

# Equal Peace, Sustainable Peace

A Feminist Perspective on Meaningful Participation  
in Peacebuilding Processes

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*Julie Granlund,  
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## Abbreviations

APRP	the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
EIU	The Economist Intelligence Unit
EPD	EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy
FARC	the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People`s Army
GR	General Recommendation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IR	International Relations
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NUG	the National Unity Government of Afghanistan
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

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# 1 Introduction

Addressing the underlying drivers of violence are challenging, especially in the age of “new wars”. Rather than conflict between organised states, conflict now appears to be multidimensional within fragile states, with several actors and often without clear negotiating partners with the power to end violence.<sup>1</sup> In 2016, more states were struck by violent conflict than in the last thirty years<sup>2</sup>, and civilian casualties as well as attacks on civilian targets have increased considerably.<sup>3</sup> Arguably then, when aiming to address the drivers of violence, actors beyond the warring parties must be included.

Today, it is internationally acknowledged that inclusion of the wider society within a peacebuilding context is essential for sustainable peace and development.<sup>4</sup> In order to promote successful transitions from conflict to peace, an inclusive process, where groups beyond the warring parties participate is therefore indispensable. As a transition process, peacebuilding also offers a valuable opportunity to address societal structures of political, economic and social exclusion, which evidently drive instability.

“Participation” as a concept is based upon the principle of equality. It is based upon the notion that people have a right to influence processes that will affect them, but also that such processes will be more effective and legitimate if they are actively involved in such processes.<sup>5</sup> In other words, in order to overcome structural barriers of exclusion, participation is an effective means. Amartya Sen underlines the significance of exclusion as a key factor in intensifying and driving violence in a development context.<sup>6</sup> He notes the importance of economic, social and political exclusion in creating obstacles for sustainable political structures, and states that inclusion of excluded actors is key for success of political settlements.<sup>7</sup> This resonates well with the reasoning behind inclusive peacebuilding approaches. Peacebuilding is an interactive process, where local ownership needs to go beyond national elites and include broader societal actors in order to build effective and

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<sup>1</sup> Kaldor, 1999, 2012

<sup>2</sup> UCDP, 2017

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, 2018

<sup>4</sup> Castillejo, 2017

<sup>5</sup> Paffenholz, 2015b

<sup>6</sup> Sen, 2000

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

legitimate initiatives which address wider needs in society than those of the political elites. Hence, participation and how it is promoted is key in a peacebuilding process.

Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325 stresses the importance of women in peacebuilding, and especially the importance of women`s equal participation in all efforts to promote sustainable peace.<sup>8</sup> However, although important, improvement in numbers does not necessarily mean that women are able to effectively influence peacebuilding policies and practice.<sup>9</sup> The Global Study on the implementation of SCR 1325 therefore emphasises that only focusing on formal, national level peace processes, “*constructs what is seen as relevant and decisive in peace processes, without sufficiently recognising that investment at the local and sub-national level – where many women are already brokering peace..., is just as important and may be neglected.*”<sup>10</sup>

## 1.1 Aims and Objectives

This thesis explores the concept of peacebuilding in order to better understand how inclusive processes can lead to inclusive outcomes. A central claim throughout is that simply including new groups, will not automatically lead to inclusive, or sustainable results. What matters is meaningful participation, as it represents both a means to achieve inclusive outcomes, and an end in itself. Consequently, the aim of this thesis is to rethink the objectives of and pathways to peace, in order to uncover the causal mechanisms which promotes or challenges such outcomes.

Thus, the research question is as follows:

*How can inclusive peacebuilding processes ensure meaningful participation of actors and issues?*

In order to answer this question, the peacebuilding structures will be explored, as well as women`s roles within these structures, through a feminist perspective. Women are one of the central actors that need to participate in a meaningful way, within a peacebuilding process.

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<sup>8</sup> Security Council, 2000

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, 2015

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*: p. 54

Recent research has unveiled the significant role women`s participation can have in peace processes. For instance, a study by O`Reilly et.al. indicated that when women`s groups effectively influenced the process, potential peace agreements were more likely to be implemented. Gender-inclusive models consequently made the processes more conducive to achieve success.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, there still remains a gap between local initiatives and their contribution and real influence at national level, especially in terms of including women.<sup>12</sup> Hence, women as participants within these processes are situated at the centre of analysis. Subsequently, an important sub-question is:

*How can women`s voices from grassroots peacebuilding initiatives be represented in formal, peacebuilding policies and practices?*

## **1.2 Structure of Thesis**

The thesis is divided into seven main chapters that seek to explore the various dimensions of the research question and sub-question. *Chapter one*, sets the scene by presenting the central themes of the thesis, the aims and objectives and the research question. *Chapter two* continues by exploring the genealogy of peacebuilding theories, which provides the background for the emphasis on inclusive peacebuilding today. Further, SCR 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and the principle of equality within the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) are investigated, in order to conceptualise women`s needs and priorities within the transition from conflict to peace. The chapter concludes by mapping out four guiding assumptions for the following research design and analysis. Based on the discussions within the theoretical and normative frameworks chapter, and the concluding assumptions, *chapter three* outline the methodological approach of the thesis. The rationale behind the choice of methods and how they are applied are also discussed. *Chapter four* maps out and discuss a feminist approach to women`s meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes. By applying a feminist lens the objectives of and pathways to peace are reconceptualised in a gender-sensitive way. *Chapter five* explores peacebuilding and the reality of women`s participation in context, through experiences from Afghanistan and Colombia. By tracing the processes within the cases this

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<sup>11</sup> O`Reilly et.al., 2015

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, 2015



chapter contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities at play in such contexts, and provides important insights to the feminist approach to peacebuilding. In *chapter six* the overall aim of rethinking the objectives of and pathways to peace are revisited, structured around the four guiding assumptions and by applying the insights from the two latter chapters. The thesis concludes with *chapter seven*, which based on the insights and analysis presented in the various chapters, attempt at providing a more focused framework for future research and to answer the research question.

## **2 Theoretical and Normative Frameworks: Conceptualising Peace and Peacebuilding**

The concepts of peace and peacebuilding are contested and numerous, still all have the same goal of building sustainable peace. Peacebuilding as an exercise is multidimensional, and involves a diverse number of instruments and actors. As a concept and strategy, peacebuilding can be conceived in both broad and narrow terms: The latter regards peacebuilding as deconstructing the structures of violence, while broader definitions also include constructing the structures of peace.<sup>13</sup> The theoretical discussions within this chapter provides an outline of the development of peace and peacebuilding theories, and the reasons why inclusive peacebuilding is necessary to achieve sustainable peace.

In October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325).<sup>14</sup> Through its adoption the Security Council recognised the central and important roles of women in prevention, resolution and peacebuilding efforts. Consequently, the WPS agenda set by SCR 1325 marked a normative change and reinforced the norms of women`s human rights within the realms of international peace and security politics.<sup>15</sup> Through determined civil society pressure, 1325 was followed by seven additional resolutions,<sup>16</sup> and together they represent the WPS agenda. Although extensively celebrated, the WPS agenda has been widely criticised for its lack of implementation and for containing

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<sup>13</sup> Bush, 2004

<sup>14</sup> Security Council, 2000

<sup>15</sup> Tryggstad, 2014

<sup>16</sup> 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015)

several weaknesses.<sup>17</sup> The normative discussions within this chapter seek to remedy such weaknesses by comparing with and drawing upon CEDAW and its conceptualisation of equality.

Together the theoretical and normative frameworks presented in this chapter represents the conceptual discussion of how peace should be built, as well as a conceptualisation of women as actors within this process. Combined, the discussions throughout this chapter lays a foundation for the research design and analysis.

