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Master Thesis

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES: HOW WOMEN OF LIBERIA PROTESTED FOR INCLUSION AND PEACE

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Declaration of academic integrity:

I hereby declare that the study presented is based on my research and no other sources than the ones indicated. All thoughts taken directly or indirectly from other sources are properly denoted as   such.

List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CPA	Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LNP	Women and Children Safety Sections of the Liberian National Police
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LWI	Women's Initiative in Liberia
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
U.S.	United States Government
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network
WPS	Women Peace and Security Agenda

Abstract

My thesis examines the following questions: What are the factors limiting women's participation in peace processes? Why is it necessary to include women in peace processes? What is women's specific experience during and after the conflict, and why is it important it reflects them in peace processes? What is the substantive reason for their inclusion? Using the case of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign and depicting their unique position during the conflict I have shown that including women in the early stage of peace processes increases the chances of these issues being addressed throughout all stages of peacebuilding, therefore increase the chances of achieving sustainable and positive peace in once conflicted area or society.

Key words: Women; Gender; Peace; Liberia; Inclusion

Content

Introduction

Throughout history, all stages of processes meant to end conflicts excluded women, regardless of notable roles they take as members of military and armed groups, supporters of combatants, or peace activists. Women often suffer disproportionate effects of conflicts, since they are mostly victims of gender-based violence, rape, and other forms of sexual harassment and violence. Although they make half of the world's population, and research data shows the significant role and positive impact they have in these processes, and international actions, efforts, and legislative framework, women remain under-represented and lack recognition and inclusion in peace processes. The rights and needs of women and girls are an afterthought in peace agreements and their implementation if they consider them at all. Not addressing these issues in formal and informal agreements risks impunity and repetition and poses a threat to achieving sustainable and long-lasting peace.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I will provide a statement of a problem and an overview of the UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions within the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. I will then examine several contextual factors that influence the involvement of women in the peace processes, such as, just to name a few, the attitude of elites, national, regional, and international actors, gender roles, the urgency of the situation. I will also emphasize a specific position of women and girls during the conflict and their rights and needs, as well as disproportionate effects of conflicts on women to drive at the fact that it is necessary to address these violations and unique experience of conflicts in peace agreements and following policies.

In the second chapter, I further examine and stress the reasons and necessity for the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes. There I showcase the benefits and contribution women's meaningful inclusion and participation can have on achieving peace agreement and long-lasting peace. With women's perspectives on peace and conflict in mind, I examine femininity and masculinity, power structures, and role and impact on women in times of conflict. With that in mind, I consult the work of different feminist scholars and policy-makers, as they shed a light on the importance of the feminist perspective to peace and conflict.

In the third chapter, as a good example of the change women can make through their participation in peace processes, I will examine the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign. Through this case study, I write about women who have protested, coordinated meetings with key stakeholders, and provided a forum for women, encouraging them to articulate their collective political and social attitudes openly. This led to the achievement of a peace agreement and ultimately inclusion of women in decision-making processes and positions.

In the conclusion, I present the key findings on the positive impact of meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes. I also underline the set of recommendations and means and for their inclusion based on the examined case study of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign.

My thesis aims to examine the following questions: What are the factors limiting women's participation in peace processes? Why is it necessary to include women in peace processes? What is women's specific experience during and after the conflict, and why is it important it reflects them in peace processes? What is the substantive reason for their inclusion? The hypothesis is that 1) because of different contextual factors, such as gender roles and power structures, women are excluded or under-represented in peace processes; 2) conflicts affect women differently, often disproportionately, than men, which makes them targets of specific types of violence; 3) because of their specific experiences, roles, needs, and rights before, during and after the conflict women prioritize different points on the peace process agenda and taking these into account can contribute to achieving peace agreement and long-lasting peace. Women's participation does not necessarily build upon women's perspectives, but different data have shown that women, more often than men, peruse gender-sensitive political and legal frameworks, such as changes in inheritance laws and healthcare systems, address women's and human rights and gender-based violence that has occurred; push for disarmament, reintegration programs for women and ex-combatants, etc. If we do not include these points, then ceasefire will not lead to cessation of conflict and violence, and this would, in turn, prevent effective and long-term peace. By including women in peace processes, I argue that we increase the chances of these issues being addressed throughout all stages of peacebuilding, therefore increase the chances of achieving and sustaining peace in once conflicted area or society.

I "Where are the women?"

In this chapter I first discuss the problem of women's exclusion from peace processes in most general terms and summarize the UNSCR 1325 and the following resolutions in the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda and the issues they address. After that, I will examine various factors that impact women's participation in peace processes spanning from gender roles to attitudes of the elites. Lastly, I also highlight a variety of roles women take and their unique position, their rights, and needs, as well as the disproportionate effects conflicts, tend to have on women. I also emphasize the importance of addressing these violations and unique experiences in peace agreements and following policies.

1. Women's exclusion from peace processes

For decades women's civil society organizations and movements drew attention to the gendered nature of wars and conflicts. Despite the increased number of conflicts and the consequent increase in the number and scope of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities during the 1990s, narrow military-focused responses flourished, with little to no attention given on addressing the specific needs of women and girls in conflicts. This also led to a lack of a systematic and gendered approach to humanitarian response. During the 1990s and onwards, many conflicts have transformed from inter-state to intra-state, or wars against terrorist organizations. These have affected civilians disproportionately and have proven to be fertile soil for vast violations of human rights and war crimes as they lacked definition under International humanitarian law. As the nature of conflicts has changed, with increasingly civilian targets, the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls has become more worrisome.

Women have also taken part in conflicts, as combatants, supporters of armed groups, caregivers, and in many other roles. They have also endured physical and emotional trauma and loss, they have lost their livelihoods and personal autonomy, as well as suffered from a range of sexual and gender-based violence inflicted not only by combatants but also by peacekeepers. However, despite the unique and complex experience of women and girls during conflicts, women

continued to be marginalized by domestic and international stakeholders and excluded from all phases of subsequent peace processes (United Nations Development Programme 2019, 4).

In 1990, a theorist Cynthia Enloe posed a question: "Where are the women?" since they were invisible not only as subjects and actors of policy and peace accords but also as subjects of theories and studies in the field of international affairs. She focused on dismantling the divisions between international and personal, demonstrating how daily actions of men and women influence and are influenced by global politics, and how these activities, in turn, are based on gendered identities (Smith 2018). However, it is unlikely that we would be able to include women's perspectives because gender-sensitive and gender-segregated data were lacking. As Stone pointed out, the lack of gender-disaggregated data for general indicators of women's equity and empowerment, as well as the difficulty of gathering data about all participants in peace processes, were and remain one of the main barriers to conducting empirical analysis (Stone 2014, 8). The implications of not studying how and why women are (not) involved in peace and security, or more specifically peace processes, has a significant impact on security policies, including how is security defined; who is deemed legitimate or relevant actors in peace negotiations and processes; and who can access the scarce resources during peacebuilding efforts (Ellerby 2013, 437).

For this reason, it became obvious that women's position and interests in the field of peace and security needed to be addressed through both policies and academia. Women's movements hence intensified their attempts to pressure decision-makers to prevent gender-blind responses and approaches to conflicts. By 2000, lobbying and international support to the women's movements resulted in the United Nations Security Council's acknowledgment of women's exclusion from peacemaking and peacebuilding processes, as well as its call for action (United Nations Development Programme 2019, 4).

1. **Women in peace and security**

In 2000, UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 entitled "Women, Peace and Security" emphasizing the importance of women's "equal participation and full involvement

in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security" (Resolution 1325 2000). It supported the idea of the positive effects women can have in the resolution of armed conflicts. UNSCR 1325 also called on countries to address the impacts of conflicts on women and girls around the globe and to systematically include women in peacebuilding efforts, including peace negotiations, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction efforts (United Nations Development Programme 2019, 4-7). The resolution launched the process of gender mainstreaming across all of the UN's institutions, as well as the international community at large. The goal of gender mainstreaming and the Resolution is to ensure that women and their issues and perspectives are well-reflected in all aspects of international policy, especially in the field of international security from which they have traditionally been sidelined.

Since then, UNSCR 1325 has been complemented by additional nine resolutions on women, peace, and security. These have been adopted to solidify the path to women's inclusion as well as to map the unique impact conflicts have on girls and women. Some of these further address impunity, rape, and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence as means of war (Resolution 1820 2008; Resolution 1888 2009; Resolution 1960 2010; Resolution 2106 2013), some address sexual harassment in peacekeeping missions (Resolution 2272 2016), and some emphasize women's role in countering violent extremism and terrorism (Resolution 2242 2015). Sexual and gender-based violence during conflict has for the first time in history been recognized as a "widespread or systematic attack" an act of crime against humanity and an act of genocide by the *Rome Statute* (Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998). It is a political act and is "that sexual violence is the product of gendered power relations" (Davies and True 2015, 497) and is also considered a part of war tactics. However, the violation of the human body, as well as the vulnerability of women and girls, is also pivotal to Resolution 1820, as it "notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide" and "demands the immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians with immediate effect" (Resolution 1820 2008).

Together, these nine UNSCR guide national and international actors on their roles concerning the *Women Peace and Security Agenda* (WPS) through its four pillars: prevention, participation, protection, and relief, and recovery. They stand for prevention of conflict and all forms of

violence against girls and women in conflict and post-conflict context; gender equality and women's equal participation and decision-making processes in peace and security; protection of girls and women from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the protection of their rights in times of conflict. Finally, they aim at relief and recovery, as unique needs of women are met and their capacities to act as agents in relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict context are built (United Nations Development Programme 2019, 5).

As WPS is legally binding to the states signatories of the Charter of the United Nations, it remains central in the field of peace and security on a national and international level. As noted by Shepard, for WPS to fulfill its purpose it is necessary that it is utilized as an effective advocacy tool and that accompanying action plans on the national level are developed (Sheperd 2011, 505). National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security have been developed in over 2/3 of UN member states to set priorities for governmental action of other relevant actors and agencies. To fill in the gap in countries where National Action Plans have not yet been developed, gender-sensitive peace and security objectives have been incorporated into sectoral policies on gender, justice, and national security (United Nations Development Programme 2019, 36).

