states that to an extent that is conceivable, researchers ought to keep a distance away from what they study so that their findings depend on the nature of what was studied as opposed to the researchers own personality, convictions and estimations. In carrying out my research, I tried not to let my own characteristics influence my answers. In the interviews, I ensured that the informants were in control of the conversations. I avoided ending their sentences and asking leading questions. This was to ensure that the findings presented a true picture of what I was studying (Payne & Payne, 2004).

3.7 Summary

The current chapter has focused on methodological issues associated with this study. Fieldwork was carried out in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, where the Ark Foundation and many other sister organisations are situated. 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the informants were recruited based on their knowledge of the study being conducted and their availability. Reflection from the field, and how the issues of insider research and gatekeeping were likely to have affected the quality of data collected have also been discussed. Although the researcher tried to ensure objectivity, such a study is still open to flaws and may not be totally objective.

CHAPTER 4: CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

4.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to develop a conceptual approach for local peacebuilding by CSOs, including women's groups. It looks at the concept of peacebuilding in general and its objectives. The chapter also discusses local perspectives in peacebuilding and the concept of local ownership. Furthermore, local peace actors, which include both state and non-state actors, are discussed and how their contributions are needed for sustainable peacebuilding. Finally, civil society's essence and involvement in peacebuilding as a local actor are discussed. Civil society here refers to non-state actors like NGOs, women groups, youth groups and others working in local communities to influence national decisions. With the choice of these concepts, I seek to demonstrate that peacebuilding is most successful when all stake holders in the society are involved; and that civil society plays a very significant role in building sustainable peace that cannot be overlooked.

4.2 Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding, as a term, first came up in the 1970s through Johan Galtung's work[19]. He identified the setting up of peacebuilding structures as a means of promoting sustainable peace. This is to address root causes of conflict and also support local capacities for managing peace and resolving conflict. Peacebuilding came into widespread use after the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali mentioned it in his report "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992. The term peacebuilding has since gradually gained a multidimensional use and covers activities ranging from disarmament to the rebuilding of political, monetary, legal and civil society institutions (UN, 2015).

Generally, peacebuilding is seen as interventions that are meant to reduce the likelihood of a country erupting or returning to war. However, there are many differences with regards to its conceptualisation and operationalization. Different terms have been used to describe peacebuilding and there are larger divisions with regards to the specific approach to achieve peace. Whilst some programmes focus on promoting stability and security, others focus on building active civil society organisations, promoting democracy and development as well as justice and the rule of law (Barnett & O'Donnell, 2007).

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[19] UN Report, accessed online on 11-02-2015, http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pbun.shtml

According to Galtung (1976: 298), peacebuilding involves the process of "creating self-supporting structures that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur". He continues to add that the structures should have conflict resolution mechanisms built into them such that there is no need for other systems to support the structures. The structures should be self-supporting. Just as a healthy body produces its own antibodies, Galtung argues that the conflict resolution mechanisms should serve as a reservoir for the system itself to draw upon. (Galtung, 1976).

Peacebuilding is also understood as "a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships" (Lederach, 1997: 20). The definition shows that peacebuilding comprises a lot of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. "Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct" (Lederach, 1997: 20).

Peacebuilding thus involves a full range of approaches, processes, and stages that are needed in order to transform to relationships that are more peaceful and sustainable. This includes the setting up of both legal and human rights institutions in addition to dispute resolution systems that are both fair and effective. Lederach also emphasizes that peacebuilding centrally involves the transformation of relationships and cultures. "Sustainable reconciliation" requires structural, cultural and relational transformations (Lederach, 1997:20). To be successful, peacebuilding activities need cautious and participatory planning coordination among different endeavours, and continued obligations by both local and international donor parties (Morris, 2000).

4.2.1 Objectives of Peacebuilding

Just as there are many definitions of the term peacebuilding, there are also many diverse perspectives when it comes to its objectives. Nonetheless, there is a general agreement that peacebuilding goes far beyond just reducing or ending conflict. Galtung (1996) introduced two concepts of peace; positive and negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence (war) and positive peace is the absence of indirect violence (structural violence) and where the sprouting of new disputes does not escalate into conflict (Galtung, 1996). It is generally accepted that the aim of peacebuilding is to promote positive peace, the kind of peace that goes further than just ending conflicts (Haugerudbraaten, 2010).

In her book, Schirch (2005) takes a relational view on peacebuilding by pinpointing three main objectives it seeks to achieve. They are 1) to reduce direct conflict, 2) build capacity and 3) transform relationships to reach "a peace with justice". In reducing violence, Schirch puts it as "…to restrain perpetrators of violence, prevent and relieve the immediate suffering of victims of violence, and create a safe space for peacebuilding activities". The second objective deals with building capacity and it entails capacity building at both personal and societal levels so as to foster a culture of peace. Finally, relationships at personal, societal and structural levels are transformed and rebuilt in order to achieve reconciliation (Schirch, 2005).

Barnett et al (2007) are also for the view that peacebuilding is more than just the elimination of armed conflict. It aims at creating a positive peace by removing all the possible causes of war so that violence is no more an option for solving conflicts once they arise. By implication, it means that measures put in place to help restore peace after wars can be used to prevent wars in the first place. They see peacebuilding as conflict prevention by another name. They go on to introduce three dimensions of peacebuilding that include stability creation, restoration of state institutions and addressing the socio-economic dimensions of conflict (Barnett & O'Donnell, 2007).

The objectives of peacebuilding goes beyond just the creation of peace. It has a long term goal of creating stability, where violence is never an option to conflict resolution. As suggested by Schirch (2005) and others, activities like the empowerment of individuals and societies are necessary tools for peacebuilding to be successful. People need to feel competent in order to be able to contribute effectively to consensus building. This can be achieved when all dimensions of a conflict are addressed to ensure that all grievances are handled accordingly.

4.3 Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding

As already discussed, the aim of peacebuilding is to ensure that societies do not relapse into cycles of conflict. To be able to achieve this, peacebuilding needs the participation of both local and international partners as suggested by Morris (2000). As part of the collective aim of peacebuilding, literature on the subject and the work of the UN have continuously emphasized the importance of local ownership of peacebuilding activities. This is because, as argued by the UN secretary-general, Boutros-Ghali, "only national actors can address their society's needs

and goals in a sustainable way" (UN, 2009)[20]. It is very crucial to the success of peacebuilding to obtain the active participation of local stakeholders in peacebuilding processes (Futamura & Notaras, 2011).

In order to achieve the full participation of local stakeholders, there is the need for strategies that are aware of the different needs and capabilities of local communities and also respect these differences. The strategies should also develop local will and competence for peacebuilding. This provides the opportunity to address the welfare needs of the local communities and interact with traditional institutions and beliefs. By including local actors, significant socio-economic root causes of conflict can be identified and handled appropriately. (Futamura & Notaras, 2011).