## **2.1 Theorising Peacebuilding: A Conceptual Discussion**

Within peace and conflict studies it is common to distinguish between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace entails absence of violence, whereas positive peace requires existence of justice.<sup>18</sup> Thus, negative peace provides a narrower definition of peace where peace is achieved when the conflict ends<sup>19</sup>, and consequently correlate to narrow definitions of peacebuilding. While positive peace necessitates a broader definition of peace where peace is a dynamic process and not an absolute end point<sup>20</sup>, hence correlating to broader definitions of peacebuilding.

These two terms were first introduced by one of the founders of peace research, Johan Galtung, in 1964.<sup>21</sup> Galtung further broadened the concepts of peace and violence by distinguishing between direct and structural violence. Direct violence refers to a personal type of violence, such as assault, terrorism or war, while structural violence, or indirect violence, refers to the violence stemming from the structures in society.<sup>22</sup> The direct violence is often built into the societal structures. Therefore, looking at structural violence within society may reveal the drivers and effects of violence and the conditions for peace.<sup>23</sup> Sustainable peace

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<sup>17</sup> O'Rourke, 2014

<sup>18</sup> Cortright, 2008: pp. 6-8

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*: pp. 6-8

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*: pp. 6-8

<sup>21</sup> Galtung, 1964

<sup>22</sup> Galtung, 1969

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

according to Galtung, is not merely an absence of direct violence, or negative peace, but rather the absence of structural violence, and hence positive peace.<sup>24</sup>

### 2.1.1 The Liberal Peace

The conception of the “liberal peace” or “liberal peacebuilding” has long been the dominant peacebuilding theory.<sup>25</sup> However, the liberal peace has not had one singular framework or logic. Its conceptualisation has from its beginning responded to various critiques and development in the practice of peacebuilding, while still kept some underlying assumptions about the peace it is to create and the necessary tools to do so.

The underlying logic of the liberal peace is the belief that political and economic liberalisation offers a key in creating sustainable peace, seen as a democratic society with liberal markets.<sup>26</sup> However, throughout the 1990s various challenges and limitations of liberalisation strategies became increasingly evident. Rather than creating durable peace where international missions intervened, these efforts had done little to address the underlying drivers of violence and in some cases created destabilising outcomes. Nevertheless, the peacebuilding interventions had to a certain degree produced a negative peace, with an end of direct violence. Still questions around the possibilities for creating the envisioned positive peace were increasingly raised. Some even claimed that “the liberal peace” was in crisis.<sup>27</sup>

#### 2.1.1.1 The Problem-Solvers and the Critical Voices

Cox’s terminology of the problem-solving and the critical theories of International Relations (IR),<sup>28</sup> illustrates two different strands of peacebuilding scholarship, which each offers different critiques of the liberal peace. Cox explains that the problem-solving theories attempt to improve the world, with the world as it is as a starting point, while the critical theories seek to move beyond the existing political and social order. Move beyond in the way of

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Sabaratnam, 2011

<sup>26</sup> Paris, 2011a

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> Cox, 1981

restructuring the world order, often from below, with the local context as the starting point.<sup>29</sup> In the context of peacebuilding, the problem-solvers often critique the liberal peace, yet not for the peace it envisions, but rather for its means. Paris, for example, comes to the conclusion that the implementation of liberalisation too quickly in war-torn societies only adds to their vulnerability to violence.<sup>30</sup> His peacebuilding strategy of “institutionalisation before liberalisation” is built upon an acknowledgement that seeking to transform post-conflict states into liberal market democracies is important, and should be the end goal. However, the means to get there needs change.<sup>31</sup> In other words, Paris creates a distinction between “liberal peace” and “liberal peacebuilding”, where the first is preserved in his strategy as the end goal, and the latter is modified by including institutionalisation before liberalisation.

The critical voices on the other hand seek to move beyond the top-down approach of the liberal peace, and rather build and conceptualise peace from below, in order to counter the universal claim of the liberal peace. Researchers such as Mac Ginty and Richmond have called for a “local turn” in peacebuilding. Central in this local turn is the need to begin with the locals, and their resistance against international liberal actors and their universal claim. The “local” is thus defined as opposed to the “international”, and local resistance opposing liberal peacebuilding.<sup>32</sup> Further they state that this type of peace is emancipatory, where societal structures are slowly reorganised.<sup>33</sup> Subsequently, the local turn attempts to reinvent peace and peacebuilding from below, by bringing in the local context. The local turn is therefore not against institution building per se, rather against the universal claim that democratic and liberal institutions can be implemented from the outside-in by liberal actors. That one size fits all.

### 2.1.2 The Local Ownership Debate

What is striking about the liberal peace and the two outlined critiques, is either the strong emphasis on external actors and a top-down, outside-in approach, or the total opposite, being emphasis on the local and a bottom-up approach. However, this has somewhat been remedied

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> Paris, 2004: pp. 1-9

<sup>31</sup> Paris, 2011b

<sup>32</sup> Paffenholz, 2015a

<sup>33</sup> Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013

by acknowledging that these approaches are in fact interrelated.<sup>34</sup> The emphasis on some sort of local ownership has now become central within the peacebuilding vocabulary.<sup>35</sup> Though as we shall see, local ownership has been conceptualised in various ways, and the approaches to ensure this ownership vary.

#### 2.1.2.1 Local Ownership as “buy-in”, Elite Ownership or Societal Ownership

Liberal peacebuilding today acknowledges that in order to ensure sustainable peace, there needs to be local ownership. However, even where liberal peacebuilding has included “the locals”, they are still criticised for conceptualising “the local” as the object instead of the subject.<sup>36</sup> That they are assuming that local actors will embrace their liberal norms, or at least that they will be “socialised” over time into accepting such norms. Donais thus defines the liberal notion of local ownership as a “buy-in”.<sup>37</sup> In other words, the local actors “buy” the liberal norms, and therefore own them, and later make them theirs. What is so striking with this notion of ownership is the continued analysis of peacebuilding as if the answer to build sustainable peace lies with the external actors. Several scholars have criticised this. As Sending says, this notion is misguided and overemphasises the power of external actors to control the outcome of post-conflict reconstruction. He states that the focus should rather be on the relationship between local and external actors, not on what external actors bring into a peacebuilding process.<sup>38</sup> Castillejo emphasise the importance of the elites. She agrees that external actors do influence with their norms, but that the success of their strategies depends in large part on the attitudes of the elites.<sup>39</sup> Building democracy demands ownership by the very actors who are supposed to participate in this democracy. Consequently, liberal actors depend on cooperation with local elites in order to for example hold democratic elections, implement laws and develop liberal markets.

The last decades have seen a rise of optimism around a third force in peacebuilding, the civil society. They are often seen as more progressive and supportive of peacebuilding processes, and as an actor able to navigate tensions between international and local norms. Yet, the real

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<sup>34</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>35</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*

<sup>38</sup> Sending, 2011

<sup>39</sup> Castillejo, 2014

power of civil society and even their existence in a post-conflict context is often ignored. In a war-torn environment, civil society might still be vibrant, but to say that they represent the society, or are even able to unite, is problematic, as they themselves have been a part of the conflict.<sup>40</sup> Still, civil society as an important actor should not be written off. Often, civil society initiatives are building peace from below. They are also often better situated than external actors to translate international norms into the local context.<sup>41</sup>

#### 2.1.2.2 Hybrid Peace and Consensus-Building

In contemporary peacebuilding, an interaction between internal and external actors and structures are at play. The concept of hybrid peace has therefore been introduced in order to better capture this interaction. Mac Ginty argue that understanding the hybridisation of peacebuilding encourage us to move beyond the polarised debate on the liberal peace.<sup>42</sup> He states that by looking at peacebuilding through a hybrid lens, the complexities and fluidity are better captured, and most importantly we are able to better examine actors at all levels involved in the peacebuilding process.<sup>43</sup> A hybrid peace is therefore a result of continuous negotiation and re-negotiation. Consequently, it becomes clear that no actor is able to preserve one vision of peace by themselves.