Despite the efforts, legally binding provisions and normative pressure, women remain underrepresented in peace processes. As shown by textual analysis, only 65% of all 54 agreed peace processes between 1991 and 2014 contain some reference to women and/or gender. Women's participation in peace negotiations was rarely perceived as a natural and obvious part of the process, and frequently it faced opposition (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 18). A woman-focused analysis of different conflicts and peace processes finds that fewer than 10% achieve UNSCR 1325's aim of women's inclusion showing that it is not perceived as important or beneficial for building and achieving long-lasting peace (Ellerby 2016, 1). Often negotiation parties or some mediators still do not recognize the integration of women and gender problems as a required component of the process of resolving and enforcing peace and transition agreements. To understand how to increase women's participation it is also necessary to consider the factors that prevent their participation in the first place.

2. Factors that influence women's inclusion in peace processes

As pointed out by Paffenholz, et al. several contextual factors can prevent or enable women's inclusion or even jeopardize the peace process. Some of them can be the expectations of gender roles, narratives, and attitudes of the elites, public and international support, and other factors (Paffenholz, et al. 2016). I will now try and touch upon some of these factors.

To begin with, women's inclusion can be more or less complex depending on wider social structures and expectations of the roles a woman has to fulfill in society and her ability to participate in politics in general. In patriarchal societies, women's gender identity is mostly perceived as private, domestic, and apolitical in nature. This continues to be an obstacle to women's participation in the public sphere and formal politics, consequently, leading roles, gender-sensitive regulations, and women's rights remain untackled. Gender norms keep women in subordinated positions and limit their potentials in public life (Kassa 2015, 5).

As the public sphere and formal politics have not traditionally been perceived as a "women's place", women's involvement thence has been opposed by conflict groups in several ways, spanning from examining their independence and legitimacy to direct harassment and explicit threats in some situations. In some countries, patriarchy and women's subordination has been supported through laws and legislation and in some movements against women's right have gained great support (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 54), which all affects women's participation in decision-making at all levels, hence the inclusion in peace processes. For example in 2013, in Yemen at the Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference some of the key actors, as well as fundamental religious groups, forced back against women's and youth's calls to reform cultural norms and historical narratives. Gender issues and women's rights were not only heavily debated at the National Dialogue Conference, but female delegates were also openly threatened and harassed and often violently assaulted for attending. There have been accounts of them being called out by name, photographed and labeled as "dishonorable" for attending dialogue sessions alone and at night (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 20). In the case of Uganda, one of the women was even accused of having sexual intercourse with one of the negotiators (Ellerby 2016, 14). Aside from stereotypical conceptions, such behavior and accusation are part of the hurdles that prevent women from participating in decision-making, including peace processes.

Women's inclusion is also affected by gender roles, the division of work, and their socio-economic status. This, in turn, influences the extent of the grassroots participation of local women. Women in rural communities, who might have had suffered from violence, internal displacement, or other effects of a conflict, face additional obstacles when it comes to participation in peace processes. However, they are often burdened with under-paid or un-paid domestic work and often spend six or more hours a day sourcing and gathering resources such as water and wood and conducting other work related to the household. Therefore a women's ability to participate in official political activities, much less informal community-based organizing, is likely to be seriously limited (Sheperd 2011, 551). Moreover, the political engagement of women is primarily dependent on their ability to obtain jobs, which provides them with financial independence, as well as a set of professional skills and increased self-confidence. As a result, women's involvement in political institutions is directly related to and influenced by their access to means of production and financing. Furthermore, women's engagement in the labor market may diminish their dependence on men. Once women are no longer reliant on men, especially in patriarchal societies, they can make political decisions and get involved in politics more freely (Kassa 2015, 4).

These gender roles can also be reinforced through laws, peace agreements, as well UN resolutions we discussed earlier. As noted by Puechguirbal "gender essentialism defines women in three conflating categories – women as vulnerable, women as mothers and women as civilians" (Puechguirbal 2010, 172). Even though they are important from the policy perspective, the UN resolutions tend to primarily represent women in narrow essentialist terms allowing space for male decision-makers to keep them in the subordinated position of a victim, thus further denying their agency. As Whitworth wrote in her studies of post-1325 peacekeeping: "There is no discussion within UN documents of militarism or militarized masculinities or, for that matter, of masculinities more generally" (Ellerby 2013, 442). Moreover, when a distinct section on gender is included, the main body of the documents frequently lacks gender mainstreaming throughout (Puechguirbal 2010, 183). Narrative and discourse that is based on dualisms, where women are perceived as victims, and men as combatants, further translates to another dualism: women as vulnerable require protection, whilst men are the key actors to conflicts and the ones who ought to resolve them. Even international humanitarian law has traditionally prioritized the special needs of mothers over the vulnerabilities which women suffer

due to gender imbalances that had existed in society before and during conflicts. As a result, it is difficult to encourage women to actively participate in peace negotiations or conflict settlement, because they are largely seen as caregivers for the wounded, children, and elderly people affected by conflicts, with limited potential for more dynamic roles (Puechguirbal 2010, 173).

Such perspective deprives women of agency both in the conflict and after it, defines them solely as the object of protection, and ascribes agency only to men. Stereotypes regarding women tend to be exploited to exclude them from the peace negotiations because they did not take part in the battle. Male ex-combatants are characterized as new peacemakers, along with the politicians vetted by predominantly male special envoys or negotiators. They participate as war participants, as soldiers, to address the issues at stake for the reconstruction of post-war society. This misconception has led to exclusion of women from the Chapultepec Peace Agreement in El Salvador, even though women represent 52.9% of the Salvadoran population, 30% of the 13,600 verified combatants of Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, and over 60% of the civilian support to the guerillas during the conflict (Ellerby 2016, 2).

Attitudes and the amount of support of the elites also seem to be one of the defining factors in deciding the success of a peace process. Since economic and political power and control are so closely linked, elites are often close to the government. When inclusive peace processes are aimed at achieving a democratic transformation, they put pressure on existing power structures and jeopardize elites' and conflict parties' access to future governance. Any changes in their status can put that the power structures at risk. This includes modifying the structure of the government and society in a general and improving position of subordinated groups such as women. As a result, these actors' opposition to shifting procedures was shown to be substantial, varying from open to more discreet forms of opposition. Moreover, political elites and parties are reluctant to implement reforms for fear of losing political support and, as a result, political power. They resist reforms that would cause them to surrender authority (Mlambo and Kapingura 2019, 5). Subsequently, when peace processes are less elite-oriented and involve civil society and the general public, their attitudes may have long-term implications on the success of the peace process and women's inclusion in it.

Public support on both local and international levels also can be an asset and determine the success of a peace process. In many cases, the success of a peace process or women's inclusion depends on the existing public narratives, the political climate in a respective country or a region. For this reason, a peace accord needs to achieve more than just an immediate cease-fire, which is usually the main goal, and gain the support of the general population and local people. It is also important that provisions addressing the needs and rights of women and girls, as well as women's inclusion in peace accords, are backboned and do not encounter public resistance. Often the level of public support for the inclusion of women in peace processes can depend on the wider role of women in one society and the gender roles in it, including the perception of what is considered appropriate for women. This is closely intertwined with the gender roles that can be permitting or restrictive for women in post-conflict societies. Also, the general public or specific groups can advocate and demand a different and more inclusive peace process, if that was not how it was conceived in the first place, and create space for the inclusion of traditionally subordinated and marginalized groups in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

International and regional actors can also have a significant role and affect peace processes and their key actors. In many cases countries and organizations such as European Union, Organization for European Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and at times United Nations can influence the outcome of a peace process or the involvement of different actors, including women. Through resolutions and internal procedures, these actors can be very relevant when gender equality and women's participation are in question. Regional and international women's networks can also be a major factor. For instance, between 2003 and 2011, and during the peace process which occurred in Liberia, women's networks were the engines behind mass mobilization organized outside of the premises where peace negotiations took place, in neighboring Sierra Leone. This was mostly possible due to the support of the existing women's network in the region, which was active in Sierra Leone as well. Members of these networks have hosted the women of Liberia and provided them with logistical as well as other sorts of support (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 54). If this kind of support or pressure does not exist it is easier to diminish the role of women in conflicts and their potential to contribute to peace processes.

There are many reasons why some conflict groups and mediators involved certain actors while others were excluded. Civil society organizations and political parties, for example, have been

included for a variety of strategic purposes, the most important of which is to resolve a lack of credibility and secure public support for the broader peace process. Apart from these strategic concerns, mediators who advocated for the inclusion of women did so to build support for peace negotiations, to generate new perspectives to widen dialogue agendas, or to act outside the box. Nonetheless, it seems that mediation teams are increasingly conscious of the international normative structures that demand women's inclusion and involvement in peace negotiations and political transformations and therefore accept it (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 46). However, the number of such teams remains low.

3. Gendered conflict and unique experience of women in times of conflict

Both conflicts and peace mostly focus on the roles men fulfill in their respective societies. They are also mostly focused on males, as human norms are most often presented and deemed as male norms. Likewise, the concept of security is highly gendered, as it primarily focuses on the military components of conflict rather than the experiences of groups of citizens and people, especially minority groups including women. According to such a perspective, peace and security are achieved when guns are laid down and a peace accord is signed between the conflicting sides. In this case, peace is negative as it is based solely on the absence of violence, while it neglects the fact that an end of a conflict does not necessarily bring to an end of violence and inequality. Conflicts are destabilizing, politically and economically crippling, and they deepen the imbalance in power structures. So even when peace is formally achieved, violence or lack of positives peace remains a condition of everyday life for many, including women (Dijkema 2001; Galtung 1996).

The roles of women in conflict and reconciliation are diverse and complex. Women and girls have historically been victims of conflicts, exposed to sexual and gender-based violence and slavery as a part of war tactics. They also tend to make the majority of displaced persons and land mines casualties during and in the aftermath of conflict. In many countries women have been involved in safeguarding their homes and communities, sometimes left to manage domestic life while men are on the battlefield, they are often primary providers and caretakers during conflicts. Just as they take a variety of roles, women can also contribute to peacebuilding in a

variety of ways. Sometimes their efforts can be directed through women's organizations, by holding and exercising power in their families and communities, or by building them by bridging conflictual and cultural divisions in their respective societies. However, they can also be agents of conflict by supporting or fighting alongside armed groups. Finally, depending on the contexts, situations, and possibilities available, they may transition between these roles. Notably, women are not homogenous groups and their needs and positions are not unanimous, for this reason, they should not be perceived solely as victims, mothers, and vulnerable civilians as their role in conflicts is central. This is also why feminist scholars, such as Cohn, Warren, and Cady have pushed for women's perspectives to study conflicts, and identifying the gendered (or, more specifically, women's) perspective to conflicts and peacebuilding processes and their effects on women and girls.