Local perspectives in peacebuilding also includes the participation of significant local actors in the particular peacebuilding context. Depending on the setting, the visibility of many local groups and actors can be limited, as well as the access to peacebuilding processes. This limitation may be the result of geographic circumstances, fragmentation in the society, the type of culture, as well as the prevalence of illiteracy. This form of limitation usually affects women, youth and other victims of the society who are often marginalised. People affected by a conflict should also have the responsibility of deciding the actors who are relevant to peacebuilding processes (Does, 2013).

Local actors in peacebuilding activities include communities, civil society groups, the private sector, women, youth, and victim groups. These actors tend to have more information about their particular situation than outside actors. Outside actors need the participation of local actors in order to understand the dynamics of a conflict and gain knowledge on how to address the problem. Local context-specific information therefore plays a very important role in starting a peacebuilding process by helping to identify the relevant issues and actors. In addition, involving the local actors can facilitate local ownership of the peacebuilding process and make it more successful (Does, 2013).

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[20] Report on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, UN 2009

4.3.1 Local Ownership

Local ownership, as a term, has gradually become central to the vocabulary of peacebuilding. In general terms, local ownership refers to the extent to which domestic actors wield control over local political processes. Peace cannot be forced by external actors, military or others on the local people. It must however be fostered through strategies that are both patient and flexible, and fit the local context in question. (Donais, 2012). According to Saxby (2003), ownership refers to the corresponding capabilities of various stakeholders, their authority or ability to set and take responsibility for a development course and to raise and sustain support for it.

The essence of the involvement of local actors in peacebuilding activities has been increasingly acknowledged since the mid-1990s. Peacebuilding has been conceptualised more and more as not being a top-down process, but one involving the whole society. As already stated, conflicts take place within societies, and it is within these societies that peacebuilding strategies must be rooted. A key principle in peacebuilding is to strengthen and support local actors with a genuine interest in peacebuilding (Reich, 2006).

Local ownership also has effects on how peace activities are framed. It has been observed that when such activities are left entirely to external actors to design, and are merely implemented by the local actors, the activities tend to be unsustainable. Rather, the local actors must be part of the whole process of designing the activities and decision making if the process is to function in the first place. For long-term sustainability, it is important that peacebuilding efforts are conceived and led locally (Edomwony, 2003: Reich, 2006).

Peace Direct, an organisation that supports grassroots peacebuilding activities, outlines three ways through which external and local actors can work together effectively. It could be a locally led approach, locally owned approach or locally delivered approach. In locally led approach, local actors are solely responsible for the planning and designing of the activities, and external actors provide resources and the needed connections. Locally owned also means that the approach comes from outside, but ownership is transplanted to a local organisation which can gradually work towards making it a locally led approach. Finally with locally delivered, the local actors merely implement the approach, and there is no transfer of ownership (Hayman, 2013).

Although it has been recognised and discussed in peacebuilding literature that there is the need for more local ownership, many would say that this has not yet been realised (Does, 2013). This is partly because most local actors lack the capacity to govern themselves and make decisions, and this in turn makes local ownership a difficult venture to achieve. Furthermore, most locally led peacebuilding initiatives are difficult to scale up to make significant impacts (Does, 2013). This could be as a result of them being designed to the needs of a particular local community which might have different needs from the next community in the same country. This is particularly true of fractionalised societies.

To achieve inclusiveness, there is the need for multiple actors to engage at various levels at the same time. These engagements happen through many overlapping processes that together define the levels of inclusivity. There should also be some connections between multiple processes at the various levels of the society and also in different places that are driven by a diversity of actors. To this end, in order to ensure adaptation to the local setting and encouraging local ownership, flexibility and continuity are very important factors that must be considered (Does, 2013).

4.4 Local Peace Actors

Local peace actors are normally members of the local peace constituency. Peace constituencies as a concept has developed in the fields of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. It refers to agreements and networks that support local capabilities for peace. The discussion of who is a local actor is central here as the concept emphasises the importance of the local actor in peacebuilding (Reich, 2006). As defined by Ropers (2002: 71), peace constituencies are a "lively network of actors who are bound neither to the state nor to any political party, who are pledged to non-violence and committed to community-oriented purposes, and who thus build a counterweight to the ethno-politically or religiously segmented society".

Peace constituencies are seen more to be placed in the realm of the society, and focuses more on NGOs than on multilateral activities. The terms non-violent or non-partisan refer more to a broad area of emerging actors in the civil society (Reich, 2006). The creation of peace constituencies is a key aspect of peacebuilding. This network should not only include civil society groups, but also state institutions and other external partners such as NGOs, churches, and development cooperation institutions. The focus should be on both political and civil society elements who are committed actively to nonviolent solutions. (Ropers, 2002).

4.4.1 Civil Society and Peacebuilding

Civil society's involvement in peacebuilding is an undisputed fact, looking at the existing position of the theory and practice of peacebuilding. The roots of the concept of civil society are found in the theory of democracy and western philosophy (Paffenholz, 2009). The institutionalisation of civil society followed the introduction of democracy. It developed in modern philosophy together with the concepts of capitalism and liberal thought. In the 1980s, civil society was associated with a particular meaning, denoting the presence of groups that were self-organised or institutions that were able to maintain an independent public domain. In this way, they were able to guarantee individual freedom and check state abuses (Pietrzyk, 2001).

When it comes to peacebuilding, civil society undoubtedly plays a very important role. Civil society has the possibility of playing an essential and effective function in peacebuilding at all levels of a conflict. Looking at the engagement of civil society as compared to other actors shows that the role that civil society plays in peacebuilding is usually supportive rather than decisive. The main motivation for civil society usually stems from political actors and most importantly the conflicting parties themselves. However, when the supportive role played by civil society is carried out in an effective way at the right time, it can bring about major transformation. Civil society groups have assisted in various ways in post-conflict environments with regards to reducing violence, negotiating settlements and facilitating peace (Paffenholz, 2012).

In alternative discourses on peacebuilding, civil society plays an important role in grassroots approaches. Civil society is the main force behind grassroots peacebuilding processes. Grassroots emancipation, socio-cultural and other differences together with structural changes of the system becomes the point of emphasis. A free civil society is seen as the agent of change by organising social activities and public communication. Civil society brings to the attention of the state as well as the international community the needs and concerns of the ordinary people (Paffenholz, 2009) .

Civil society is known to play a number of roles in wider peacebuilding processes. Firstly, they act as intermediaries between outsiders and the local communities. Outsiders here may refer to the national level or international agencies. Also, in cases where there is a weak state, or the state is either negligent or incapable of meeting the needs of the people, civil society is known

to step up and provide either complementary or alternative structures. They thus enhance the national capacity by providing the local people with socio-economic opportunities. Civil society is furthermore considered a pillar in the democratisation process of a country. Aside acting as a check for state agenda and holding governments accountable to its citizens, civil society's engagement in national issues is thought to build confidence in democratic processes[21].

One other role played by civil society is much interest to this study is their involvement in electoral procedures. CSOs contribute in various ways by encouraging larger participation by voters and advocating for peaceful and successful elections. Voter education initiatives carried out by civil society are of great importance in ensuring that the local people understand and appreciate electoral processes. Through non-partisan election monitoring, CSOs are able to ensure transparency in elections and also increase public confidence. This is an important requisite for peace to prevail during election periods. A more direct effort in peacebuilding is the organisation of campaigns and public meetings to advocate for peace before, during and after elections[22].