Although evidence reveals that most international led liberal peacebuilding missions have ended in a hybrid form<sup>44</sup>, hybrid peace and how it come about has been criticised. One of the main critiques is that it fails to accomplish what it was set out to do, namely to fully capture the interaction between external and internal actors. By problematizing the complexities and nuances of the interacting actors and structures in peacebuilding further, Donais, argues for a new vision of peacebuilding as consensus-building.<sup>45</sup> Building upon the hybridisation of peace, he argues that peacebuilding is, or at least should be seen as, consensus-building among the broadest variety of stakeholders regarding the peace that should be built.<sup>46</sup> Hence,

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<sup>40</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

<sup>42</sup> Mac Ginty, 2011: pp. 209-217

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*: pp. 209-217

<sup>44</sup> Belloni, 2012

<sup>45</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*: pp. 139-144

Donais takes a step back, and examines the process of consensus-building which will bring about the peace there is consensus around. Be it liberal, a hybrid or some other peace.

The local ownership debate, and its focus on the actors within the peacebuilding process, have therefore been a way for the advocates of liberal peace to take the focus away from how to implement the right mix of liberal institutions, towards acknowledging that some of the answers lies within the conflict-ridden society itself and that the agency of the various actors is important. For the critical voices, this has been a way of acknowledging that the external actors do influence, and that “the local” are not one unity.

### 2.1.3 Towards Inclusive Peacebuilding

In 2011 the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States were signed, marking an international attitude change towards the practices of peacebuilding, as inclusion were emphasised as essential to build durable peace.<sup>47</sup> Although heavily criticised for its various shortcomings, the New Deal at least contributed to a shift in the debate. It helped situate the inclusivity norm on the peacebuilding agenda more firmly than before. Donais and McCandless argue that with the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and especially SDG 16 on inclusive societies, the inclusivity norm was further institutionalised.<sup>48</sup>

Inclusivity is closely linked to the local ownership debate presented above, where it finds its origins. Inclusion is therefore based upon the acknowledgment of the importance of ownership beyond the elites.<sup>49</sup> Drawing upon the “Broadening Participation project”, Paffenholz presents and discuss some of the findings on inclusion. She says that one main finding is that broader inclusion does not increase the likelihood of sustainable outcomes of peace processes. Rather, sustainable outcomes depend to a large amount on the ability of actors to provide meaningful contributions throughout the process, which again depended on various process and contextual factors.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, what matters is meaningful inclusion, and not just inclusion of a broad range of actors. Donais and McCandless define meaningful inclusion in the context of peacebuilding as “*the carving out of space within which a broad*

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<sup>47</sup> Donais and McCandless, 2017

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*

<sup>49</sup> Paffenholz, 2015b

<sup>50</sup> *ibid*

*cross-section of the conflict-affected community, ..., can exercise meaningful voice and agency in the design and implementation of peace processes*".<sup>51</sup> According to them inclusion is thus about merging top-down and state-centric peacebuilding approaches with bottom-up and society-centric strategies through a vertical integration<sup>52</sup>, or as presented above, through a process of consensus-building. Vertical integration of inclusion is namely a long-term process of building consensus among various actors around the means and ends, through a participatory process.<sup>53</sup>

In practice however, such vertical integration has turned into something closer to mere lip-service, or at least not opened for meaningful inclusion in the way it was supposed to. Scholars have pointed to the broader issue of power as a main reason.<sup>54</sup> McCandless et.al. points out that *"vertical relationships are by definition hierarchical, and as such are marked by asymmetries of power"*.<sup>55</sup> Conclusively, peacebuilding efforts need to consider the power relations between the actors who are vertically integrated. Castillejo points out that it is often assumed that an inclusive peacebuilding process will automatically lead to inclusive outcomes.<sup>56</sup> As revealed by the power asymmetries, some actors are not always able to participate in a meaningful way, even when included. Thus, one may question the assumption that including a broad range of actors will lead to better outcomes, and possibly state that one must separate between inclusive processes and inclusive outcomes.

#### 2.1.4 A Feminist Vision for Peace

Several scholars emphasise the need to bring in feminist theory in order to conceptualise and theorise peace and peacebuilding in a way that would ensure sustainable outcomes. It has even been stated that feminism or gender analysis is the missing piece in the puzzle.<sup>57</sup> However, feminist theory in the realm of peace and security is nothing new. As Duncanson summarises, decades of feminist scholarly work have explored the gendered nature of conflict in *"the way that war impacts on men and women differently, the way that it is experienced*

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<sup>51</sup> Donais and McCandless, 2017: p. 293

<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*

<sup>54</sup> McCandless et. al., 2015

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*: p. 5

<sup>56</sup> Castillejo, 2017

<sup>57</sup> See for example: Bjorkdahl and Selimovic, 2016; Bergeron et. al., 2017; Confortini, 2012



*differently by men and women, and, finally, the way that gender as a relational power dynamic underpins and sustain the war system.*”<sup>58</sup> As such, feminists have argued for the crucial importance of including women and a gendered analysis in any effort to build peace.<sup>59</sup> As emancipation and agency are central topics,<sup>60</sup> feminist theory has much in common with the “critical voices” mentioned above. Feminist theory, also draws on constructivism in that “gender” is seen as a relation of power and that it therefore influences other social relations of power. By identifying these power relations, feminists seek to understand how forms of oppression and exclusion may be changed, and how this social change can be emancipatory. Consequently, as feminist theory aims at identifying actual and potential forms of oppression or exclusion in society, feminists are not only concerned about emancipating women.<sup>61</sup>

Departing from this, Duncanson defines feminist visions of peace as “*inclusive, expansive and transformative*”.<sup>62</sup> Feminist peace is inclusive in the way seen above, as a process where actors are emancipated and empowered to challenge and change power structures in society which oppresses and excludes them.<sup>63</sup> Consequently it has a lot in common with the inclusive peacebuilding and consensus-building project. Yet, it differs in that feminism focus more on enhancing meaningful participation than opening avenues for participation, as feminists believe that emancipated and empowered actors themselves will and should challenge and change the power structures. It is expansive as feminism defines peace way beyond the notion of absence of violence, or negative peace. In this sense, feminist peace has much in common with Galtung’s positive peace and the need to end structural violence. It involves the enjoyment of human rights, both civil and political and economic, social and cultural. Lastly, in order to achieve all this, feminist visions of peace are transformative. Unjust structures must be transformed in order to emancipate the actors, so that they themselves can participate in the process of making peace.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, feminist visions for peace, goes a step further than the liberal peace’s aim at building effective and accountable structures and including a broad range of actors. A feminist theory of peace is therefore critical, in Cox’s sense of the

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<sup>58</sup> Duncanson, 2016: p. 21

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

<sup>60</sup> Confortini, 2012

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> Duncanson, 2016: p. 47

<sup>63</sup> *ibid*

<sup>64</sup> Duncanson, 2016

word.<sup>65</sup> It questions and seek out ways to transform the existing power structures, instead of developing existing structures as the problem-solvers would. In other words, such an approach broadens the objectives of peacebuilding by including concepts which is often seen as something which come “after peace is created”.