As explained above, politics and war have been for a long time and still are men-dominated spheres. Before a conflict women are less likely to be politically represented and there are not many female leaders, thus women could rarely be directly accountable for war and violence that occurs as men in the decision-making positions. For this reason, Warren and Cady state that patriarchy is the key cause to both outbreaks of violence in different societies, as well as the international community's failures to provide long-term resolution to those violent conflicts (Warren and Cady 1994, 4). Any peacebuilding process that fails to recognize how conflict affects women will be male-centered and will perpetuate the inequality. This is an additional reason why women's position in times of conflict and peace should be well understood and implemented in decision-making.

Women are not more vulnerable per se in times of war, as the position and suffering of women during the war is the consequence of women's subordinate position in most societies, rather than of any intrinsic weakness in particular. They are more vulnerable due to pre-existing inequalities and patterns of discrimination and because of gender roles and marginalized positions that existed before a conflict. These gendered power hierarchies, however, are overlooked in most decision-making processes both in times of peace and conflict and continue to deprive women of their agency. Women's and feminist perspectives enable us to understand that victimization and subordination of women are typically perpetuated and reinforced during conflicts and in peacebuilding processes through existing gender roles, historical-cultural practices, and

economic production patterns (Tickner 1995, 52; Puechguirbal 2010, 173). To prevent them from being reinforced through peacebuilding and subsequent policies, decision-makers need to either be mindful of them or to include women in the decision-making processes.

During a conflict, women's lives can be affected and worsened in many different and notable ways. Perhaps the most frequent way is the increase in sexual and gender-based violence towards women. This type of violence can be conducted by almost all combating parties – rebel groups, members of military forces, insurgents, terrorist organizations, even fellow combatants when women are part of the military groups. As noted by some of the scholars, such as Gagnon, Brass, and Cockburn, such violence reinforces gender stereotypes and disbalance in power in the most primitive and degrading manner. Sexual and gender-based violence can occur for a variety of reasons and it is sadly often considered a natural part of a conflict as it always revolves around dominance and masculinity as the crux of power. Mostly, men rape women as an act of victory, as in traditional and conservative societies women are perceived as their families' or husbands' properties, hence violating women's bodily integrity shows the control over "one's property" (Warren and Cady 1994, 4). This also should signal the men they have failed their masculinity and their duty to protect their women and their property (Puechguirbal 2010, 176) which is the ultimate symbol of their defeat.

The situation can worsen when the state lacks control over a certain part of the territory, or control over military personnel – in addition to the existence of warlord insurgence, terrorist groups, or non-functioning central institutions in charge of protection of civilians and access to justice. Moreover, demobilization of military troops or armed groups can result in a significant number of resentful and armed men wandering local communities and increase the level of violence in them. In those cases sexual and gender-based violence can be sporadic, as well as frequent; it can be a consequence of opportunistic intentions, or a part of political and tactical action (Karam 2000, 10; Davies and True 2015, 506).

The consequence of sexual and gender-based violence can manifest in the forms of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome or through social aspects, such as shame, guilt, and questioning women's sexual morality (Karam 2000, 5). It puts women and girls at a higher risk of unplanned pregnancy, maternal mortality, and morbidity, severe sexual and reproductive injuries, and

contracting sexually transmitted diseases, particularly when access to essential services such as health care, including sexual and reproductive health services, is disrupted (UN Human Rights). Sexually transmitted diseases can also negatively affect women's reproductive health. Sometimes sexual violence can be lethal for women, when they get infected with HIV/AIDS or when they are victims of femicide – women's lives are sometimes taken due to the stigma survivors of sexual violence face in more conservative societies. Moreover, during conflict and after it, prosecution of perpetrators, support to victims or the re-establishment of functional health facilities and essential services are often under-prioritized and rarely available (Pankhurst 2003, 168). Including women's perspectives in peacebuilding and processes of re-building post-conflict societies allows them to recover from the trauma and amplify their voices. When women are not supported and empowered to break the stigma and tell their stories of sexual violence perpetrators tend to enjoy impunity.

Even though women and girls are to larger extent subjects to sexual and gender-based violence, men and boys can also fall victims to it. In some cases, especially in ethnic conflicts, boys and men are targeted for gender-selective executions to eliminate the resistance of certain ethnical groups, as well as to eliminate future generations of combatants (Pankhurst 2003, 167). Sexual assault may also be used to undermine their manhood, agency, and political identity (Davies and True 2015, 502). This shows how masculinity remains in the center of power relations and violence that occurs.

After a conflict, levels of violence also tend to spike in society as a whole. In these kinds of circumstances, due to disruptions in family and social-economic structures, gender-based violence, domestic violence, and trafficking are on the rise (Karam 2000, 5; UN Human Rights). Additionally, the residue of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade can contribute to the level of gender-based and domestic violence, as the research data indicates that the presence of guns "increases the risk of a lethal outcome for women within the domestic context" (SEESAC 2018, 10). In almost all post-conflict societies women rarely own small arms and light weapons, and rarely misuse them, but are disproportionately and more often affected as they find themselves in the role of a victim. This means men still hold weapons after conflicts and use them as means of dominating women and putting them at risk. This further perpetuates the power disbalance and reinforces it. Even with the empirical data on the causes of gender-based and

domestic violence indicating that these forms of violence are on the rise, women and their issues are rarely perceived as security concerns in post-conflict societies (Pankhurst 2003, 160). The reason for this is that domestic violence is often believed to be a private and family matter and is not a question of the security of one state or community. This only raises a question to which extent are post-conflict societies peaceful and safe for women.

Moreover, the absence of men, whether they are on the battlefield, missing or deceased, leads to the shift of social responsibilities from men to women which puts an additional burden on them. They not only fulfill women's traditional roles, such as water gathering and distribution, food production, and taking care of survivors and children, as their primary role as caregivers would be, but also they take on the roles usually assigned to men. They are forced to seek alternative sources to ensure the livelihoods of their families. In these circumstances, it is not only their responsibility to be breadwinners but to maintain the social and political life in their communities. Sometimes women turn to heavy labor and sometimes they are once again exposed to sexual exploitation as some of them engage in prostitution to be able to fulfill their newly assigned roles – to provide and make the ends meet (Nikolic-Ristanovic 2003).

Regardless of the roles the women take, humanitarian workers and representatives of the international community still neglect them when it comes to the allocation of humanitarian aid because the execution of gender equality policies and strategies has not been properly incorporated into the delivery of humanitarian aid. The women might be externally or internally displaced or residing in the conflict-affected areas, but humanitarian aid is usually being first allocated to men as they are traditionally perceived as the head of the families. Also, women tend to be neglected due to a variety of factors – being considered a lower priority, discrimination on a gender basis, or other factors. Refugee and internally displaced women are one of the world's most vulnerable groups, due to a variety of issues such as gender-based discrimination in access to resources, education, and employment, inadequate reproductive health care, and exclusion from decision-making processes. When relevant actors fail to distribute humanitarian aid to women properly it can additionally hamper women's political, economic, and social position and deepen the existing inequalities (SIDA 2015, 1-3; Government of Canada 2020, 12).

To fully grasp this variety of roles, it is important to include this perspective as well and the body of accounts that showcase women's involvement and sustainment of a conflict. When they do not take an active role on the battlefields, women can contribute to war efforts. For example, "Muslim women have used their all-enveloping veils to secure their anonymity and also to hide the arms and ammunition that they carry for the fighters" (Afshar 2003, 181). Even then they comply with the gender roles and duties assigned to them, such as wearing veils, to support the conflicts. The analysis of war in former Yugoslavia, as well as research on nationalist movements around the world, support this statement as they demonstrate how motherhood and caring can be used as an integral part of nationalist mobilization and recruitment, and how women were forced to become the archive of nationalist identity construction (Weber 2006, 10). It is also necessary to be aware of crimes committed by women and their impunity. However, there is a tendency, even among feminist scholars, to depict female fighters as exceptions (Weber 2006, 7).

As already noted above, during an armed conflict, all social and institutional structures are disrupted and gender norms alleviated (Dijkema 2001). Many women have accepted these shifts as moments of emancipation from the old and perhaps fixed social order and structure. By taking these numerous roles, women were sometimes able to make a shift in power structures. Before a conflict women's lives are mostly fixed to reproduction and the private sphere. Since women were forced to take the roles of breadwinner within their families it enabled them to learn new skills and gain social, economic, and political influence and independence, and sometimes they have managed to obtained positions of authority. Moreover, albeit rarely, women who have taken a more active role in the conflict, such as nurses, fighters, or other roles, have been able to take a stance and advocate within their professional and political movements for the improvement of women's position and human rights in general (Pankhurst 2003; Puechguirbal 2010; Dijkema 2001; Karam 2000; Afshar 2003). These experiences, which come at a tremendous cost, could also serve as strong foundations for women's full participation in any post-conflict imagining and constructing of peace.

That is why it is important not to neglect the women in peacebuilding processes, and to use to momentum when they are, perhaps for the first time, gaining visibility, independence, and influence in the public sphere. When this momentum is not used effectively, many situations can

prevent women's empowerment and lead to undermining their position. Often after conflict women are expected to go back to their traditional roles, back to their roles of wives and mothers, and back to the private sphere. This means there is no longer a need for them to participate in political life or to fill in the position in the military or other fighting groups. This translates into them taking a subordinate role in peacebuilding processes, as they are rarely prioritized in the peace agenda and when resources are being distributed. They are rarely offered roles in emerging governments after a conflict. For these reasons and according to several studies, women remain socially, politically, and economically marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable to violence even with the onset of peace (Karam 2000, 12; Pankhurst 2003, 154).