Nevertheless, civil society is not without its faults. As noted by Robinson and White (1997), "they contain repression as well as democracy, conflict as well as cooperation, vice as well as virtue; they can be motivated by sectional greed as much as social interest". In addition to its many good attributes, it is still plagued by the same problems weak states face. However, it is evident that the role played by civil society groups is very crucial to many societies. Efforts should therefore be geared in strengthening civil society to be well equipped to deliver on its functions[23].

4.5 Multi-Track Collaboration in Peacebuilding

In discussing the actors and approaches to peacebuilding, Lederach (1997), introduces three levels of leadership that cut across society. These are associated with both top down/ bottom up approaches. For peace to be sustainable, all the three levels should be involved and work together. Level 1 is composed of top level leaders in the society. This includes military leaders,

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[21] http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org
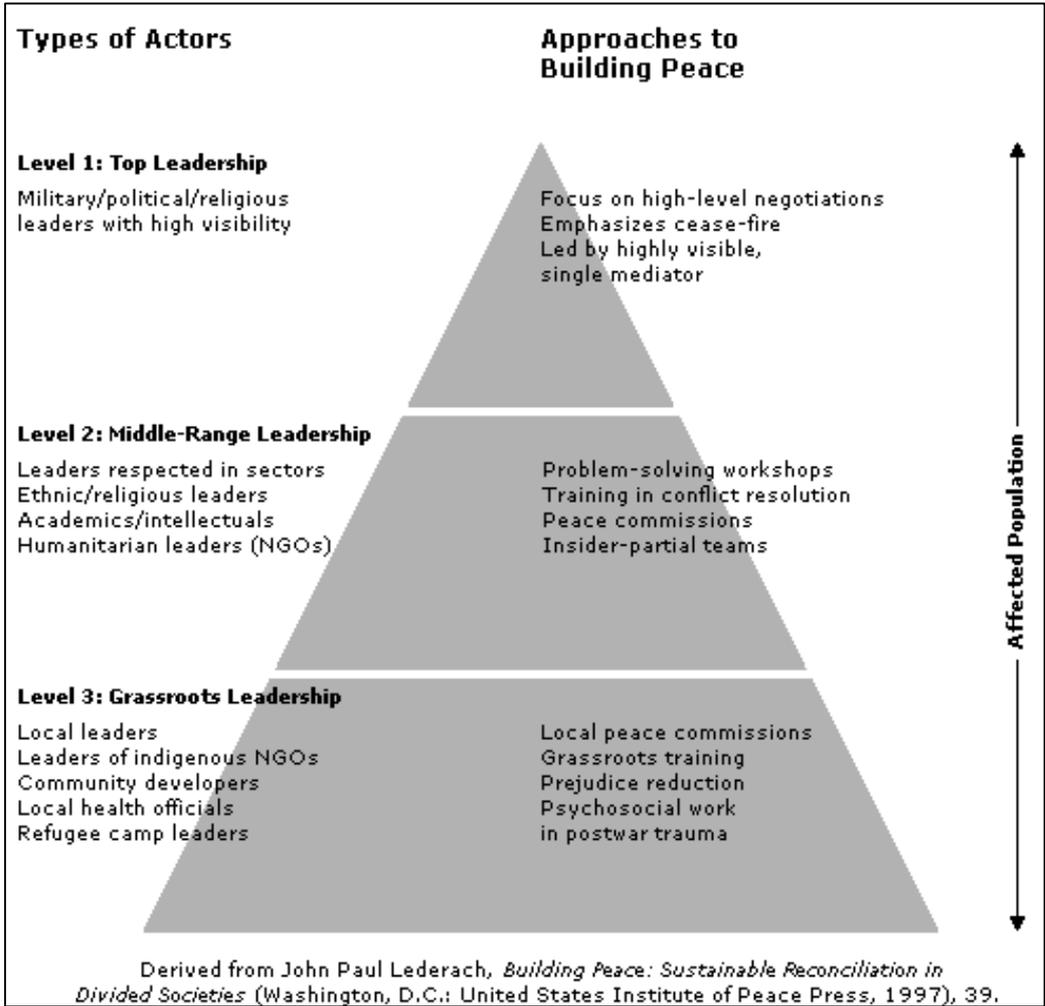[22] http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org
[23] Ibid

key political figures, religious leaders and others who are the highest representatives of the government. These leaders are seen to have significant power and influence in the society. They are highly visible and much attention is paid to their involvements. There is not much contact with the local communities at this level. These leaders therefore tend to be less familiar with the day to day issues of the local people. Approaching peacebuilding entirely from this level may not yield favourable results and may even lead to further problems in the society.

The second level comprises of middle range of leaders whose positions are not necessarily connected with power or formal government structures. These leaders include people who are highly respected in the society and sometimes occupy formal leadership positions in significant sectors of the society such as health, education and business. At this level, there are also leaders of NGOs who work as intermediaries between the national and local levels. As mentioned, their positions are not associated with any political power, but the influence they have originates from on-going relationships. This makes them more flexible and able to work in all conflict settings.

The third level represents grassroots leaders who represent the masses/ everyday people. Leaders at this level consists of individuals who are involved in local communities. They are concerned with the more practical issues of everyday life such as carrying out relief projects in conflict affected areas. These leaders are found within local organisations and groups and sometimes the local branches of NGOs.

Figure 1 illustrated, shows the actors and approaches to peacebuilding as developed by Lederach (1997). At the top of a hierarchy, there are only a few people but there are many at the bottom. Lederach represents this scenario with a pyramid, with the top of the pyramid representing top level leaders in the society. At the middle of the pyramid, we have the middle range leaders, who act as middlemen between the top and bottom levels. At the bottom also, we have the grassroots. This is the highest represented level comprising of all the local level leaders working with the local masses. One important fact about this level is also the presence of many perpetrators of violence and also their victims. It is therefore important to work from this level focusing on reconciliation processes within the local communities.

Figure1: Actors and Approaches to Peacebuilding

Types of Actors

Approaches to Building Peace

Level 1: Top Leadership

Military/political/religious leaders with high visibility

Focus on high-level negotiations
Emphasizes cease-fire
Led by highly visible,
single mediator

Level 2: Middle-Range Leadership

Leaders respected in sectors
Ethnic/religious leaders
Academics/intellectuals
Humanitarian leaders (NGOs)

Problem-solving workshops
Training in conflict resolution
Peace commissions
Insider-partial teams

Level 3: Grassroots Leadership

Local leaders
Leaders of indigenous NGOs
Community developers
Local health officials
Refugee camp leaders

Local peace commissions
Grassroots training
Prejudice reduction
Psychosocial work
in postwar trauma

Affected Population

Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

Source: Lederach, 1997

Building sustainable peace requires the active participation of all three levels of leadership. The middle level, being in direct contact with both the top and the grassroots levels, is in a better position with regards to peacebuilding. A typical example of such an actor already mentioned are CSOs. Working from this level, it is easier to build peace committees and organise problem-solving workshops. Peacebuilding as seen is a shared responsibility, cutting across all three levels of the society. It needs the cooperation and involvement of all levels to be effective. The process must consist of multiple interventions that cut across the various functions and roles of all three levels of leadership.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has sought to present the conceptual framework for this study. To start with, in order to understand the essence of peacebuilding, I have discussed the concept of peacebuilding and its objectives. As discussed, the overall purpose of peacebuilding is to ensure that a society does not fall or relapse into violence. Sustainable peace is therefore of essence here. I introduced the concept of local peacebuilding as a means to achieving sustainable peace. This is where the perspectives of the local people are taken into consideration when working for peace. As deliberated, state institutions as well as non-state institutions are both capable of playing significant roles in working for peace at the local level.