## **2.2 The Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Women`s Human Rights**

In 2013 the CEDAW Committee issued general recommendation (GR) No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.<sup>66</sup> Within the recommendation CEDAW recognised the resolutions within the WPS agenda, and their crucial importance “*for advancing advocacy regarding women, peace and security*”.<sup>67</sup> Further it was emphasised that the areas addressed within these resolutions, “*find expression in the substantive provisions of the Convention*”, consequently, “*their implementation must be premised on a model of substantive equality and cover all rights enshrined in the Convention*”.<sup>68</sup> By identifying the implementation of the WPS agenda as an integral part of CEDAW`s implementation, the Committee provided a strong foundation for the promotion of women`s rights within a peacebuilding context. Not only did it strengthen the WPS framework to further promote women`s rights, GR 30 also made CEDAW highly relevant within peacebuilding contexts.

### **2.2.1 UNSCR 1325 and the WPS Agenda**

SCR 1325 specifies three areas, or pillars, of priority for action, namely prevention, protection and participation.<sup>69</sup> Together, these pillars conceptualise women`s gender-specific experience, and portrays women in a conflict or post-conflict context through multiple roles. The two most central being first women as “victims” of armed conflict, with different experiences than men, and hence in need of protection better adjusted to their needs, and second as decision-makers and active agents who needs to be included in order to build durable peace.<sup>70</sup> The discourse on women`s participation in peacebuilding processes has long been a contested

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<sup>65</sup> Cox, 1981

<sup>66</sup> CEDAW, GR 30, 2013

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*: para. 25

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*: para. 26

<sup>69</sup> Tryggstad, 2014

<sup>70</sup> Security Council, 2000

phenomenon. Nevertheless, the establishment of SCR 1325 has been described by several scholars as a turning point, or even a normative change, as it firmly links women, peace and security and the increased participation of women in decision-making at all levels.<sup>71</sup>

#### 2.2.1.1 Feminist Criticism of the WPS Agenda

The WPS agenda have been criticised broadly by the very feminists who advocated for such an agenda in the first place. Critiques have, amongst other, revolved around its weak implementation and its overemphasise of protection at the expense of the other pillars, as well as a complete neglect of prevention.

The critique of the overemphasis of the protection pillar, does not try to undervalue the importance of, for example, protecting women and girls against sexual violence. Rather the critique has been that the implementation efforts have in large part neglected other parts of the WPS agenda, and therefore conceptualised the role of women in peacebuilding as “victims”, and neglected their multiple roles.<sup>72</sup>

Since the very beginning, there have been little focus on the prevention pillar beyond attempts at preventing sexual violence. Prevention in its more fundamental sense necessitate tackling the underlying forces of conflict, often revealed as inequality and injustices embedded in societal structures.<sup>73</sup> Drawing on the previous elaboration of feminist theory, this pillar partly represents the core of feminist theory and what it aims to accomplish. Namely identifying structures in society which creates unequal or unjust barriers in order to create emancipatory social change, performed by the empowered actors themselves. By neglecting the transformative potential of the prevention pillar, the WPS agenda can be placed within the contemporary notion of the liberal peace and its weaknesses. It seeks to include women and address their special needs, yet without transforming societal power structures, this cannot be addressed in a meaningful way.

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<sup>71</sup> See for example: O'Rourke, 2014; Tryggestad, 2014

<sup>72</sup> Korac, 2016

<sup>73</sup> Duncanson, 2016

O'Rourke's identification of five meanings of "women's participation" within the WPS agenda<sup>74</sup>, is illustrative of this. Using a political feminist perspective, she defines women's participation five-fold, as "*participation as the presence of role models, participation as representation, participation as deliberation, participation as inclusion and participation as expertise*".<sup>75</sup> The WPS agenda therefore approach women's participation from various angles. However, O'Rourke argue that the various types of `participation` have been prioritised differently. She states that within its implementation there has been much less focus on participation as representation and deliberation, than the other three types.<sup>76</sup> Focusing on participation as presence of role models, inclusion and expertise is not bad in itself. These three types of participation emphasise that participation of a larger number of women in high positions in international peace and security will provide an example that women are able to hold such positions, and thus challenge the picture of peace and security as a male domain. Further, that inclusion of women would heighten the likelihood for inclusion of their needs and interests. And lastly that gender expertise is a way of ensuring that women's interests are translated into policy implementation.<sup>77</sup> Greater numbers of women in peacebuilding processes and the participation of gender experts in order to ensure that gender issues are included, are important aims. However, participation as representation and deliberation emphasise gender equality and structural change, and therefore have close ties with feminist visions of peace and the prevention pillar as presented above. Participation as representation is based on a justice/equality argument.<sup>78</sup> As women comprise at least half of the population, their exclusion from decision-making is unjust. Consequently, it is reasonable that women and men should have an equal right to participate in decision-making that affect their lives.<sup>79</sup> Further, participation as deliberation correlates to a "larger dream" argument. This represents a more process-based type of participation, where participation is grounded in inclusive negotiation of different interests between different actors throughout the peacebuilding process. Consequently, the peacebuilding process must be adequately open, in order to ensure deliberative participation of women.<sup>80</sup> In other words, it necessitate transformation of

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<sup>74</sup> O'Rourke, 2014

<sup>75</sup> *ibid*: p. 1

<sup>76</sup> *ibid*

<sup>77</sup> *ibid*

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*

<sup>79</sup> Phillips, 1995

<sup>80</sup> O'Rourke, 2014

structures. Without these types of women's participation then, ensuring meaningful participation, at least among more marginalised women, will be difficult.

## 2.2.2 CEDAW – A Holistic Framework for Women's Rights

CEDAW further elaborates on international human rights from a gender perspective. The Convention is often celebrated for its holistic approach of including extensive and progressive measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all its forms. In several areas, it also goes well beyond the hierarchical generational paradigm established within the wider human rights treaties.<sup>81</sup> Within the preamble the importance of a holistic approach which includes civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is emphasised.<sup>82</sup> Consequently, by acknowledging the close ties between these rights, several scholars claim that it is the instrument with the greatest potential to address the close relationship between women's marginalisation, inequality and social rights.<sup>83</sup> Although, CEDAW has been broadly criticised for a range of reasons, as a human rights convention with its unique gender perspective, it contains a transformative potential.

### 2.2.2.1 The Principle of Equality

Equality is a central commitment of human rights law. Yet the meaning of equality is highly contested. Formally, equality demands equal treatment between men and women under the law and equal protection against discrimination. However, merely giving individuals the same rights under the law, does not address the issue that for many, disadvantages still persist, which in turn leads to outcomes of exclusion and inequality.<sup>84</sup> As seen above, simply adding people to a peacebuilding process does not ensure sustainable outcomes. What matters is their ability to provide meaningful contributions to the process. In other words, giving people a right to participate without ensuring a possibility to participate in a meaningful way do not ensure *de facto* equality. Consequently, the concept of substantive equality has been introduced in order to address the limitations of formal equality. In order to achieve substantive equality, disadvantages must be redressed, agency and participation should be

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<sup>81</sup> Bantekas and Oette, 2016: pp. 493-495

<sup>82</sup> CEDAW, 1979

<sup>83</sup> See for example: Fahra, 2008; Hellum and Aasen, 2013

<sup>84</sup> Fredman, 2013

enhanced and structural change must happen.<sup>85</sup> Related to this, the CEDAW Committee issued GR 25 in 2004, which underlines that the object and purpose of CEDAW is three-fold:<sup>86</sup>