As Turshen argues "men reassert control through political violence: in the aftermath of conflict, men overlook women, discount women's powers to resolve conflict, under-use women's ability to mobilize communities for reconstruction, and even remove women from leadership positions" (Puechguirbal 2010, 181). Women's participation in peace processes is hampered in part by their "invisible roles" and a lack of awareness of their position during times of conflict. Given how women typically keep communities functioning throughout conflicts, formal recognition of their already essential role in preserving day-to-day life should be regarded as critical to achieving long-term peace. A key concern is the lack of evidence-based understanding regarding the various modalities of women's engagement and their impact on peace and other processes of political transformation. This might be because their involvement has been perceived as insignificant, as they are not recognized as combatants in armed conflicts. These are deemed central and most significant roles, while other supporting roles usually filled by women are considered marginal.

While it is common for men to transition from breadwinners to combatants, the transition of women between the positions of housewives and combatants is almost unimaginable. Such a shift may pave the way for equality, but it also has the potential to undermine a woman's position in a society. Those few women who get to positions of leadership frequently can feel vulnerable or are under the pressure to constantly demonstrate their dedication and fearlessness and, in the end, the right to sustain gained rights and freedom (Afshar 2003, 180). Furthermore, women are frequently excluded from peace discussions and agreements, which instead on the general public and marginalized groups, focuses on key elite actors who are predominantly male, and typically

former members of the military or combating forces (Smith 2018). For these reasons, women must be visible as community leaders, military leaders, police commanders, and personnel in male-dominated spheres such as the military during and after the conflict.

For this reason and to better understand why is it important to include women's perspectives we also have to understand the feminist or women's perspective to conflict. There is no armed conflict in which women have not participated, either by supporting conflict or peace. "Seeing these sorts of ways women fit in means making visible what is often invisible or undervalued, namely, the full extent of women's roles and participation in social structures" (Warren and Cady 1994, 4). The field of peace and security has still so much to gain from recognizing and including women's perspectives. Decision-makers should start by including their unique position and experiences in the body of analysis but they should also be aware of the disbalance in power relation and gender inequality as it is by itself a "form of violence which contributes to the insecurity of all individuals" (Tickner 1995, 18).

The lack of analysis and recognition of the underlying (social) roots of violence also allows for peace accords to be reached at the level that leaves key causes of violent conflict and inequalities unaddressed. Negative peace can thus be reached by accepting worse conditions for marginalized groups, including women, in a desperate attempt to stop the armed conflict. Galtung's alternative vision of constructive peace necessitates not only the reduction or elimination of all forms of violence but also the elimination of the primary potential sources of future conflict. To put it another way, serious conflicts of interest must be handled, as well as their violent manifestations. Positive peace entails a vision of how society should be, but the specifics of this vision are frequently left unspoken and rarely articulated. An engaged and equitable civil society, inclusive democratic political institutions and procedures, and transparent and responsible government are some of the ideal features of a society that is enjoying peace o its full extent (Pankhurst 2003, 156; Galtung 1996). Such a vision of peace also entails equality between men and women which could only be achieved through the inclusion of women and their perspective and skills into peacebuilding processes.

In order to emphasize the importance of addressing these violations and unique conflict experiences in peace agreements and following policies in this chapter, I indicated the problem

of women's exclusion from peace processes and I have summarized UNSCR 1325 and following resolutions in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Also, I provided an overview of the contextual factors that affect women's participation in peace processes, including elite attitudes, national, regional, and international actors, gender roles, the urgency of the situation, and other factors. Lastly, I provided an insight into the unique position of women and girls during the conflict, their rights, and needs, as well as the disproportionate effects conflicts, have on women. In the following chapter, I further examine and stress the necessity for the meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes and showcase the benefits and contribution it.

II Women's meaningful inclusion and participation

In this chapter, I will further examine and highlight the necessity for the inclusion of women in peace processes. With women's perspectives on peace and conflict in mind, I examine femininity and masculinity, power structures, and role and impact on women in times of conflict. I consult the work of different feminist scholars and policy-makers, as they shed a light on how masculinity and femininity shape the field of peace and security and why is it important to include a feminist perspective in it. I also showcase examples of women's efforts that led to the improvement of women's rights, as well as the means of their participation in peace processes.

1. The feminist perspective that differs

I will begin this chapter with a quote from Cohn. "Women, of course, are not a monolithic group, but instead individuals whose identities, options, and experiences are shaped by factors including their age, economic class, race, clan, tribe, caste, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, physical ability, culture, geographic location, state citizenship, and national identity, and their positioning in both local and global processes" (Cohn 2012, 2). As I have already elaborated in the previous chapter, women's perspective is necessary for comprehending the settings in which that experience comes about, the complexity of interconnected systems, relationships, processes, and intersectionality that make up the circumstances in which women live and act. This leads to very distinct priorities and needs. For this reason, if we do not properly understand what causes inequalities we are in jeopardy of falling short and reproducing them through peace treaties and policies.

Male policymakers tend to believe that peace negotiations are not the right platform for the discussion of women's rights, needs, and positions, as they are not representing the broader public. They also believe that peace treaties and processes are gender-neutral. Regardless of this perception, the reality is that peacebuilding processes are highly gendered, and the overrepresentation of powerful male actors typically reinforces gendered power hierarchies and inequities. If peace negotiations serve as a forum for these inequities to be reproduced, they may also be re-envisioned as places where these dynamics can be addressed by shifting who gets to

participate, who gets left out, and whose concerns are prioritized (Rahimi 2020). Moreover, the volume of data suggests that women are not key actors in the majority of peace negotiations, and it is worth considering if this leads to their marginalization from the official plan designed for future peacebuilding processes specified in peace accords (Anderlini 2008, 112-116). Women's issues have been reported to be disregarded by policymakers or, at best, relegated to second-class. The typical argument has been that in times of crisis, "the interests of the nation" must take precedence over women's issues and issues of a specific group of citizens. This allows space for us to pose the question - why women's issues are not essential to the concept of the nation's concerns as a whole. In reality, there is no agreement on how to define national goals in a way that takes into consideration the inequalities in power distribution between and among men and women (Karam 2000, 8).

These omissions may be seen in women's exclusion from decision-making as well as the belief that the reality of women's daily life is unaffected by the consequent conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Although not all women are peaceful, many of them are committed to peace as it has enabled them to survive conflicts, which contributed to their disproportionate suffering and subordination (Afshar 2003, 10). According to a feminist perspective underlined in the work of Warren and Cady, it is the patriarchal frameworks and behaviors that reproduce systems of domination such as sexism, racism, classism, and warism and the coercive dominance over institutions and practices. Hence, no peace is achieved until these patriarchal frameworks are acknowledged as they underpin and perpetuate conflict and are reinforced through conflict resolution strategies (Warren and Cady 1994, 4). For this reason, feminists offer an alternative to a men-centered, masculine approach to peace since it is heavily intertwined with dominance, control, hierarchy authority, and violence (Kwon 2013, 224).

Moreover, feminism and peace share a key conceptual link: both are dedicated to the abolition of the coercive privilege systems of dominance as a foundation for equal relations between different individuals and groups, including men and women. As a result, both feminist critique and feminist efforts to develop a particular peace policy are ultimately a critique of unjust dominance structures against all marginalized groups, including those against women (Warren and Cady 1994, 4-5). This is particularly important when it comes to peace and security agendas and policies, as they are deeply rooted in sustaining and securing "symbolic mobilization of gender

identities, roles, and bodies, in the service of the new polity". During conflicts, ideologies do not vanish; they are simply temporarily diminishing. As Basch states "'in the effort to protect, revive and create nations", emerging post-conflict states typically reconstitute nationalism that often depends on patriarchy and control over women, which then becomes central to peace-building processes as well (Afshar 2003, 185).

As peace goes hand in hand with the notion of national security, we should also be mindful of how masculinity influences decision-making in this field. The concept of gender shapes and restrains security policy. This concept is profoundly rooted in national security discourse, as they underpin perception of what keeps us secure and what defines "logical," "self-evident," and "practical" security policy and where strengths are perceived as masculine and weaknesses as feminine. As Cohn argues "many of our assumptions and beliefs about which security policies will be effective arise from a series of gendered ideas about how to most effectively exercise power, what it means to be "strong" and what "works" to keep us secure" (Cohn 2019, 8). Often these "logical" and "realistic" policies are detrimental to political, economic aspects as well as influence women. Even with this precaution they still aim to make options of positive peace and those that would provide a better condition for the general population appear weak, timid, defensive, and insufficient. "For instance, our dominant culture encodes rationality, dispassion, objectivity, invulnerability, independence, courage, aggression, and risk-taking (to name but a few!) as *masculine*, while encoding emotion, empathy, subjectivity, vulnerability, dependence, passivity, caution, intuition and nature as *feminine*" (Cohn 2019, 9).

Cohn also examines connections between masculinity and masculine language and peace and security. In her work, she suggests that thinking and deciding within a "masculinity box" shrinks the space and options leaders would make about military strategies, as well as that it influences the decisions made within a country. This prevents decision-makers from approaching and considering security in a broader, more inclusive, and practical sense. She also argues that this limits the ability to consider peace and security policy more comprehensively and that it shapes and limits the possible outcomes of peace negotiations and processes. It is difficult for anyone involved in national security planning to express "feminine" ideas, such as a preference for negotiation over coercive threats if they want to maintain their credibility (Tickner 1995, 49). Unfortunately, as Smith examines, feminist theory has shown, not only that peace and security

but a broader sphere of international relations are gendered. It is necessary to recognizing and then question preconceptions about masculine and feminine gender roles, which further define what women and men should or can accomplish in global politics including in the field of peace and security (Smith 2018).

Moreover, according to Peterson, policies that ignore women's specific needs and disregard the way in which the state has historically structured security, contribute to the reproduction and reinforcement of inequalities, including gender hierarchies and lack of positive peace, reinforce structural violence against which states claim to protect their citizens. The feminist analysis allows us to envision more secure societies in which these various forms of domination can be mitigated or even eliminated because feminists believe those gender systems of dominance and subordination are not fixed but rather constructed through socialization, and perpetuated through unjust political, social, and economic structures. We may explore innovative methods to alter the oppressive systems (and structures within which these behaviors are positioned) by recognizing the intersectionality between various forms of dominance. New ideas about comprehensive security and peace, such as those provided by different feminist scholars and policymakers push us to look at structures and individuals other than the state and national security as possible security providers (Tickner 1995, 50).