Moreover, the concept of civil society is introduced to represent all non-state actors working for peace in local communities. Of much importance to this study is the work of women groups, which is a very important section of civil society. The roles played by CSOs and their significance in achieving sustainable peace have also been discussed. The concept of actors and approaches to peacebuilding introduced by Lederach (1997) is also drawn upon. Peacebuilding is described as a multi- track agenda that needs the participation of several actors. This concept explains the interconnections between three levels in the society, and how each level contributes to the peace agenda based on their placement in society. The interplay between the concepts presented and the empirical material will be further discussed in the data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the field data. It starts with a focus on the socio-demographic background of the informants, such as age, gender, family structure, level of education and place of residence. These issues have the tendency to affect people's opinions, attitudes and life choices. Furthermore, the chapter attempts to delve into the individual motivations and reflections for working for peace before, during and after the 2012 elections in Ghana. By analysing the informant's narratives through the conceptual framework provided in the previous chapter, the study seeks to show the role of women's groups and their members in local peacebuilding initiatives targeted at post-election peace.

5.2 Socio-Demographic Data

This section includes data on the age, family structure, occupation, educational level, and place of residence of the study informants. For the study, a total of ten (10) women were interviewed, three (3) staff of the Ark Foundation and seven (7) peace activists[24].

5.2.1 Age

All three (3) staff interviewed were aged between 30 and 34. Three of the peace activists interviewed were also aged between 30 and 34, and four were aged between 25 and 29. Studies carried out on age and political participation have shown that there is greatest participation among people between the ages of 35 to 60. However, with the increase in voter registration and mobilization efforts, more youth are seen to participate in political processes (Boundless, 2014). In the case of Ghana, there has been mass education among the youth to sensitise them on the need to participate in electoral activities. Registration centres are now introduced in senior high schools, where students aged from 18 years upwards, are registered and encouraged to vote in elections. Other community based outreaches continue to empower the youth to participate in activities geared towards the development of their local communities (UN Women, 2012).

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[24] Peace activist refers to the young women who took part in the Nuisance Project implemented by the Ark Foundation

This could probably account for the active participation of the informants in advocating for peaceful elections, although they are all below 35 years. Their involvement in civil society is notable, as they contribute to the development of their local communities as well as the main goal of ensuring post-election peace.

5.2.2 Gender and Family Structure

All ten (10) informants interviewed were females. This is very significant as women face many barriers when it comes to participation in political activities (Anderlini, 2007). Women's participation in political activities is a field that continues to receive great attention. Political participation includes any activity that is aimed at influencing the structure of a government, appointment of decision maker and the execution of policies (Laban et al, 2008-2009). These activities can take place at any level of the society, but most often, women's contributions are at the community or grassroots level.

Certain factors are known to mobilise women when it comes to their participation in political activities. One major factor is their "triple role"; women are known to have triple roles in the society. These are productive roles, reproductive roles and community roles (SIRD, 2015). These roles make them more concerned about the welfare of their personal interests, families and communities. This concern is what drives them as women to be actors of peace and not passive observers in their communities. Also, the fact that women are the worst hit victims when it comes to conflict (Moseh & Clark, 2001), makes them want to participate in peace work to safeguard both their lives and that of their families. Peruvian women, for example, following the conflict in 1980 organised themselves and were able to rise above their confinement to traditional roles to unite themselves as social and political actors, and were able to limit the war and widen democratic opportunities both at the local and regional levels (Moseh & Clark, 2001).

The family structure of women can also influence their participation in political activities. Family structure is defined as marital status and the presence of children. Studies have shown that married adults tend to be more active in political activities than the unmarried ones, and the presence of children also has a similar effect. This has been particularly evident in voter turnout (Wolfinger & Wolfinger, 2008). Five out of the ten informants were married, with four having children. Out of the five who were single, four had boyfriends. Only one informant was

not dating anyone. Following Wolfinger et al (2008), this attachment could have contributed to the reason why the informants were part of the peacebuilding work.

5.2.3 Education and Employment Status

All ten (10) people interviewed had tertiary level education. Nine (9) of them had finished their education and one (1) was in her final year of school. Education has been identified as part of the highest predictors of individual participation in political processes. Many studies have indicated a positive impact of formal education on political participation[25]. Education is known to provide and sharpen cognitive skills, which in turn prepare individuals for political participation. Such preparation could be in the form of knowledge of political processes. Such knowledge is able to empower people and give them a sense of worth and thereby motivate them to be active in political activities (Aars & Christensen, 2013).

Employment status also has an influence on individual political participation. There is higher participation among individuals with an occupation and earning some form of income. Having an occupation is associated with a high level of self-worth, and this reflects positively in people's willingness and confidence in being politically active (McClosky, 1968). Nine (9) of the informants were in gainful employment and had reasonable levels of income. The last informant was a student, but also had a part-time job which she did on her vacations to earn her an income.

5.2.4 Place of Residence

All three (3) staff interviewed lived and worked in Accra. One lived at Ashaiman, another at East Legon, and the last at Madina. Five of the peace activists lived in the Greater Accra Region and two lived outside the region. One lived in the Central Region and the other lived in the Western Region of Ghana. Out of the five who lived in the greater Accra region, four lived in suburbs of Accra, and one lived in Tema, a city close to Accra. All places of residence are urban areas, which is also known to contribute positively to political participation. Participation is greatest among urban dwellers. This is often attributed to the increased **exposure** to higher education, mass media and a greater possibility of being disposed to the formation of voluntary

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[25] Campbell 1968; Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet 1944; Parry, Moyser & Day 1992; Verba & Nie 1972; Verba, Scholzman & Brady 1995

associations (McClosky, 1968). A summary of the informants' socio-demographic data is captured in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of Informants Socio-Demographic Background

Informant	Age Range	Gender	Level of Education	Marital Status	Employment Status	Place of Residence
1	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Married	Employed	Ashaiman
2	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Married	Employed	East Legon
3	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Married	Employed	Madina
4	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Single	Employed	Tema
5	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Married	Employed	Anaji
6	25-29	Female	Tertiary	Single	Employed	Mateheko
7	25-29	Female	Tertiary	Single	Employed	Swedru
8	25-29	Female	Tertiary	Single	Employed	Lashibi
9	30-34	Female	Tertiary	Married	Employed	Ablekuma
10	25-29	Female	Tertiary	Single	Student	Ashaley Botwe

Source: Fieldwork 2014

5.3 Perceptions of Peacebuilding

This section takes a look at how the informants see peace and their general approach to peacebuilding. As discussed in the previous chapter, how peace is perceived peace influences the types of activities that are implemented. It is therefore important to understand how the informants interviewed see peace in order to appreciate their motivations for working for peace.