1. *“to ensure that there is no direct or indirect discrimination against women in their laws and that women are protected against discrimination....in the public as well as the private spheres.”*
2. *“To improve the de facto position of women through concrete and effective policies and programmes.”*
3. *“to address prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes that affect women not only through individual acts by individuals but also in law, and legal and societal structures and institutions.”<sup>87</sup>*

Further they state that *“a purely formal legal or programmatic approach is not sufficient to achieve women’s de facto equality with men, which the Committee interprets as substantive equality”<sup>88</sup>* The committee hence says that the Convention requires State Parties to provide women equal opportunities and empowerment to achieve equality of results. Fredman claims that it is not adequate to merely extend human rights to women in order to create equality. Simply giving rights to women without removing the obstacles for their enjoyment, does not address inequality.<sup>89</sup> In other words, without removing social and economic obstacles for women’s participation for example, they will not be able to utilise civil and political rights. Hence, the importance of CEDAW’s holistic approach. Further, in achieving this, State Parties have not only negative duties to respect equality, they are required to *“take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men”<sup>90</sup>* The emphasis is therefore on ensuring that women are actually able to make use of their rights.<sup>91</sup> Consequently, CEDAW does not command women to be added into or conform with existing structures, rather it demands structural change.

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<sup>85</sup> Fredman, 2016

<sup>86</sup> CEDAW, GR 25, 2004

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*: para. 7

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*: para. 8

<sup>89</sup> Fredman, 2013

<sup>90</sup> CEDAW, 1979: art. 3

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

## 2.3 Four Guiding Assumptions

As shown above, conceptions of peace and peacebuilding has gone through an evolution. However, consensus around one concept of peace and how it should be built is still lacking. Although the importance of local ownership and inclusion are somewhat internationally acknowledged, different peacebuilding practitioners and scholars conceptualise these concepts differently, which hence bring about various peacebuilding approaches. Also, the several challenges and obstacles current peacebuilding efforts face in securing local ownership and inclusion, reveals the limitations within peacebuilding theories.

Drawing upon O'Rourke's conceptualisation of women's participation, the neglect of the prevention pillar reveals several gaps and weaknesses within the WPS agenda that are preventing meaningful inclusion. It also reveals the close relations between the three pillars, and especially participation and prevention. Together, participation as representation and deliberation strongly correlates with CEDAW's conceptualisation of substantive equality, and its transformative potential. Without these two types of participation and their foundational arguments, the participation pillar falls in the same trap as other peacebuilding approaches by addressing the symptoms rather than the underlying causes of women's lack of meaningful participation.

The main analytical focus is therefore a rethinking of the objectives of and the pathways to peace, aiming at closing the gap between the theories and practices of inclusive peace building, and the rhetoric and reality of women's participation in these peacebuilding processes. With this in mind and based upon the discussions above the following four guiding assumptions create a basis for the research design and analysis:

1. Sustainable peace is a process, not just an outcome. Therefore, peacebuilding approaches must aim at addressing the underlying drivers of violence, and should apply an expansive conceptualisation of peacebuilding where peace is framed as positive peace.
2. In order to address these drivers, peacebuilding processes must be based upon meaningful participation. Consequently, we need better conceptualisation of the actors and structures in a post-conflict situation and a better understanding of their relations, in order to create more effective strategies to building peace.

3. Women are a central actor who needs to be included in these inclusive peacebuilding processes. The WPS agenda have laid the foundation for better conceptualisation of women in the realm of peace and security, and their relationship with the conflict and post-conflict structures. However, the neglect of the prevention pillar creates gaps and weaknesses within the framework, and hinders meaningful participation. Further links between women`s rights and the WPS agenda, with an emphasis on promoting substantive equality could help remedy such weaknesses.
4. Feminist methodology with its gender lens, informed by the normative frameworks and the weaknesses of contemporary approaches to peacebuilding, could lay a basis for a feminist approach to peacebuilding, which in turn could enhance the possibilities for sustainable peace.

### **3 Methodology**

This chapter outline the methodological approach of the thesis. To answer the research question and sub-question, and enable contributions to a rethinking of the objectives of and pathways to peace, a feminist approach and process-tracing, complemented by comparative methods, are applied. The rationale behind the choice of methods and how they are applied will be discussed, as well as potential limitations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The main method for data collection is qualitative research. Mostly in the form of key document analysis and literature review. Relevant academic research and reports from relevant actors, newspaper articles, as well as legal and policy documents has been reviewed. As the primary focus is the dynamics involved in a peacebuilding process, and the challenges such processes face in order to promote meaningful participation, discovering the causal mechanisms have been the main aim in choice of data collection and analysis. The thesis is therefore inductive, as it aims to contribute to theory-building.

Research on complex social and political processes, such as peacebuilding, is a complicated undertaking. Perhaps especially when the process under study aims at vertical integration of actors beyond the warring parties, the elites and international actors. As disclosed in the



theoretical discussion above, vertical integration is hierarchical, and thus marked by asymmetries of power. These power asymmetries challenges meaningful participation of women and others who face several structural barriers. As revealed in the elaboration on the normative frameworks, having formal equality is not always enough in order to have *de facto* equality. Based on these discussions, the thesis drew out four guiding assumptions on how meaningful participation and sustainable outcomes of peacebuilding can be achieved. In order to test these assumptions, a feminist approach to meaningful participation is first mapped out. Second, two case studies are presented, before the approach and cases are analysed in a structured, gender-sensitive way. Although women are at the centre of analysis, the discussions and approach aim to contribute to a deepened understanding of how inclusive peacebuilding can enhance inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Therefore, the choice of methodology has been carefully made to stimulate such an aim.

Applying a feminist approach entails an objective of adding to the understanding of women's experiences and how they are treated in various contexts, by filling gaps on these experiences and treatment in specific contexts. It is therefore grounded in the feminist epistemological tradition which identifies such knowledge as unique and valuable.<sup>92</sup> Consequently, the thesis applies a gender lens, as this "*illuminates interactional patterns and institutional practices and sharpens our view of power, privilege, and priorities*".<sup>93</sup> Further the thesis applies process-tracing as a way of structuring and analysing the cases and the knowledge deriving from them and the feminist approach. Process-tracing are generally emphasised by case study researchers as an effective method in providing supplementary evidence about cause and effect.<sup>94</sup> It is therefore a method which enables testing of the assumptions this thesis builds upon.

### 3.1.1 Feminist Approach

The thesis therefore applies a feminist approach of investigation throughout, both in form and methodology. It builds on multiple strands of feminist theorisation, which together provides the foundations for the analysis. Feminism approach global politics and society from numerous perspectives, including realist, liberal, constructivist, critical, post-structural and

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<sup>92</sup> Hesse-Biber, 2012

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*: p. 476

<sup>94</sup> Levy, 2008

post-colonial.<sup>95</sup> Subsequently, feminism offers different and sometimes contradictory answers. In other words, there are not one simple feminist lens this thesis can apply, but many. Nonetheless, no matter the theoretical perspective, feminism shares an understanding of “gender” as a kind of power relation or structure, and not the equivalent of membership in biological sex classes, which conditions individual’s agency. “Gender” is consequently a social construction.<sup>96</sup> Yet, all individuals do not experience “gender” in the same way. People experience gender within different contexts throughout the world. Still, as a social structure it shapes and condition people’s place and view of the world. Feminists thus seeks to identify these structures and then understand how structural forms of oppression and exclusion may be changed, and how this social change can be emancipatory.<sup>97</sup> As a consequence, feminists are rarely concerned with the experience of women only. Other silenced or marginalised groups are often included in their emancipatory project through their search for understanding how social, economic and political systems creates, support and preserve oppression and exclusion.<sup>98</sup> Viewing peacebuilding processes as a transition from conflict to positive peace, and its need for inclusiveness, through a feminist lens therefore provides a unique means to elaborate upon the peacebuilding process as it works or does not work for enabling meaningful participation. The approach of this thesis is thus politically engaged and has as its goal the transformation of peacebuilding as a concept and approach in order to promote meaningful inclusion of actors and issues.