2. Necessity of inclusion

There are several key arguments pertaining to women's political representation: the justice argument, the symbolic argument, the critical mass argument, and the democracy argument. The justice argument builds upon the fact that women make up about half of the population and contends that they have the right to be proportionally represented. According to this argument, they should be included based on their personhood. Moreover, full and equal participation of both men and women in political decision-making creates a balance that more accurately reflects society's composition, and as a result, political processes may gain legitimacy by becoming more democratic and responsive to the concerns and perspectives of all or majority of social groups.

Women should also be included based on their experience, as explained in the previous chapter. Because women's experiences differ from men's, they must be included in peace negotiations and

processes that lead to policies and their implementation. Because of these differences, women also tend to "do politics" differently than men. This argument highlights that men's and women's interests differ and sometimes rencontre and that women are needed in representative institutions to articulate women's particular interests. The symbolic argument states that every female politician and leader acts as a role model for all women, regardless of political views or party membership. When women attain specific levels of representation, the critical mass argument argues, they can develop solidarity of purpose to promote women's interests (Kassa 2015, 3; Mlambo and Kapingura 2019, 2-10). However, they do not necessarily possess any additional qualities or deliver a specific virtue to the table. Also, women filling in the leading positions does not necessarily mean better representation of women or their rights. It is critical to highlight that a woman's engagement in peace processes, and politics in general, should not be seen as just advocating for women's rights. Women's rights could and should be raised by both women and men. Equal participation means that a woman's thoughts and concerns should not be limited by her right to be present (Taylor 2018).

Finally, the democracy argument claims that equal representation of women and men improves government democratization in both transitional and stable democracies. In short, many development policies have failed because they have disregarded gender and other perspectives, and it has become obvious, owning to feminist scholars and policy-makers, that if gender and women's perspective is taken into consideration, considerably greater success may be achieved. Stable institutions require the inclusion and participation of a wider population. Lack of women's representation indicates deep systematic injustice which may incite turmoil. Negative peace can be achieved without taking women's perspectives into account, however positive peace cannot. A peace that is supported and consolidated at the grassroots level is more likely to last, but a peace negotiated only among the elite and without the participation of the mass of people is more likely to cause volatility. Several instances show that women's initiatives have a strong track record of good influence at the grassroots and local government levels (Karam 2000, 12; Pankhurst 2003, 163). By organizing closed-door informal gatherings that exclude women, male political leaders, for example, have undermined democratic decision-making procedures. The absence of a collective voice, on the other hand, restricted women's ability to wield influence. The presence of women in a decision-making forum can be used to legitimize the policies put forward by that forum when the women there have been openly or implicitly excluded

throughout the debate and have been able to contribute little or nothing to its eventual conclusion (Sheperd 2011, 509).

Women can speak on their behalf and offer solutions and also voice out their interest in building peace at the family and the community level (ZOA 2020). When given space, women and women's organizations are likely to advocate for gender-awareness provision to be included in peace negotiations. When present, women often have continuously campaigned for comprehensive gender-awareness frameworks and provisions. These frameworks and regulations were also essential in conflict and post-conflict contexts for meeting the unique needs of disadvantaged groups in those societies. Importantly, peace initiatives with women's participation were more likely to effectively address and enforce these concerns than processes without women's participation. (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 25). This is because women, according to Hanan Ashrawi, represent the desire to communicate openly about the most difficult topics, rather than avoiding or being entangled in bureaucratic reasoning. Indeed, in South Africa, for example, this integration resulted in a slew of national institutions, procedures, and regulations that, to the best of their abilities, ensure gender equality and sensitivity across the board. As a result of these aims, it is evident that women's participation in conflict resolution and management procedures is critical to resolving or redressing the effects of conflict (Karam 2000, 11).

Significant empirical evidence shows the necessity and benefits of including women in all aspects of establishing and maintaining peace. According to an International Peace Institute analysis of 182 signed peace accords between 1989 and 2011, including women in peace processes increases the likelihood of a 15-year or longer peace deal by 35%. Evidence suggests that women involved in peace processes are more concerned with reconciliation, economic growth, education, and transitional justice than with the spoils of war — all important aspects of a long-term peace (Lindborg 2017; Profeta 2017, 36-36). Women's involvement in politics advances the development of gender equality by influencing the range of policy concerns, as well as the sorts of solutions suggested. It is about the things women tend to focus on that contribute to sustainability. It is those "small and insignificant" aspects that make the daily lives of the people in one society.

In their study, Moosa et al (2013, 457) concluded that, despite regional, cultural, and socioeconomic variations, there was a significant difference in how men and women define peace. This is crucial to consider when thinking about ways in which women's participation affects peace-building processes and outcomes. If men and women give different meanings to "peace", their approaches to achieving peaceful goals will be different as well. According to Moosa et al and other studies, men emphasized negative peace, concentrating on the lack of formal conflict and insecurity at the community, regional, and national levels, as well as the stability of formal systems including governing institutions, the judicial system, and infrastructure. Women, on the other hand, were more concerned with peace on a local level and in the private sphere, with a focus on family and community needs, such as domestic peace, child education, and the realization of individual rights and freedoms (Remenyi 2016; Pepera 2018).

There is other numerous empirical evidence that supports the findings from these studies. In Colombia, the United States Institute of Peace started a project in 2015 to assist a network of women peacebuilders and women-led groups devoted to nonviolence and mediation. This network, which included people from all walks of society, aided the formal peace process once it got underway. Local ceasefires were arranged by women's groups with armed factions, and hostages were released. They put pressure on rebels to remove barriers and documented breaches of human rights. They protested against the local governments' financial priorities and demanded answers to drug trafficking and other criminal activities (Lindborg 2017). Accountability, human rights protection, and economic growth, care for children and housing are all key aspects of avoiding conflicts and consolidating peace, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It's worth noting that efforts that reflect these features are almost often led by women's groups (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 25).

Gender equality and domestic violence (as well as human rights) are regarded as "soft" concerns in contrast to the "hard" or actual issues of military security. As a result, this notion of peace does not prioritize women's safety (Smith 2018). O'Rourke recognizes that "feminist security studies are an essential corrective to the male bias that influences nations and international organizations" (Wibben 2014, 749). To challenge the existing male-centered approach more people and groups should be considered and represented. For this reason, women's organizations frequently advocated for increased participation of women in the peace process, particularly

during the negotiating and implementation stages. Women's rights activists fought hard to increase women's participation in a wide range of processes, most notably by demanding gender quotas, Women's groups' strength was demonstrated on several occasions in guarantees of women's participation not only during the peace process but also in post-conflict/post-agreement government structures, ranging from increased participation in negotiations to mandatory roles in legislative assemblies, inclusive councils, or legislatures (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 24).

For example, women's groups in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Sierra Leone developed and implemented action plans that included education, advocacy, rehabilitation, research, and training for women to make a living and participate in conflict resolution at various levels (Karam 2000). Moreover, women in South Africa had a key part in defining the country's constitution and the institutions that would outline and serve to implement their goals. Ugandan women also guaranteed that they had access to specialized institutions and services that would and do address women's unique needs and demands. In both South Africa and Uganda, a specialized and institutionalized system has been established to ensure that national budgets are "gender screened" to make them "gender-friendly". Ugandan women and civil society shaped the agreement during talks with the Lord's Resistance Army, ensuring that health and education were prioritized in the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; establishing a compensation fund for victims; and defining a "ceasefire" to include combatants' halting gender-based violence. The discussions were heavily impacted by women. Although only two women were actively involved in the formal peace discussions, one was extremely active in ensuring that women's issues were addressed.

Gender-sensitive suggestions were also proposed at the negotiation table by women civil society leaders in Guatemala's Assembly of Civil Society (ACS), supporting a more broadly inclusive approach. Women's groups in Guatemala included several themes essential to their advancement into the peace agreement. Equal access to land, credit, and economic assets, as well as health care, education, and training were among the concerns addressed. Also, the peace accord recognizes women's rights to a paid employment, eliminates legal discrimination, and makes sexual harassment punishable, in addition to creating new institutions to encourage women's political involvement. Sudanese women peacemakers, for example, advocated for the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement to include humanitarian, social, and economic matters. They

emphasized the need to attend to the suffering of conflict-affected individuals, notably refugees and displaced persons (Karam 2000, 12-15; The Institute for Inclusive Security 2009, 2-5).

After considerable advocacy, persuading, pushing, and sheer presence, the Women's Initiative in Liberia (LWI) engaged in peace negotiations. The lobbying for a new unit for women and children inside the Ministry of Planning was one of the outcomes of their involvement within the process. They also persuaded the Ministry of Education to implement the "Each One Teach One" mass literacy campaign for women and girls. A member of the LWI went on to become the Liberian Minister of Education, and several of her colleagues are now members of the Liberian Legislature (Karam 2000; Sherman 2020). For Liberia, this was one of the crucial aspects for the development of the country as according to George Kronnisanyon Werner, Former Education Minister of Liberia since years after the conflict 35% of young women and 21% of young men have not been able to read a single sentence and only 39% of women in the country had finished elementary school. Also, many Liberian schools were destroyed and many teachers have lost their lives as a result of the civil war the education budget was severely restricted in one of the world's poorest countries (Werner 2017).

3. Means of inclusion

For women to be able to bring their perspective and encourage these unique changes they first and foremost need to be included. In order to understand women's inclusion in the peace process, we need to understand the concept of inclusion. Here I will be referring to the modalities outlined in Ellerby's *Processes, (En)gendered Security? The Complexities of Women's Inclusion in Peace.* The first modality she mentions is by direct decision-makers when they fill in the position of power and authority and can directly make strategic decisions. Incorporation is the second type of inclusion, and it refers to how women are integrated into existing bureaucratic and peacebuilding structures but not in positions of authority and decision-making. Incorporation practices address the absence of women in peacebuilding and government tasks on a day-to-day basis and tackle their lack of involvement in existing institutions. The third type of inclusion is protection which emphasizes the importance of violence, discrimination, and women's rights. Regulations addressing direct forms of violence, such as physical harm and sex-based

discrimination, as well as language addressing structural violence, limited access to economic, legal, or social resources fall into this category. Recognition is the ultimate level of inclusion, and it highlights provisions that call for understanding women's perspectives and needs throughout policy development (Ellerby 2013, 147-151).