5.3.1 Individual Definitions of Peace

A construction of peace is the negative and positive peace phenomenon introduced by Galtung. According to Galtung (1996), there are two dimensions to peace: a negative dimension and a positive one. He calls the negative dimension of peace as negative peace and the positive,

positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence (war) and positive peace is the absence of indirect violence (structural violence). This refers to a form of violence where some social structure or social institution may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs (Galtung, 1996).

For positive peace to exist, all forms of violence must be absent in a society. A society that stays away from war but still has some elements of indirect violence qualifies at best for a negative peace status. To attain positive peace, there must both be avoidance of war and the complete elimination of all types of indirect violence that may be embedded in the structure of the community. Simply put, eliminating direct violence will lead to a negative peace, and going further to eliminate indirect violence will result in a positive peace (Galtung, 1996).

How a society perceives peace is very important as it will influence the types of activities undertaken to build a peaceful society. If a society perceives peace to be more than the absence of war, then it will go ahead to ensure that its structural systems do not hinder the wellbeing of its inhabitants as proposed by Galtung. From the answers received from the informants, it was very evident that most people perceive peace to be more than just the absence of war. All respondents perceived peace to include factors associated with the positive peace concept introduced by Galtung. One informant defined peace as this:

> *…when there is no war or strike; stillness within you and no fight in the mind or otherwise*

From the definition of peace by this informant, she confirms the positive peace construction by Galtung (1996) by acknowledging inner peace and a free mind as components of peace. This can be achieved if the individual is not hindered in any way by the society and as such is very relaxed and able to function well. "No fight in the mind" may mean there are no issues bothering individuals in the society due to fair systems.

> *…Peace is being able to live in harmony and cordially with the people around you, and they being tolerant towards you*

This definition of peace also suggests that the relationship between people in the society should be very cordial. There should be tolerance and this implies that all categories of people are

treated fairly and not discriminated against. This suggests that violence is not an option at all in the society and that people relate very well with others and treat them with respect.

> *...Peace is people being able to live in a harmonious environment without fear or panic, and the presence of legal justice*

This definition of peace likewise moves from just living in a society free from violence to one that the law system works. This means that the people believe that violence is not an option to solve problems but leave it to the law to take its course. Justice to enforce the law also indicates that there is fairness in the system and the rule of law works (UN, 2002).

Taken together, the above definitions of peace by the informants indicate that peace is more than just the avoidance of war. This confirms the positive peace dimension introduced by Galtung (1996). Positive peace is presented as an ideal situation that all societies should replicate for the wellbeing of people.

5.3.2 Peacebuilding as a Joint Effort

Peacebuilding is a shared responsibility and demands the contributions of all actors in a society. Lederach (1997) describes it as a multi-track collaboration between three levels of leadership within the society. Most importantly, peacebuilding should be embraced by the 3rd level leadership which is made of local leaders and representatives of NGOs, who work with the local people. This is the level where most conflicts emanate and as such is the best level to start peacebuilding activities from. As discussed in Chapter 4, in order for peacebuilding to be sustainable, there is the need for the locals to "own" the peacebuilding processes. As stated by Donais (2012), peace cannot be forced by external actors. It can be achieved when the people it concerns are involved and they see it as their responsibility. It must be embraced by the local people and their various capabilities must be put to use to ensure the success of the process.

From the answers received from the informants, it was evident that they saw themselves as important actors in working for peace in Ghana during the election period. From their motivations for working for peace to the results they hoped to achieve, there was a sense of ownership. All informants saw that they had a part to play in the peacebuilding process as it was within their own society. No one indicated that they saw it as a duty of the state or foreign organisations, but as their own responsibility.

Peacebuilding stands a better chance when embraced by the local people. This could be attributed to the success of the election peacebuilding project that the informants were part of. Their answers also indicated a great sense of commitment to the whole process which is also a necessary factor for the success of peacebuilding. One informant had this to say:

> *…Since there was so much threat of war, I thought I could contribute to peace by volunteering to work with the organisation. I did it as my duty as a citizen of Ghana.*

Another had this to say:

> *… Because I yearn for peace and I wanted to add my little voice to the masses.*

Another informant had this to say:

> *…I wanted to promote peace. As I am a Ghanaian, I don't have anywhere else to go.*

The above narratives indicate the perception of ownership of peacebuilding among the informants. It also shows their levels of commitment to ensuring that peace prevails in the country. This is very necessary as already discussed. The eagerness to embrace peacebuilding processes by the locals is an important factor in the success of the process.

> *…My ultimate goal was for Ghana to have a peaceful election, so after I was trained by the Ark Foundation, I felt I had what it took to also tell people how that could be possible.*

The concept of multi-track collaboration in peacebuilding by Lederach (1997) is clearly confirmed by the informant's narratives. Working from the bottom of the hierarchy, they collaborated with local leaders and peace commissions to work for peace. They also participated in grassroots training, and supported local level leaders to reach the local people. This shows how representatives of the various levels can work together for peace and the need for joint interventions.

5.4 Contributions of Women's Groups to Post-Election Peace

As already discussed in chapter four, there is no doubt as to whether women's groups are important or not when it comes to peacebuilding. In most developing countries like Ghana, where the state is not so strong to provide its citizens with all their political needs, the responsibility partly falls on the civil society (Helman & Ratner, 1992). Success from all over

the world, with examples from Liberia, Cambodia, Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone etc., show that civil society has stepped up to fulfil this responsibility.

From speaking with my informants, it was very apparent that they also saw women's civil society groups to be important in contributing to peace. They particularly emphasised women groups working for peace, like the Ark Foundation[26], and this is very important to this study.

5.4.1 Women's Individual Contributions to Post-Election Peacebuilding

Aside working together with groups and organisations, women also contribute independently to the peace agenda. This opportunity usually arises as a result of their associations with organisations that work with at the community levels, and also through their roles towards the local community (ILO, 1998). Through the Nuisance Project carried out by the Ark Foundation carried, many women were given the chance to work together with the organisation, and also on their own to ensure peace before, during and after the election period. As all the young women had the interest to work for peace, this opportunity they had was a big stepping stone for them. The training sessions equipped the women with a sense of efficacy and made them more politically active. In addition to being a part of the Nuisance Project, some of the women similarly worked on their own in their local communities. Some narratives presented below reflect some individual efforts made to promote post-election peace.

> *…I wanted to gain experience in peacebuilding and also be able to tell my story. I also wanted to ensure that the right thing was done in Ghana.*

This woman peace activist had the desire to work for peace and so when the opportunity came, she gladly took it. When asked how she contributed to ensuring that peace prevailed, she had a lot to say.