### 3.1.2 Process-Tracing

Process-tracing as a method are increasingly used in qualitative research in the social sciences. George and Bennet defines process-tracing as the use of various sources “*to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case*”.<sup>99</sup> In general, process-tracing is a method of outlining the causal mechanisms, by applying detailed, inter-case empirical analysis of how a process plays out in practice.<sup>100</sup> It is accordingly a method where a

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<sup>95</sup> Sjoberg, 2010

<sup>96</sup> Steans, 1998

<sup>97</sup> Ackerly and True, 2006

<sup>98</sup> Enloe, 1996

<sup>99</sup> George and Bennet, 2005: p. 6

<sup>100</sup> Levy, 2008

description of a case is compared to theoretical patterns in order to determine conformity in mechanisms.<sup>101</sup>

According to Beach, process-tracing can be broken down into three core components: first, theorisation of the causal mechanisms which links causes and effects.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, the feminist approach contain theorisation about the causal mechanisms which could enable or hinder meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding processes. Second, analysis of observed empirical manifestations of the theorised mechanisms.<sup>103</sup> In other words, analysis of the processes within a case which combined represents the mechanisms that links the cause and effect. This thesis presents two case studies in order to adhere to the third component according to Beach. Namely complementing findings from single case studies with another case study, through use of comparative methods to enable generalisations of findings.<sup>104</sup> Employing such tracing on two cases helps build confidence in the causal processes found within the studied cases, and when analysed together with the feminist approach.

### 3.1.3 Case Studies

In order to contextualise peacebuilding and women`s participation, the thesis therefore conducts two case studies. This provides important insights of the complexities at play, and the challenges peacebuilding processes face in order to promote meaningful participation. The selection of case studies when conducting comparison of few cases, often face the issue of selection bias.<sup>105</sup> Therefore, the cases have been intentionally selected in order to fit the criteria of process-tracing and because they are contrasting in several ways. Contrasting cases are often valuable when aiming at hypothesis testing and contributions to theory-building,<sup>106</sup> as this thesis is.

Comparison of few countries are often described as `case-oriented`<sup>107</sup>, as the focus is more on the unfolding of processes and variations within the cases, than on macro-variables between

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<sup>101</sup> Andreassen, 2017

<sup>102</sup> Beach, 2016

<sup>103</sup> *ibid*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid*

<sup>105</sup> Levy, 2008

<sup>106</sup> Andreassen, 2017

<sup>107</sup> Ragin, 1987

countries.<sup>108</sup> The focus of comparison is therefore on the similarities and differences within the peacebuilding contexts of the two countries. To structure the investigation and to provide insights in order to answer the research question and sub-question, the case studies are first exploring the peacebuilding dynamics at play, and second, the status of women within the countries and their potential participation within the peacebuilding dynamics.

### **3.2 Reflections on Potential Limitations**

The concepts of `reliability` and `validity` are often used to assess and ensure credibility and objectivity of qualitative research.<sup>109</sup> Reliability refers to the replicability of the processes and results<sup>110</sup>, which is an obvious challenge when investigating complex processes of peacebuilding. Therefore, being transparent of and consistent to the research design and process throughout has been important. Validity refers to the representativeness and accuracy of findings.<sup>111</sup> The fact that the research is based on a few primary sources, yet mostly secondary sources offers some limitations, especially in terms of the case studies. Providing a more complete picture of the complexities within the cases of Afghanistan and Colombia, would entail a much broader scope than what is within the limits of this thesis. However, as the description of the processes has aimed to draw on several sources, as well as the contrasting element within the cases, they still provide important insights when combined with feminist theory. Further, as the aim of the thesis is to rethink the objectives of and the pathways to peace, the methods used enable a more focused framework for future research. By mapping out an approach, based on theoretical and normative discussions, and subsequently analysed in a structured, gender-sensitive way, informed by experiences from Afghanistan and Colombia, contributions are made to enhance the understanding of the dynamics at play in a peacebuilding process, and how meaningful participation can be promoted. Future research could build upon these insights, and test them further.

Furthermore, when exploring transitions from conflict to peace, with an aim of reconstructing structures of exclusion, there is a clear hazard of imposing a Western conceptual frame, which in turn could reify inequalities. There is no simple solution here, yet hopefully being

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<sup>108</sup> Landman, 2008

<sup>109</sup> Anderson, 2010

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*

conscious of and sensitive to such complexities will allow meaningful contributions to the contexts in which these structures and actors operate.

## **4 A Feminist Approach to Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding Processes**

Creating peace demands continuous action from numerous actors at various levels. None of these actors can build sustainable peace on their own, or by excluding certain groups in society. However, as seen, performing an inclusive peacebuilding process is easier said than done. Inclusive peacebuilding seeks to include different voices, yet making this inclusion meaningful, at least for grassroots and the most marginalised has been revealed as the least effective part of both peacebuilding processes aiming at being inclusive and of the implementation of the WPS agenda.

The following section elaborates upon the concept of “participation”, and reveals the importance of framing participation as “meaningful participation”. Further, building upon Munro’s threefold conception of gender in relation to peacebuilding<sup>112</sup>, the basics of feminist theory within peacebuilding is presented. Departing from these sections, the third section maps out the elements of a feminist approach to meaningful participation. By situating the actor at the centre of analysis, the structures which challenge women’s agency are unveiled. Rethinking the objectives of and the pathways to peace from a feminist perspective and its gender lens discloses the need for more expansive notions of peace and security in order to make agency visible in relation to peacebuilding. Hence, the concept of human security is discussed, and reframed as gender-sensitive human security. Further, in order to challenge the oppressive and unequal structures in a post-conflict context, social and economic empowerment permeated by the concept of substantive equality is suggested as a transformative potential. These elements however depend to a large extent on political will in order to gain influence. Consequently, an approach hoping to get passed the level of theory, and to realise practical results, needs an avenue for change. Women’s movements as change-makers and translators of women’s rights are thus presented and discussed.

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<sup>112</sup> Munro, 2000

## 4.1 Meaningful Participation

Civil and political rights are cornerstones of participation. Strengthening democracy, accountable institutions and political liberty therefore seems obvious prerequisites to participation, and hence natural priorities in peacebuilding processes. However, broader participation on its own do not necessarily ensure sustainable outcomes. Illustrative of this is discussions within development scholarship, where participatory development long has been central and applied by several development agencies and mainstream development thinking.<sup>113</sup> Yet with increasing influence, comes attention and critiques. Cooke and Kothari have collected a number of the critiques in their volume “*Participation: The New Tyranny?*”.<sup>114</sup> Central in the critiques are doubts about the emancipatory project of participation. The doubt in emancipation arise from the critiques questioning of the motivations behind empowerment as a tool for development. In other words, whether the empowerment and participation project only provides an alternative way of integrating the poor into the larger development projects giving an impression of a more inclusive process, while still being top-down and outside-in.<sup>115</sup> Such arguments are recognisable in the context of peacebuilding by revisiting the previous discussion of the conceptualisation of local ownership as “buy-in”.<sup>116</sup>

Parfitt argues that it is an ambiguity at the heart of the concept of participation. That participation can be seen as both a means and an end, and that seeing it as one has different implications than the other.<sup>117</sup> If inclusion of actors is based upon a wish to make processes more effective and legitimate, and thus achieving some development target or results, “participation” becomes a tool, or a means. Questioning participation as an emancipatory project hence becomes reasonable. Participation as an end on the other hand, necessitate transformation of power relations between the donor and recipient, as local actors are empowered in order to emancipate and create agency.<sup>118</sup> In this sense, development through empowerment is seen as the goal in itself, and not as a means to achieve some other goal. Participation as an end can be seen as parallel to the emancipatory peace promoted by peace

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<sup>113</sup> Parfitt, 2004

<sup>114</sup> Cooke and Kothari, 2001

<sup>115</sup> Parfitt, 2004

<sup>116</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>117</sup> Parfitt, 2004

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*

scholars such as Richmond, where peace is built from below by emancipated locals and their agency enabling social change in their own lives.<sup>119</sup> However, as Parfitt point out, participation needs both the means and the end segment of participation: *“any project must include at least some element of participation by the local populace and produce at least some development outputs”*<sup>120</sup>, hence the inherent ambiguity.