In order to make any of these goals attainable during the difficult period of re-establishing peace after a conflict, the crucial step is the early involvement of women in the peacebuilding processes, as it is a process that is especially formative for the character, priorities, and orientation of the state. It is thus critical that women, as equal stakeholders in the state, have the right to equal and meaningful representation during this critical phase. Peace negotiations should be seen as part of a broader peacebuilding process since they serve to construct and determine the impact of peace procedures on state formation and can also be used as a platform to address existing inequalities. Excluding women from these processes is especially harmful because it denies them the right to assert claims as equal actors in the state's political, economic, social sphere, and to have their say in how and to whom scarce resources are to be allocated in the post-conflict communities (Rahimi 2020). Inclusion is paramount since women's involvement throughout the process has frequently set the foundation for long-term women's participation in negotiations and implementation. However, when they are not they tend to be neglected and excluded throughout the entire process. Finally, the disposition and competence of mediators, knowledge of the role and value of women, their aptitude for gender issues, can have a major impact on women's inclusion, both in terms of enabling and supporting their presence and influence. (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 46-47).

Women involved in peace negotiations can be part of formal negotiating teams or they can have their own women-led teams. Women had a much better chance of exerting power at the negotiating table when they had their women-only delegation and/or were willing to strategically organize other women across delegations to enhance shared goals – by formulating joint positions on key issues and/or by forming unified women's coalitions across structured delegations. A good way to express women's interests in negotiations is through women's agendas. Ellerby defines women's agenda as a set of defined and commonly written provisions and priorities offered to relevant parties. A women's agenda outlines when and how women should be engaged in peacebuilding initiatives, ranging from representation in government and

transitional bodies to requests for legislative reforms (Ellerby 2016, 8). Women's perspectives were also far more likely to be heard and acknowledged when they formed coalitions, gathered around shared causes, and negotiated as a single party. In cases examined by Paffenholz, et al. it has been shown that women had to overcome their differences in order to retain some cohesion, which was not surprising given that distinct women's groups had complicated and differing political goals to begin with. Often women leaders, both from within the country and from abroad, notably powerful women mediators, aided in the formation of coalitions and the resolution of dividing disputes. As a result, women's coalitions were given the authority to offer concrete recommendations and ideas, the vast majority of which were incorporated into final peace accords. (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 41-42)

Women can win their seats at the negotiating table through informal means. The conventional "negotiating table" may be composed of numerous entry points, allowing for various types of women's representation to coexist. Women can take the role of observers that may be recruited to operate as watchdogs, provide informal counsel to mediators, negotiate between conflict parties when needed, and build alliances with other observer organizations to aid in the final agreement. Included groups might utilize their observer position to impose normative and/or political pressure to conflict parties, as well as lobby for the inclusion of new issues on the negotiating table. However, only a few women are usually able to participate as observers and in those cases, they have less control over the process. In Liberia (2003), women observers were only successful when they actively cooperated with a large women's community outside of the negotiations (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 44; The Institute for Inclusive Security 2009, 4).

When women are not included through the formal means they can organize in mass actions and protest for their right and opportunity to be included in the peace negotiations and the ensuing peace processes. Large crowds are mobilized by citizens' mass action, which usually takes the form of street marches and public protests. As global events over the last decade have demonstrated, mass action remains a very powerful instrument of democratic pressure on established powers and elites, including elected political elites, particularly when combined with social media and mass media, such as live satellite broadcasts of mass movements. The bulk of mass action can be driven by grassroots, bottom-up dynamics and is aimed at achieving a common national goal, such as democratic reforms to end authoritarian rule, the end of the war

and armed conflict, and/or the negotiation of a peace treaty. Women have mobilized and carried out mass action demonstrations in endorsement of peace accords more than any other group. Women also placed significant pressure on conflict parties to begin negotiations and sign peace treaties. In a few cases, women's organizations have used mass action to effectively persuade mediators and negotiation parties to provide them with more formal representation (Paffenholz, et al. 2016, 35-37; Goishabib 2019).

To once again emphasize the importance of women's participation in peace processes in this chapter I discussed the benefits and contributions that women's meaningful involvement and engagement can have to the achievement of long-term peace. I examined notions of femininity and masculinity and power structures. With this in mind, I referenced the work of many feminist scholars and policymakers, as they shed light on the significance of the feminist perspective in terms of peace and conflict. For this reason in the next chapter, as a good example of the change women can make through their participation in peace processes, I will examine the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign. Through this case study, I will discuss how these women protested, coordinated meetings with key stakeholders, and provided a forum for other women, encouraging them to articulate their collective political and social attitudes openly. This led to the achievement of a peace agreement and ultimately inclusion of women in decision-making processes and positions.

IV Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign

In this chapter, I will attempt to demonstrate how the unique experience of women and their inclusion in peace processes can be beneficial for achieving sustainable peace. To do so I will give a brief overview of Liberia's two civil wars, with an emphasis on the second one, which was concluded by a peace agreement – the last one that occurred in Liberia to this day. Women from the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) played a particularly important role in protesting and pressuring warlords and Charles Taylor, former president of Liberia to sign a peace agreement, bringing the fighting to an end. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, Ghana in 2003. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's contribution I will also turn upon women's achievements and share women's efforts to achieve equality following the signing of the peace agreement.

When it comes to women's inclusion there were more modalities of inclusion in peace processes in Liberia, as women have participated through both formal and informal means. However, in my work, I will focus on WIPNET's Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement as it was the grassroots peace activism initiative that generated women's individual and collective political agency. Women of the movement have shown a great eagerness to end the conflict and to be included in the peace processes even outside of the formal mechanisms of political participation. It also showcases how women were able to bridge the differences in their religions and ethnicities, as well as use social constructs and gender norms to call for action and demand for peace.

1. Context and conflict

Liberia was formed in 1847 by African-American slaves who had been liberated and repatriated. For almost a century, this small group of Americo-Liberians, that now make up less than 2% of the population represented the elite of the country and held political power. From the end of US colonization in 1847 through 1980, they held political authority in Liberia, establishing themselves as superior to the native indigenous Liberians. However, the population was made

out of a variety of ethnic groups such as the Kpelle (20.3%), Bassa (13.4%), Grebo (10.0%), Gio (8.0%), and Mano (7.9%). Liberians also practice and were divided based on different religions where around 86% of the Liberian population are Christian, while 12% are Muslim (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 2). From the very establishment of the country such a divided community and exclusionary character of the Liberian government provided the socio-cultural setting and fertile soil for the two waves of armed conflict.

As an indigenous Liberian, Samual Doe conducted a coup d'état and took control of the government in 1980. He was the first indigenous Liberian to hold authority, and he enjoyed support from the United States at first. However, once in control and once it came to appointing key political and military positions in the government, he prioritized his own ethnic Krahn group, as well as the Mandingo to a lesser extent. He also filled in the military with individuals from Krahn ethnic group. Also, after growing oppressive and corrupt, his government was beset by counter-coup attempts and lost international support. In 1985, a coup attempt against Doe headed by the Gio was met with violence that involved the deaths of hundreds of Gio and Mano people. Charles Taylor, Doe's opponent, used it as an opportunity to create legitimacy in both the 1980 coup and the creation of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Taylor, who wanted to gain political leadership, used it to recruit individuals from Gio and Mano ethnic groups, who had suffered greatly under Doe's dictatorship, into his NPFL. To gain their support, they were promised jobs, money, and privilege, revenge on their deceased relatives, and a new era of democracy (Klay Kieh Jr. 1992). From here the historical discourse of exclusion between Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians had firmly shifted to inter-ethnic conflict (The Institute for Inclusive Security 2009, 2; Boulton 2019; Nilsson 2009, 17).

The armed conflict that erupted in 1989 lasted until Charles Taylor, who was both a warlord and the leader of NPFL, was elected president in 1997 with 75% of votes. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, who was later elected the first female Liberian president was one of the presidential contenders that were defeated. Some believe that one of the reasons for Taylor's remarkable victory was public concern that if he lost the elections, he would return to war. Moreover, while there were also accusations of electoral irregularities, foreign observers considered the elections to be generally free and fair (Nilsson 2009, 18). The peace was short-lasting, lasting just two years as it became clear that Taylor was oppressive. Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)

and rebelled against him in 1999, with the assistance of soldiers from neighboring Guinea, triggering the second Liberian Civil War which lasted until 2003. Taylor's control of power was supported by his key involvement in the Sierra-Leone Blood Diamond trade, which provided him with significant power and resources. Moreover, proxy Cold War dynamics, the resource curse linked with Liberia's enormous iron ore, wood, and other resources, and ethnic conflicts all played a role in the conflict (Boulton 2019).

Throughout the years of armed conflict, violence rose and decreased, and while it was usually focused on Monrovia, most regions of the nation were targeted at various points, particularly Nimba and Bong counties, as well as port cities like Buchanan. The recruitment of child soldiers on all sides, especially to NPFL, most of them aged eight to 15, as well as widespread civilian casualties, characterized the conflict. Although the numbers vary, most estimates vary between 60,000 and 80,000 people who lost their lives, with one million people displaced. Although combatants were predominantly men, women and girls were subjected to extensive sexual violence, abductions, gang-raping, forced labor, and forced marriage across the country. Data shows that over 40,000 women were raped during the two conflicts. Women were also both forcefully and willingly recruited into armed resistance groups to fight or serve as cooks and housewives for combating men and boys (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 2-3; Boulton 2019; Council on Foreign Relations 2020; Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013).

Due to instability, limited resources, and men's limited capacity to work during the war, some women engaged in what has been called "survival" sex, a practice considered rape by International Criminal Court, with combatants in order to provide food and protection. Women and girls in internally displaced persons camps were also more vulnerable and prone to sexual abuse from family members, neighbors, or combatants. At least 18% of women have experienced sexual and gander-based violence at some point in their lives, and both men and women soldiers have been subjected to high levels of sexual violence during times of conflict. These have resulted in sexually transmitted diseases, and unplanned pregnancies, while outside of the capital, Monrovia, legal, health, and security services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence were missing even before the conflict, and survivors were not provided any assistance through the formal health and social system. Moreover, after the war, societal isolation and stigmatization resulted from sexualized violence and impregnation by combatants. (Scully,

Karim and Bernstein 2013). Unfortunately, further sexual exploitation of minors was conducted by some of the members of humanitarian agencies in Liberia during and after the conflict. Supplies, jobs, money, and support were frequently offered by the members of the UN Mission in Liberia, as well as by local and foreign CSOs in exchange for sexual favors from mostly teenage girls. Women and girls became involved in it as a result of poverty, lack of food and resources, often pressured by their families (Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013).

2. Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign

After years of economic deprivation, instability, suffering, and bloodshed, and the conflict for political and ethnic dominance in Liberia, conflicting sides were still unwilling to discuss a peace agreement. Taylor even vowed that he would never negotiate with rebels and would fight until the last soldier died. Women were more and more sidelined and neglected as the country sank into the conflict. As a result, they have been mostly missing from political life as well as in any peacemaking attempts, even though they were the ones who suffer the most from the conflict (Tavaana 2019).

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), a regional peacebuilding organization located in Ghana, recognized the seriousness of the situation and expressed rising worry about the position of women in Liberia. For this reason, the WANEP founded the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) in 2002. WIPNET was established with the belief that "systematic violence against women such as rape, forced prostitution, mutilation, etc., was an expression of a deeper systemic disregard for women existing in West African societies….By using women's numerical strength and their ability to mobilize around key issues, it would be possible to ensure that they could play a central role in formal peace processes and decision-making in the region" (Tavaana 2019).

In 2003, WIPNET launched a Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement to build a women-only peace movement, which was led by most notably Leymah Gbowee, as well as Asatu Bah Kenneth, Etweda "Sugars" Cooper, and Vaiba Flomo. In order to achieve its goals, the women's movement called for a quick and unconditional ceasefire, peace negotiations between the Liberian government and rebels, and the mobilization and involvement of foreign

intervention forces. For this politically neutral movement, peace was the ultimate goal (Tavaana 2019). Women who were usually being portrait as passive and victims have decided to exercise their political agency through the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement.

Leymah Gbowee, a social worker, decided to gather women from her church to protest the war in response to the violence. Following an appeal to her Lutheran church, she sought the help of several hundred other Christian women to pray for peace in Liberia. Asatu Bah Kenneth spoke to the gathering in March 2003 and announced that she would bring Muslim women to join the Christian women in demanding peace from Taylor and the warlords (Navarro 2010). Women of diverse religions and ethnicities were linked by their shared experience of the conflict as mothers, sisters, daughters. Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was formed by women from Muslim and Christian groups, both indigenous and elite Americo-Liberian classes, in a nation replete with ethnic and religious tension (Tavaana 2019). Not only that but they have also begun to put pressure on pastors and bishops to support the demands, as well as for them to pressure warlords (Boulton 2019).

On April 1, this group of Christian and Muslim women came together to protest for the first time. They urged Monrovia's women to speak out in favor of peace by using radio to promote the message - "The women of Liberia want Peace". The Catholic Church-owned radio station Radio Veritas broadcasted their nonviolent protests and demonstrations despite the high level of control of media in Liberia at the time. WIPNET and Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement soon caught the attention of the mainstream media in Liberia and beyond (Tavaana 2019; Boulton 2019). In response to their radio message, numerous internally displaced women joined their campaign. All of them dressed in white, they gathered every day of a week at the fish market. It was a peaceful gathering as they sat, sang, and danced. The fish market was strategically chosen, as it was in the vicinity of and visible from Taylor's. Throughout the week, more than 2,500 women gathered at the market to participate in the protest. They also agreed upon going on a sex strike, praying and depriving their partners of intimacy until the conflict ends (Navarro 2010).

It is also important to be aware of the context in which such protests took place. At the time organizing any protest in Liberia was highly challenging due to the political climate and level of

control in the country, in which media representatives and opponents have been killed. Also, because of the 14-year civil conflict, most Liberians did not have access to running water or electricity, and there was a whole generation that had never used the Internet or even seen a television. This all contributed to the isolation of protestors and slowed down the dissemination of ideas (Tavaana 2019).

When Taylor offered women a hearing in April 2003, nearly 2,000 women gathered to demand. Taylor was forced to attend peace negotiations in Ghana by both the women's mass action and the pressure from the international community (Tavaana 2019). He has agreed to peace negotiation only if women were able to locate the leaders of rebels. This was perhaps the most defining moment for WIPNET's involvement in the peace process. The women demonstrated their resourcefulness by funding a small delegation's travel to Sierra Leone, where several rebel leaders were residing. The women set up meetings between Taylor and his military forces, LURD and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), gaining the reputation of neutral mediators (Lawson 2017).

Although the organization was established in response to women's marginalization, WIPNET members strongly embraced and organized around their identities as women. As sisters, mothers, and wives – all positions that Liberian culture accepts and values – they constantly referred to themselves as such, promoting a non-threatening image of women. According to Gbowee "Policymakers are sympathetic to the word 'woman,' because they remember how well their mothers took care of them" (Tavaana 2019). Despite the country's patriarchal nature, this was partly due to women adhering to patriarchal logic by advocating under the umbrella of being mothers, wives, daughters, aunts, and sisters. Traditional women's roles were categorized as calm and non-threatening and this self-imposed categorization facilitated their access to the conflicting parties. However, by intentionally organizing their advocacy to match traditional expectations of women, they were able to achieve a considerable degree of autonomy. Despite their initial focus on reducing violence rather than on gender discrimination, they were essential in improving women's rights in general (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 13).

The peace negotiations began in Accra, Ghana in June 2003. The Liberian women who had come to Ghana sang and held banners on the grounds in front of the building where negotiations were

taking place. To finance their stay in Ghana, WIPNET depended on self-funding and donations from members and other regional network members. During the negotiations, several WIPNET representatives returned to Monrovia and were replaced with women already living in the nearby refugee camp. Many women were transferred from a Liberian refugee camp nearby, as well as representatives from women's organizations from Monrovia. Every day, between 150 and 200 women refugees came to the hotel where the negotiations were taking place. Women activists also invited family members of rebel leadership to the negotiations, including the mother of one of them (Hayner 2007, 12).

Even with the ongoing peace negotiations in Accra, the violence in Liberia re-escalated, and on July 21 a missile fired at the U.S. Embassy premises in Monrovia killed numerous Liberians sheltered there. Women in Ghana brought reinforcements to Accra, where they organized a large protest. Together, they sat down at the door of the building where the negotiations were taking place and joined their arms. Before an agreement could be reached, they closed in on the building and refused to let the delegate leave. The police even tried to arrest them, but during the attempt, Gbowee threatened to strip off her clothes, which would embarrass the men who found themselves there. As a result of her threat, the women were not relocated. In Liberia, seeing a man's mother naked is considered a curse, thus this move increased the pressure on the conflict parties to reach the peace agreement. "For a son to see his mother's nakedness – it's considered a curse. And to do it in public! So the men were saying, 'We better do something because they're threatening to take their clothes off'", remembered one of the women (Hayner 2007, 13). Because of this, the Ghanaian President agreed to meet with the women and listen to their requests for peace as long as they removed themselves from the negotiation building. However, the women agreed to do so on the condition that they would be let in into the premises if the agreement was not reached (Navarro 2010). The protest was conducted to call attention to the continuing peace negotiations' lack of seriousness and urgency, as well as to promote the signing of peace agreements. This group of women asked that the peace talks be treated seriously and that progress be made.

The mediators and, to a lesser extent, the conflicting parties, took the women activists seriously. This was because, in part, due to the women's commitment to a patriarchal rationale of women as natural peacebuilders and mothers, which allowed them to have a considerable effect on the

discussions. Also, following WIPNET's successful mass action campaigns, the mediation team, including General Abdulsalami Abubakar, chief mediator and former President of Ghana, met with them on several occasions. Despite Abubakar being favored by Taylor, he was very supportive of women's inclusion in the peace negotiation process, as well as pressured conflicting parties to reach an agreement. He also offered a position of observer to the WIPNET, however, they rejected it because they believed they could be more successful from the outside and did not want to compete with the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET) (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 6). MARWOPNET was another women's initiative at the time, which was, along with other CSOs, granted formal observer status during the peace negotiations.

WIPNET and MARWOPNET had different approaches and were not always on the same page. However, as the negotiations progressed, they began to communicate and consult with one another. WIPNET would be briefed on the proceedings by MARWOPNET members, and WIPNET would exert pressure on the parties from the outside. WIPNET refused the seat because they were well informed about MARWOPNET's activities and did not want to jeopardize the latter's position in representing Liberian women. This action helped improve the ties between the two groups. The groups' collaboration resulted in the formation of a Women's Forum to discuss the peace negotiation. The Golden Tulip Declaration of Liberian Women Attending the Peace Talks, released a few days before the peace accord was finalized, marked the end of the Forum. It outlined the demands of the various women's organizations and emphasized the need of eliminating gender-based discrimination (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 9).

In the meantime, Taylor was charged with war crimes by an international court in Sierra Leone during the Accra negotiations. To avoid being apprehended, he returned to Liberia. On August 11, Taylor resigned as Liberia's president, and the conditions of the peace agreement were disclosed. Despite this, after total of 76 days of negotiations, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra on August 18, 2003. The CPA paved the road for a transitional government in October 2003 that lasted until the late 2005 elections and was based on a four-way power-sharing accord between the Taylor government, LURD, MODEL, political parties, and civil society groups. The conflict parties picked Gyude Bryant as the interim Chairperson from

nominations provided by civilian actors throughout the negotiations. (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 3)

Although women organized marches, held weekly protests in central fish markets, and conducted women's strikes and sit-ins across the country, as well as playing a key role in urging combatants to undertake formal talks, enforcing negotiation timeframes, and gathering national support for the process they remained underrepresented in the formal peace negotiation process. Female representatives of CSOs served as observers and composed 17% of the observers to the signing of the treaty, no female negotiators or mediators were involved in formal peace negotiations (Council on Foreign Relations 2020).

3. Women that brought the change

The Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Ghana in 2003 was Liberia's seventeenth peace agreement since the conflict began in 1989. The majority of other agreements were only in force for a few weeks or less. The 2003 agreement, which was more thorough than prior agreements, attempted to address a wide range of issues. Rather than defining an interim government that excluded other conflicting parties, as several prior agreements did, the CPA allowed the rebel groups who were just laying down their arms the vast majority of ministries in a transitional government. The peace would, at least in the short term, reward those who had also benefitted from the conflict (Hayner 2007, 6).