> *…I went to political leaders to collect their signatures in accordance with a petition drafted to ensure that all leaders were committed to peace. I helped to mount banners with peace messages all around the capital city, Accra. I also went around to mobilise old women in the communities to participate in a peace vigil. Lastly, I was part of many durbars held to encourage the youth to desist from violent acts during the election period.*

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[26] See 2.3.3 and 2.3.3.1 under Chapter 2 for more on Ark Foundation's involvement in post-election peacebuilding in Ghana

From the above narrative, it is very obvious that this peace activist was proud of what she was able to do. Through her efforts, she sought to ensure that things would be done peacefully in the country. Another female peace activist also indicated that she had the interest to work for peace and see the elections end peacefully. Just like the previous informant, this peace activist was also part of the signature collection project, peace vigils and the banner hanging project.

Speaking with my informants, I realised that almost all of them embraced all the activities the organisation set out to do. They all had some passion to work for peace in their country. As discussed earlier, they saw this as their responsibility and so went out willingly to participate fully in all the peacebuilding activities. One major activity carried out by the organisation was the "Azonto for Peace" Street Dance Competition". Azonto, being a popular dance among the youth during the time of the project, was used to attract the youth to participate. As suggested by Does (2013), peace work needs to be flexible and adaptable to the setting in which it is being carried out. All the peace activists participated in this project and took the opportunity to speak to the youth who were attracted by the project individually to encourage them to be peaceful. As there was a high turnout of the youth at the project, it was very helpful that the peace activists were there in their numbers to interact with them.

Some informants additionally worked on their own in their local communities, churches and work places. Some spoke to their colleagues at work to encourage them to obey electoral regulations and also desist form violent acts at polling stations. Others also encouraged their own family members to be peaceful and not engage in any troublesome acts or talk. From their own accounts, the training they received by the Ark Foundation built their confidence and equipped them with the skills they needed to influence others to work for peace.

> *...I organised the young people in my church and gave a talk on the need to seek a violent-free election. I used my position as a national youth secretary of the Methodist Church Ghana to influence the programmes of our national gatherings to talk about peace. One of the greatest achievement of such talks was that, some young men confessed to being part of serial callers[27] and were very remorseful about their actions.*

The preceding narrative by one of the activists shows how she used her position in her church to encourage the youth to abstain from acts of violence. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, the youth, usually the young unemployed men, are engaged by some political persons to carry out

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[27] A person who calls different people to threaten them, usually with a disguised identity.

inappropriate acts. In this case, these young men were used by some politicians to call their opponents and their supporters and threaten them. Some even go to the extent of blackmailing innocent people so they would lose face with the general public. It is amazing that through this peace activist's efforts, these young men were willing to avoid such activities. Hopefully, they also were able to influence some of their fellow comrades to resign from being serial callers.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a higher sense of self-worth leads to a higher level of political participation. Factors like level of education, employment status and other socio-economic aspects directly affect ones sense of self-worth or efficacy when it comes to political participation. Training programmes in peace work equip the trainees with the tools they need to work with and likewise results in a higher sense of confidence. One important benefit enjoyed all the informants was the training they received from the organisation. The Ark Foundation had an extensive training programme for all its thirty (30) women peace activists and also its staff prior to the implementation of the Nuisance Project. The trainees were taken through advocacy and capacity building programmes to empower them for the task of enforcing peace.

...I had a lot of training and I also acquired a lot of knowledge on peace work
...I received raining and more understanding on women's issues.

These two informants were particularly thankful for the training they received. One got the opportunity to learn more about peace work and the other got more understanding on women's issues. Another informant in response to being asked the benefit she derived from working with the organisation responded:

...During the project, I learnt a lot through the many programmes that were organised. I was also selected to be part of a training organised by the New York University. I moreover met a lot of renowned public figures I never thought I would meet.

One other also said:
...I learnt a lot and I got to meet a lot of prominent people in the society.
Aside the training they received, some were also glad they could meet and interact with important people in the society. This is a good way of building confidence in young people. One informant iterated this point saying:

> *…It build my confidence. I got to understand who I am as a woman. The training helped me transfer my weaknesses into strengths and it also helped to place value on myself and by so doing empowering me.*

Another informant was just glad she got the opportunity to contribute her quota to peacebuilding in the country.

> *…I was able to do something to promote peace in Ghana and that is more than enough for me.*

From the accounts of the informants, it is very apparent that they enjoyed a lot of benefits working with this women's group. Aside getting them to work for peace, the individual capabilities of the activists were improved. The training they received also helped to give them better understanding of peace work and women's issues. The direct influence this had on the informants was the increased participation in political activities at all the three levels in the society. They got to understand that they are also important in the society and their efforts are needed if peace is to prevail in the country.

Women are seen here to be active local peace actors in the community. The narratives confirm what Reich (2006) had to say about peacebuilding. According to him, a major principle in peacebuilding is to identify local actors with genuine interest and train them to work for peace. These informants had the interest to see their country have a successful election, and the training they received made it possible for them to engage in peace work. Training is therefore necessary to build the capabilities of the local people to participate effectively in peacebuilding activities.

5.5 Women's Motivations for Working for Peace

As per a report by CSIS[28], the 2012 general elections of Ghana was the singular most potential source of violence in the country during the period (Throup, 2011). Although the possibility that violence could occur during elections in Ghana may be low, according to Amankwah (2013), ignoring certain instances that occur during elections invariably means the symptoms

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[28] Centre for Strategic and International Studies

of potential explosions of violence may also be ignored in the longer term. The period preceding the elections was full of tension, and this raised fears in the general population[29].

There were speculations of war, and with the examples of surrounding neighbouring countries, the idea of war did not seem too far-fetched. Many of the informants had the same feeling and this fear motivated them to do something to curtail any violence that could spring up. In speaking with the informants, a lot of them expressed concerns about their fears during the period. One informant said:

> *...I had fears of the possibility of war.*

Another said:

> *...I was worried that the two major political parties would engage in war.*

As discussed in chapter one, the country's election has been keenly competed between two major political parties; the NDC and the NPP. The tension between these two parties prior to the elections and after was very great, and was felt throughout the country. To add to the tension was the court validation process after the election results were released. It is therefore not surprising that people were worried that war could spring up. One more informant expressed her fears this way:

> *...I was scared there was going to be an outbreak of war, as people had grievances.*

This informant brings in grievances being able to lead to the possibility of war. The grievance phenomenon to the study of conflicts argues that relative deprivation and the grievance it produces fuels conflict. The grievance model sees civil wars as occurring due to elements such as relative deprivation, grievances, inter-ethnic or horizontal inequality and the desire for identity formation (Murshed & Tadjoeddin, 2009). In the case of Ghana, all these elements are present and so could easily escalate into a conflict. This informant saw the possibility of this situation leading to the outbreak of war and so was much worried.

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[29] Center for Strategic and International Studies

One other expressed concern about the possibility of the youth in the country being incited to engage in violence. This subject has been discussed much in this study. In a country like Ghana where unemployment among the youth is high, some youth have become weapons of political parties[30]. There have been many instances where the youth have been involved in so many vices during elections. It is not surprising then that this informant was worried that the youth could be a source of potential violence during the election period.