Participation of actors beyond the internationals and the elites in a peacebuilding process is a means to achieve legitimate and effective peacebuilding initiatives. Still, it is also an end in itself, as inclusion of multiple actors adds new dimensions and priorities to the consensus-building process. In order to frame “participation” as both a means and an end, it is helpful to look at the issue of broader participation in peace processes as an issue of ensuring “meaningful participation”. As seen, broader inclusion on its own does not increase the likelihood of sustainable outcomes of peace processes. Rather, sustainable outcomes depend to a large extent on the ability of actors to provide meaningful contributions throughout the process, which again depended on various process and contextual factors.<sup>121</sup> Consequently, what matters is meaningful participation, and not just inclusion of a broad range of actors.

Departing from this meaningful participation can be measured by individual`s or group`s ability to voice their opinions within spheres of decision-making and exercise of power. This “ability” not only entails their representation or inclusion in such processes, but also their ability to make their voices heard and have influence on matters that influence them. In other words, meaningful participation may be defined as the ability of groups or individuals to have a transforming effect or impact upon processes that condition their lives. As meaningful participation is at the heart of feminism, a feminist perspective on peacebuilding could provide important leads.

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<sup>119</sup> Richmond, 2005

<sup>120</sup> Parfitt, 2004: p. 554

<sup>121</sup> Paffenholz, 2015b

## 4.2 A Feminist Perspective on Peacebuilding

A common misconception within peacebuilding scholarship and broader IR is that including a gender perspective or a gender lens is simply a recipe to add women into the analysis and stir.<sup>122</sup> In order to illustrate this, Munro outline three ways of looking at how gender relates to peacebuilding. First, she sees gender equality as a goal of peacebuilding. Second, the feminist concept of “gender” can be used as an analytical tool of assessment in peacebuilding operations. Lastly, “gender” can be used as an approach to building peace.<sup>123</sup>

Gender equality as the goal of peacebuilding, or equality in general, is not only about including groups or women, *“it is the deconstruction of gendered binaries that structure oppression”*.<sup>124</sup> The concept of “gender mainstreaming” has been introduced and popularised as a tool to promote gender equality.<sup>125</sup> *“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels”*<sup>126</sup> At a theoretical level, gender mainstreaming is a tool to incorporate gender-sensitive practices and perspectives into formal procedures and institutions. Yet, at a more practical level its implementation has had varied success, and scholars have raised concerns that the mainstreaming efforts too often have taken the form of “adding on”.<sup>127</sup> Merely “adding” issues or women into an established structure do not address the problem of why the issues or women were excluded in the first place. Ní Aoláin et.al. argues that *“gender mainstreaming has become a tool of convenience for policymakers, rather than a radical means of achieving gender equality”*,<sup>128</sup> and suggest the concept of “gender centrality” as a way of alleviating the “adding on and stir” issue. Gender centrality according to them requires *“centralization of women’s needs, equality and autonomy from the inception of any response to a problem”*.<sup>129</sup> This is where “gender” as a concept of analysis enters the assessment in peacebuilding operations.

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<sup>122</sup> McLeod, 2015

<sup>123</sup> Munro, 2000

<sup>124</sup> Duncanson, 2016: p. 12

<sup>125</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al., 2011

<sup>126</sup> United Nations, 1997

<sup>127</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al., 2011

<sup>128</sup> *ibid*: p. 14

<sup>129</sup> *ibid*: p. 14



Munro suggests that gender as an analytical tool “*can bring to light the experiences of men and women during conflict and peace, assess needs, and show how gender relations change during and due to conflict and peace*”.<sup>130</sup> Duncanson goes a step further and reveals how conflict and peacebuilding not only impact men and women differently, but also draws attention to gendered structures within war and peacebuilding processes. She thus emphasise how peacebuilding initiatives such as liberalisation of markets as a tool to rebuild economies, often involve cuts that affect women in ways that do not promote their emancipation or agency as they often are most reliant on the services that are cut.<sup>131</sup> Sjoberg draws attention to something similar when she assesses international security from a feminist perspective.<sup>132</sup> In her re-conceptualisation of “security”, she highlights that what is understood as a security issue is too narrow in order to comprehend what security would include if applying a feminist approach to security.<sup>133</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al supports this claim by stating that peacebuilding initiatives such as security sector reforms overemphasise physical violence. Although important, by applying gender analysis on security it “*extends beyond physical security to include civil, political, economic, and cultural security for men and women, boys and girls. It includes formal and enforceable legal rights, as well as opportunities to participate in the economic and political life of the country*”.<sup>134</sup> Consequently, feminist perspectives on peacebuilding demands gender analysis in order to reveal the unique experiences and needs of women and men, and further create more effective and gender-sensitive strategies and initiatives. Gender analysis then is an analytical tool which take the experiences and needs of certain groups in society as a starting point and investigate how gendered power structures influence these experiences and needs. It then seeks to challenge oppressive or exclusionary structures in order to build emancipatory change.

“Gender” as an approach to peacebuilding would subsequent include the revealed gender concerns and issues by the gender analysis, in order to achieve the goal of gender equality.<sup>135</sup> Consequently, any feminist approach must begin at the micro-level, with the actors, here; the women. Who are they? What are their roles within this given context? And most importantly, what are their needs in order to live their lives in everyday peace? “Gender”, when

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<sup>130</sup> Munro, 2000: p. 3

<sup>131</sup> Duncanson, 2016

<sup>132</sup> Sjoberg, 2010

<sup>133</sup> *ibid*

<sup>134</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al., 2011: pp. 79-80

<sup>135</sup> Duncanson, 2016

conceptualised from a feminist perspective therefore offers both the means and the end for peacebuilding.

### 4.3 Women`s Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding

Women in conflict and post-conflict contexts play a variety of roles. They are peace protesters, conflict supporters, soldiers, terrorists, members of the workforce, care-takers, refugees or revolutionaries. Acknowledging these diverse roles are important for at least two reasons. First, women in a post-conflict context do not have the same needs. However, as women, and despite this broad range of roles, gender as a power structure still frame their agency. Hence, second, despite their various experiences of conflict, structures in society often limit women`s agency and their importance as peacebuilders.<sup>136</sup> Although women are not a homogenous group, being a woman thus places certain barriers upon their opportunities and situates certain expectations upon them. Seeing “peace” from this perspective reveals structures in society which influence women`s possibilities to fulfil their needs, and how structures influence these experiences and needs. Sjoberg`s and Ní Aoláin et.al`s elaborations on the traditional security focus in post-conflict contexts mentioned above, are illustrative of this. By defining security issues too narrow, the strategies and initiatives do not fully comprehend the issues of structural violence which obstructs meaningful participation of women.