Furthermore, the CPA was noteworthy for its inclusivity, since the peace negotiations included representatives from all three conflicting sides, political parties, and civil society, and women organizations. The peace agreement was comprehensive not just in terms of the large number of parties participating, but also in terms of the numerous issues it addressed (Nilsson 2009, 24). Due to the active role of women in the peace negotiation processes gender equality was also included in election procedures as a result of the peace accord and subsequent legislation: gender balance was required in both elective and non-elective positions under the National Transitional Government, according to Article XXVIII of the peace agreement (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 8). Post-conflict Liberia's government has recognized women's equal political

and economic involvement which was vital to the country's efforts to achieve positive peace and maintain it.

After the peace agreement was reached, and after they have returned to Liberia, the work of women of WIPNET was not done. They continued to assist the government in bringing about democratic elections over the course of the following two years. In addition to registering voters, they also set up voting booths. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Liberia's first female president, was elected on November 23, 2005 (Navarro 2010).

WIPNET began focusing on implementation after the Accra 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement was reached. WIPNET involved women directly in the implementation process. Due to the lack of a defined timeline for the completion of certain activities in the CPA, WIPNET arranged a five-day workshop to identify benchmarks in the implementation of the CPA. Goals included informing Liberians - especially women - on when key responsibilities need to be accomplished so that civil society might function as a "watchdog" on the implementation of the peace agreement. This was especially important for women, who were left out of the disarmament process, which was one of the main aspects of the agreement. WIPNET members and other women leaders came to the disarmament camps to meet the combatants and persuade them to lay down their guns and the disarmament process was accelerated (Bekoe and Parajon 2007).

The political activity also continued in the run-up to the 2005 presidential election, which brought up Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first democratically elected president. Many Liberians were able to exercise their right to vote due to civic education and a voters registration campaign led by women. Nearly 80% of Liberian women who voted in the country's first post-conflict presidential election opted to put a woman in charge for the first time on a continent that had been described as the world's most patriarchal (Kuwonu 2018). When it came to voting in 2005, WIPNET played an important role. The fact that government institutions were never before oriented towards women, led to an initial lack of interest among women in voting. Women who protested at the markets were still not registering five days into the registration period. To address this issue, WIPNET organized a coalition of 200 women to provide free transportation, childcare, and market stall supervision so that women would have the resources and peace of

mind to leave their jobs and vote. 7000 women have registered to vote at the end of the five-day registration period (Bekoe and Parajon 2007). It was precisely these women that took tremendous risks to elect Sirleaf on the grounds of her commitment to maintain peace and make gender equality a priority in her government. Others tricked the young men into trading their voter ID cards for beer, while others ran market stalls for their female owners while they registered to vote and watched the children so that moms could vote on Election Day (Lawson 2017).

Some of the women who helped bring Sirleaf to power are now running what is known as Peace Huts. There are 38 of them and they are located throughout the country, and they aim to support women by empowering them to mediate domestic violence and other issues before they escalate (Lawson 2017). Peace Huts "provide spaces for women and young women to engage in mediating local disputes, serve as vigilant watchdogs on the police and justice services, prevent gender-based violence (GBV), refer GBV victims to support services, raise community awareness of peacebuilding priorities, and mobilize on other critical issues such as elections and the importance of women's political participation, and governance" (Mlambo-Ngcuka 2019). A Ministry of Gender has also been established, while MARWOPNET was initially in charge of it. However, since it was accused of being biased and focusing solely on women, it was deemed necessary to include both men and women to adequately address gender inequalities. Liberia's post-war reforms have been extensively aided by the international community, both financially and technically (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 3-6).

After the elections, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has shown a particular interest in tackling sexual and gender-based violence from the beginning of her presidency, and under her leadership, the Liberian government introduced measures to combat it. The government has placed a high priority on strengthening survivors' protection, prevention, and rehabilitation systems. For her achievements, Sirleaf shared the Nobel Peace Prize with fellow Liberian Leymah Gbowee in 2011. Sirleaf has highlighted the need of confronting sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia and across the world in several addresses, including in her acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize (Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013).

Under the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Liberian government has adopted one of the first National Action Plans to End Gender-Based Violence. The Liberian Ministries of Gender and Justice launched the National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action in 2006, which is built on four pillars: protecting women and children from sexual and gender-based violence, preventing sexual and gender-based violence, promoting women's human rights, and involving women in peace processes (Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013). Liberia has also passed two significant pieces of legislation aiming at improving protection against sexualized violence. The first is a penal law that was amended in 2005 to incorporate gang rape, sexual abuse of children, and rape with weapons in the definition of rape. The amendment's provisions are phrased in gender-neutral language, eliminating the misconception that rape is solely committed by men against women. The second reform came in 2008 when Liberia amended its judicial law to create a special court with sole jurisdiction over sexual offenses. In February 2009, Criminal Court opened its doors. Furthermore, legislators are now considering enacting a domestic violence statute. (Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013)

The Women and Children Safety Sections of the Liberian National Police (LNP) have been formed around Liberia to strengthen the protection of women and children, especially against sexual violence. Liberia has established an all-female civil police unit devoted to crimes of sexual and gender-based violence (Scully, Karim and Bernstein 2013). Moreover "Articles IV and VI of the 2005 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Act require the TRC to adopt mechanisms and procedures to address the experiences of women, children, and vulnerable groups; pay particular attention to gender-based violations; employ specialists in women's rights; protect women's safety; and not endanger women's social reintegration or psychological recovery. A minimum of four of the nine commissioners had to be women (Article V)". In 2009, the final TRC report was released, and in 2011 Johnson Sirleaf formed a follow-up commission, the Peace and Reconciliation Commission (Inclusive Peace & Transition Iniciative 2018, 7). This act was especially important as it recognized the need to include a variety of perspectives and experiences including women's.

In this chapter, I provided a brief insight into the two civil wars that have occurred in Liberia, with the focus on the second one as it was ended by a peace accord. Although Liberian men also had a significant role in the peace negotiation and peacebuilding process, the role of Liberian

women was more prominent. Especially notable was the role of women of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) who have protested and pressured warlords and Taylor to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, in Accra in 2003, bringing the conflict to an end. The Agreement divided Liberia's government ministries and commissions across four groups: Taylor's government, the rebel groups MODEL and LURD, and representatives of CSOs and women leaders who had gained influence in the peace process. One of the results of women's efforts were elections that were held in 2005 after an interim government, in which Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president, marking her the continent's first elected woman president. She and other representatives of women's organizations and the Liberian government continued to strengthen women's equality in Liberia and build long-lasting positive peace.

In the conclusion, I will layout conditions most suitable for women's participation and their inclusion, which in case of Liberia led to more inclusive processes and more sustainable peace. Also, I will highlight some of the unique aspects of Liberia's peacebuilding process.

Conclusion

In Liberia, women played a key role in demanding formal negotiations, keeping conflicting parties responsible for adhering to the peace negotiating process, and mobilizing support on a national level for the process. Women-led marches were held weekly, demonstrations in the central fish markets, and staged protests and sit-ins for women nationwide. By examining the case study of Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, in the previous chapter, as a good example of women's agency I will now be able to layout contextual factors that I believe have led to women's participation and inclusion, which in the case of Liberia led to more inclusive processes and more sustainable peace. Also, I will highlight some of the unique aspects of Liberia's peacebuilding process.

In the case of Liberia women's participation in the peace process was limited by patriarchal society and gender roles jointly with years of conflict, economic deprivation, instability, and suffering. These factors have restrained women from participating in political life as well as contributed to their disproportionate suffering from the conflict. Although they were the key peace agents', no female negotiators or mediators were involved in formal peace negotiations and female representatives of CSOs served as observers and composed 17% of the observers to the signing of the peace agreement. However, joined by their shared experience and issues women generated individual and collective political agency and brought to their reflection in the peace agreement and following policies, as well as political and legislative changes. Most significantly, Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace was able to include, unite and mobilize women and men from both Muslim and Christian groups, as well as both indigenous and elite Americo-Liberian classes, in a nation and conflict-driven by ethnic and religious division.

Their inclusion was of key importance as it has been shown that their experience differed as women suffered disproportionately during the conflict. Factors that enabled their participation were somewhat positive attitudes from the key conflicting parties, main mediator, as well as wide public support. Something specific in this case was that traditional gender roles and attributes related to the notions of masculinity and femininity often limiting women's participation in decision-making processes in this one enabled their participation. In the case of

Liberia, women were perceived as peaceful and non-threatening which enabled them access to Charles Tylor and rebel leaders, paving the way to the formal peace negotiations. Also, since the CPA allowed the rebel groups the vast majority of ministries in a transitional government they did not feel their position of power was threatened, so they were more excepting of the other positions and provisions which would lead to the change in power structure between men and women.

Moreover, the chief mediator was very supportive of women's inclusion in the peace negotiation process, as well as offered them a position of the observer in the formal peace negotiations. Lastly, as women's main interest was overlapping with the national interest – ending conflict and achieving sustainable peace – they were able to obtain wide support from both Liberian women and men.

However, since they were involved through both formal and informal ways in the early phases of the peace processes the rights and needs of women and girls were not an afterthought but were included in the peace agreements and subsequent provisions. Thence, the Liberian government has established women's fair political and economic presence as crucial to its ongoing efforts to consolidate peace. Moreover, after the cessation of open warfare, women's vigorous national advocacy promoted civic education and catalyzed long-term change, during which women led a nationwide voting and civic education movement that reinvigorated public confidence and involvement in the political process. Elections in 2005 brought the country's and continent's first female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who further pushed for equality of girls and women in Liberia.

Another significant aspect of women's inclusion was that once they gained access to the decision-making position they did not only focus on the policies, legislation, and inclusive provisions but they also continued to engage with women as well as concerned with peace on a local level and in the private sphere, with a focus on family and community needs, such as domestic peace, child education, and the realization of individual rights and freedoms building positive peace.

Overall the case of Liberia showcases that if we do include women's perspective and their voices, the ceasefire will not only lead to cessation of conflict and violence and will prevent

effective and long-term peace to occur, and brother societal changes. By including women in peace processes, we increase the chances of these issues being addressed throughout all stages of peace processes, therefore increase the chances of achieving and sustaining positive peace in a once conflicted society.

Knowing that no other conflict has erupted in Liberia since the signing of the Accra Agreement we can state that the long-lasting negative peace has been achieved. However, to grasp the full understanding of the success of women's inclusion we would have to further examine the level of implementation of inclusion laws and provisions, level of women's participation and impact through decision-making, as well as to measure how and if the level of sexual and gender-based violence women experience has decreased in the years after the conflict.

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