From the above narratives, one obvious factor motivating all these women is their concern or fear of the outbreak of violence. This would mean loss of lives, homes, properties and livelihoods. This can be traced to women's triple roles in the society which makes them more sensitive than the average man when it comes to the welfare of their families and local communities. Women's reproductive roles does not only include biological reproduction, but also the care and maintenance of their children and even partners (ILO, 1998). This obviously makes them more thoughtful and more willing to ensure that there is peace, given that they have direct responsibility with regards to the safety of their families. Their roles require that they are naturally nurturing and caring (Meintjes et al, 2001).

Women's community role which is an extension of their reproductive role, also makes them more involved in their local communities. Their roles include ensuring the availability and maintenance of shared resources like water, education and medical services (ILO, 1998). Women are often members of local committees, and represent their families at social gatherings. Being more involved in the affairs of their communities makes them more inclined to ensuring peace and stability. According to Meintjes et al (2001), women's motivations for doing peace work stem from their strength in being involved in community-based activities. Women certainly have interests in the welfare of their communities and this makes them more willing and motivated to prevent all types of conflicts and their effects.

5.6 Individual Reflections vis-à-vis Post-Election Peace

This section focuses on the individual reflections of the people interviewed in relation to the post-election situation in Ghana. It is worthwhile to reflect on ones activities and the effects it produced in order to see how effective one has been. The peace that prevailed in the country

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[30] See 3.2 under Chapter 3

following the elections despite the threat of violence was very much encouraging both to the local community and international observers (Ayittey, 2012).

All the informants were glad they were able to contribute to the post-election peace situation in their own ways. Many have been encouraged and now appreciate the value of working for peace. Asking them about their reflections, all answered they wanted peace after the elections regardless of the outcome of the elections. They were therefore very satisfied that peace was achieved. Here are some narratives:

> *...I wanted the elections to end peacefully*
> *...I wanted peace, as we had set out to achieve*
> *...I was able to contribute to peace as a good citizen.*

Another informant gave the following reflections:
> *...My core hope was to achieve the aim of the Ark Foundation for the 2012 elections which was to promote peace before, during and after the elections and this was achieved.*

All informants were looking forward to participating in peacebuilding activities towards the next elections to be held in Ghana in the year 2016. One peace activist who was pregnant during the previous project and could not fully participate was looking forward to participating in the next project. Having experience success in their efforts, they were more than encouraged to continue in the good work. One informant said:
> *...The growth of a country depends solely on the peaceful nature of events within it and so I will participate to promote a peaceful Ghana.*

It is very evident form speaking with the informants that they have a genuine interest in the progress of the country. As this is very important for the success of peacebuilding activities, the country stands to benefit a lot in this regard. As discussed in chapter 4, it is very important to gain the full participation of the local stakeholders in peace work (Futamura & Notaras, 2011). Such as done by the Ark Foundation, the strategies carried out were aimed directly at developing the will and competence of the peace activists. This resulted in higher participation and achievement as the peace activists, being part of the local community, knew what their needs were and the type of interventions to carry out.

As outlined by Peace Direct, there are three ways local actors can be involved in grassroots peacebuilding effectively (Hayman, 2013). The approached used by the Ark Foundation was a locally-led one. In so doing, the local actors, represented here by the peace activists, were responsible for planning the activities carried out. The advantage here is that as local actors, it is easier to identify the needs in the community, and design activities to respond directly to those needs. This is important for long term sustainability (Reich, 2006). From the narratives, the peace activists were glad to see the results they had set out to achieve, thereby confirming the need to include local perspectives in peacebuilding.

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have focused on presenting and analysing the narratives from the fieldwork. From the results, it is indicative that all the informants saw peacebuilding as an important activity, especially with regards to post-election peace. Speaking with them, all the informants perceived peace to be more than the absence of war. This perception finds expression in Galtung's "Positive Peace" phenomenon as discussed. Moreover, the informants saw peacebuilding as their responsibility, and not just the preserve of the state. They owned the peace processes and worked towards achieving peace as dutiful citizens.

Women's triple roles in the society as discussed is also a very significant factor mobilising them to work towards peace. As they have more interests with regards to the welfare of their families and communities, they benefit a lot by ensuring that peace prevails in the society. The need to include local perspectives in peacebuilding cannot be overemphasised. For sustainability, there is the need to include actors with a genuine interest and competence in peace work. Peace is everybody's business and women have definitely shown themselves to be willing and competent for the task.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has attempted to discuss the importance of the involvement of women's civil society organisations in post-election peacebuilding. It has sought to throw light on the motivations of such organisations and women in working for peace. The study has been based on ten semi-structured interviews with the staff of the Ark Foundation and women peace activists who worked with the organisation during its peacebuilding project. It also involved several visits to the Ark Foundation. To explain the concept of peacebuilding, it has drawn on a local approach to peacebuilding and the concept of local ownership. The involvement of CSOs in peacebuilding as local actors has also been chosen as a lens to further explore the work of such groups and their contribution to post-election peace.

6.2 Summary of Findings

From the field narratives, it is indicative that peacebuilding is a shared responsibility that needs the inputs of all. It is remarkable that none of the informants saw peacebuilding as the sole responsibility of the state. This perhaps could be attributed to the fact that the people interviewed all had some form of training on peacebuilding. Another important finding was how the informants personalised peacebuilding. They were all committed to the peace agenda and saw it as a worthy cause that needed their direct inputs. Furthermore, they had this deep commitment to ensuring that peace prevailed in the country during the general election period. As discussed in the chapter 4, this eagerness of the local people to embrace peacebuilding activities is a necessary factor in the success of peacebuilding activities.

Women's groups were also seen to be very important in organising local people and implementing peacebuilding activities, including durbars, youth talks and peace vigils. The interviewees were all part of the peacebuilding team because they were associated with the Ark Foundation Ghana. The organisation gave the informants the opportunity to work for peace and unravelled the eagerness in them to contribute to a worthy cause. It is very possible that most of them would have been idle had the organisation not given them the opportunity to be part of its peacebuilding project.

Likewise, aside giving the local people the opportunity to work for peace, women's groups are also seen to provide the local people with training. All the informants had gone through training processes prior to the implementation of the "Nuisance Project". They went through

empowerment training, advocacy training and a lot more. The informants admitted that their confidence was boosted as a direct result of these trainings and they felt they had what was needed to be active actors in the peacebuilding arena. This is particularly of great importance to the wider society where women are seen to be weaker than their male counterparts and incapable of initiating successful projects (Anderlini, 2007). Training also equips women for certain tasks in the public sphere, which translates in higher political participation.

Furthermore, involvement with the Ark Foundation gave the informants the opportunity to invest their time towards a commendable end. Almost all the peace activists had just graduated from school when they were selected for the project. This meant they did not have to stay home and just while away time. Being part of the organisation meant that they had a form of employment and this meant a lot to them considering the high level of unemployment in the country. Some of the informants admitted the training they received from the organisation made them more attractive on the job market afterwards, and helped them to get good jobs.

The field narratives additionally give first-hand information about both women's combined efforts and individual efforts in peacebuilding. Through the activities carried out by the Ark Foundation, we see the combined contribution of women to post-election peacebuilding. These activities targeted all levels of people in the society, from the political leaders to the youth in the local communities. The women's individual efforts were more centred in their local communities including churches, work places, and homes. In working for peace, they all hoped that the elections would be free of violence and end successfully. The inborn desire to feel safe and secure also helped to keep them in focus.

The informants perceived peace to be more than just the situation where there is no strife or violence, but also where there are other elements associated with positive peace. Such elements they noted to be tolerance, stillness in the mind and the presence of a justice system to enforce the law. This form of peace was seen as the ideal and what should prevail in the country Ghana. The informants had a longing for this peace and most admitted that it was possible although a lot of effort was needed to achieve it. All of them wanted to be able to live comfortably in their communities and not have any negative thoughts about their safety. This reflects the inborn desire of humans to feel safe and secure and the informants identified with it (Moseh & Clark, 2001).

Finally, the interviewees' reflections vis-à-vis their goals indicate that they were very satisfied with their work and also with the outcomes. As they had set out to attain peace, they felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction when that peace was realised. Most of them expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to contribute in ensuring post-election peace in Ghana following the 2012 elections. It is thus obvious that many others will be interested in working for peace, if given the opportunity to do so.

6.3 Concluding Remarks - Analytical Contributions

6.3.1 Factors Mobilising Women

Analytically, this study has contributed to the understanding of why women work for peace. Women's motivation for working for peace stems from certain factors associated with the roles the play in the society. The triple role of women identified as reproductive, productive and community roles, make women more concerned and involved in the welfare of their families and local communities (SIRD, 2015). This makes women want to work for peace and see to it that their interests are preserved. Noticeably, women are suitable for peace work, and not only helpless victims as they are generally portrayed. This is not surprising as women are traditionally labelled as victims in conflicts. They are shown to be either mothers mourning for dead children, sufferers of gender abuse, starving widows, etc. (Cheldelin & Eliatamby, 2011).

However, women have shown themselves to be both perpetrators and victims in times of conflict. Some have also risen up to develop powerful voices in combatting conflicts (Kuehnast, 2011). Being well-equipped with the capabilities and commitment of being actors for peace, women are able to make significant contributions to peace work (Schnabel & Tabyshalieva, 2012). Efforts should therefore be made by all governments to include women in peace negotiations. One step towards consolidating women's involvement in peacebuilding is the adoption and implementation of the Resolution 1325 of the UN. Women's groups should also receive support in the form of funds and training to further their strengths and capabilities.

6.3.2 CSOs/ Women's Groups Supplement Peacebuilding Efforts

The study has also given credence to the idea that peacebuilding is a multi-track venture, requiring the contributions of stakeholders at all levels of society. As suggested by Lederach (1997), building sustainable peace requires the active participation of all three levels of leadership outlined in the hierarchy of "Actors and Approaches[31]". Grassroots support to

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[31] See Figure 1 on page 39

peacebuilding as demonstrated is not a phantom but a reality. The challenge of getting policies from the national level to the community level is facilitated by the presence of CSOs. As discussed, they are placed between the top and bottom levels and as such, have direct access to both levels.

CSOs also create opportunities for non-state actors to contribute their quota, thereby making peacebuilding a broad-based exercise and more relevant for wider sections of the society. The importance of grassroots peacebuilding initiatives as carried out by CSOs cannot be overemphasised. Governments and societies need the involvement of such organisations in building sustainable peace. As in the case of Ghana, where the state is weak, the contributions of CSOs are very crucial for maintaining peace, especially during election periods and thereafter, a critical in consolidating the democracy in the country.

Similarly, the study is reflective of the notion that CSOs/ women's groups are an essential actor when it comes to local peacebuilding (Accord, 2013). They work directly with the local communities and as such have some form of influence on the people. From the study, we see them as active in organising the youth and equipping them with essential skills needed to work for peace. They are also able to encourage and support interested people to participate in peacebuilding activities when they are most needed, like during election periods.

6.3.3 Including Local Perspectives in Peacebuilding

Analytically, this study has also given support to the idea of including local perspectives in peacebuilding (Futamura & Notaras, 2011). Local perspectives are represented by local actors in the society who contribute to peacebuilding, such as women groups. This is important because these actors, being part of the local communities, tend to be more aware of the issues surrounding them. They provide context-specific information that helps to identify relevant actors and issues in a peacebuilding project (Does, 2013).

Involving local actors in peacebuilding likewise, has the advantage of facilitating ownership of the peace process. As suggested by Donais (2012), peace cannot be forced on the local people. It should rather be fostered through flexible strategies that fit the context under consideration. Such knowledge is offered willingly by the local actors when they are involved in the process of planning peace. This in turn leads to more sustainable methods that are keenly embraced by the local communities.

The study thus agrees that women and women's groups are needed in peacebuilding and that they bring on board invaluable contributions which are needed for sustainable peace to exist.

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APPENDIX

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDES

PART 1: DIRECTOR

1. What were your motivations for setting up this organization?
2. What are your objectives?
3. How do you go work towards achieving your objectives?
4. How many registered members do you have?
5. Why a women's group? Do you work with male counterparts?
6. Why were you involved in the peace process during the 2012 elections?
7. What types of activities did you carry out and why?
8. How did you raise funds to organize your programmes?
9. Who were your participants for the various programmes?
10. How did you recruit them?
11. Were you able to achieve your goals for the period?
12. What were some of the significant outcomes of your involvements?
13. Will you be involved in the coming 2016 general elections peace building and why?
14. Would you do anything differently from how you did it in 2012?

PART 11: STAFF OF ARK FOUNDATION

Section A: Personal data

1. Age Group:
2. Educational Background:
3. Marital Status
4. Employment Position:
5. Place of residence
6. Religion:

Section B:

1. Why are you part of the Ark foundation?

2. What was your occupation before you joined the Ark Foundation?

3. Do you do anything in addition to being part of this organisation?

4. Did you participate in the 2012 elections peace building?

5. If so why? If not, why did you not?

6. What were your fears during the period?

7. How did you contribute personally to achieving the organisation's goals?

8. What did you hope to get out of all that you were involved in?

9. Did you actually get anything from it? If yes, why

10. Will you recommend other women to join the organisation?

11. Will you be a part of the coming 2016 elections peace building and why?

PART 3: FEMALE PEACE ACTIVISTS

Section A: Personal data

1. Age Group:

2. Educational Background:
3. Marital Status:
4. Employment Status:
5. Place of residence:
6. Religion:

Section B: Perspectives on Peace

7. Why are you part of the Ark foundation and not another group?

8. What are some benefits you derive (d) from being a part of the organisation?

9. In your own definition, what do you think peace is?

10. Why did you participate in the 2012 elections peace building?

11. What were your fears during the period?

12. How did you contribute personally to achieving the organisation's goals of promoting peace?

13. What did you hope to get out of all that you were involved in?

14. Will you recommend other women to join the organisation?

15. Will you be a part of the coming 2016 elections peace building and why?