Women`s participation in decision-making is increasing all over the world.<sup>137</sup> Yet decades after the pivotal United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where 189 countries called for “*full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life*”<sup>138</sup>, women`s participation in peacebuilding processes are lagging behind. Despite efforts to create more inclusive peace processes and despite the broad consensus around the importance of the WPS agenda, women are still lacking as meaningful participants. Between 1992 and 2011, only 2 percent of mediators and 9 percent of negotiators in peace processes were women.<sup>139</sup> To remedy this inclusive peacebuilding projects have for example sought to open avenues for participation through quotas, creative modules of

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<sup>136</sup> Sjoberg, 2010

<sup>137</sup> The EIU et.al., 2015

<sup>138</sup> The United Nations, 1995

<sup>139</sup> UN Women, 2012

negotiation, and promotion of female mediators.<sup>140</sup> Quotas in elections in post-conflict contexts for example, have increased the number of women in decision-making. Wider presence of women might also help undo gender stereotypes and change public perceptions. Yet, “adding” women do not guarantee improved conditions for women.<sup>141</sup> Neither should it be expected that, just because they are women, they will use their power to improve women’s conditions. As seen, women have multiple roles, and subsequent, multiple interests and needs. “Adding” women or women’s issues within a peacebuilding process then, only addresses the symptoms of exclusion and inequality. O’Rourke’s identification of women’s participation as five-fold within the WPS agenda<sup>142</sup>, is therefore instructive. As previously discussed, meaningful participation has not been adequately promoted through its implementation as participation as representation and deliberation have not been sufficiently addressed. These two types of participation emphasise gender equality and transformation of structures, and therefore hold the greatest potential for agency and emancipatory change.

Departing from this, two central barriers for women’s meaningful participation in peacebuilding can be unveiled. First, the ends and means of peacebuilding, and second, the deeper societal resistance. Simply giving civil and political rights to women, or promoting their participation within peacebuilding processes, only remedy symptoms of these barriers. It is rather the underlying drivers of women’s exclusion that must be addressed.

#### 4.3.1 Gender-Sensitive Human Security – An Expansive Notion of Peace

Today it is internationally agreed that unstable and vulnerable states pose a threat to international security and stability.<sup>143</sup> This underlying motivation of creating stability in order to obtain international security helps explain why various peacebuilding operations have prioritised negative peace over positive peace. Such motivations also partly help explain why inclusion of the wider society has been difficult to achieve. Elites hold a great negotiating power, as their cooperation is necessary to achieve stability.<sup>144</sup> Consequently, inclusion of elites and their priorities becomes a natural primary goal. Unless their priorities are in line

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<sup>140</sup> O’Reilly et.al., 2015

<sup>141</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al., 2011

<sup>142</sup> O’Rourke, 2014

<sup>143</sup> Newman, 2011

<sup>144</sup> Donais, 2012

with the wider society then, other priorities become secondary. Top-down mediation among those with a decision-making power and building of state institutions, rather than a bottom-up project of local-driven resolution and peacebuilding, becomes natural. Still, stability and negative peace are not insignificant. It promotes absence of physical violence, and is clearly a necessary prerequisite of several of the trademarks of positive peace. However, negative peace can be a fragile peace. Containing violence without addressing its drivers, could in reality resemble a pressure-cooker, and thus sow the seeds of its own failure. Without addressing the underlying drivers of insecurity and violence, research have revealed how conflict-ridden societies have a greater tendency for violent recurrence than others.<sup>145</sup> Drawing on Galtung's separation between direct and structural violence<sup>146</sup>, it can be argued that containing violence and conflict and building negative peace is only addressing the direct threats of violence. Although important, direct violence is, as seen, often built into structures in society. Consequently, investigating structural violence may reveal the drivers of violence and how it affects society.<sup>147</sup>

Human security has therefore been introduced as a way of broadening the “security” concept to include issues beyond direct violence and with a more actor-centric focus.<sup>148</sup> As an approach, human security provides an alternative to the more traditional security approaches in order to remedy the narrow focus on stability.<sup>149</sup> This is not to suggest that stability or negative peace are not invaluable. As seen above, this is important. Yet “security” is not fully created when negative peace is built. As with positive peace, “security” is a process, in which the individuals and communities that are influenced by the security situation need to have influence on both the means and end of security. Human security initiatives therefore have the individual as referent.<sup>150</sup> The individuals should not just be protected, but they should also participate, and accordingly help prevent insecurity. Consequently “agency” is central in human security approaches. Individuals and communities with agency can better bring about positive change within their lives, based on their experiences and needs.

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<sup>145</sup> Mason, 2009

<sup>146</sup> Galtung, 1969

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*

<sup>148</sup> Krause, 2009

<sup>149</sup> Newman, 2011

<sup>150</sup> *ibid*

However, there is no consensus around the specific content of the concept. As with peace and security, human security has both broad and narrow definitions, depending on who conceptualises or uses it. As a point of departure, we can separate between two strands, which can be summed up in two phrases. Namely, “freedom from fear” as the narrower conception, and “freedom from want” as the broader one.<sup>151</sup> Hence, there is disagreement over which threats individuals should be free from and the means to achieve human security. The latter phrase draws on the original formulation of human security, first introduced in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) “Human Development Report”.<sup>152</sup> “Freedom from want” entails sustainable human development as a means to achieve security.<sup>153</sup> It therefore focus on ensuring basic human needs. By applying this concept of human security in a peacebuilding context, development is linked with security, and thus indirectly with the process of achieving peace. However, this broad definition might be criticised for being nothing more than a shopping-list;<sup>154</sup> a list of several issues which are not necessarily linked and which includes “everything”. It therefore becomes illusive and loses any analytical usefulness. Accordingly, the broader vision of human security has often fallen outside the peacebuilding agenda, within the development sphere, which is often seen as something that comes after peace is built.

“Freedom from fear” on the other hand, entail an elimination of threats of and use of force or violence from people’s everyday life.<sup>155</sup> Hence, this type of human security is a more direct form of securing people’s everyday life. In a peacebuilding context, it involves initiatives such as disarmament, clearing of land mines, implementation of accountable criminal justice systems and institutions and other direct threats of physical violence to individuals caused by the state or other warring parties. Subsequently, human security as “freedom from fear” although it has people’s everyday lives as the starting point, does not remedy the above stated issues of the more traditional security concept. These initiatives are important in a post-conflict situation, yet as various scholars have pointed out, this type of security becomes ad hoc, and still fails to address deeper insecurities in society. “Freedom from fear” are necessary

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<sup>151</sup> these two elements of freedom were included in US President Roosevelt’s 1941 State of the Union address, later known as the Four Freedoms speech. Now these phrases have been picked up and popularised by the UN.

<sup>152</sup> UNDP, 1994

<sup>153</sup> Krause, 2009

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*

<sup>155</sup> *ibid*

in a post-conflict situation, yet seeing these types of security initiatives as an end in themselves fails to recognise the deeper drivers of violence. “Freedom from fear” are rather means to an end.

Ignoring the “freedom from want” dimension of human security, or at least “leaving it for later”, neglects the importance of investigating and tackling underlying drivers of insecurity during the peacebuilding process. Leaving such security issues for later hinders a process of positive peace as well as neglecting the issue of insecurities deterring meaningful participation by various actors. Ní Aoláin et.al. summarises this issue well by stating that local populations need a broader type of human security in order to feel secure, “*security for them means not just security from (harm, injury, sexual violence) but security to (care for one’s family, work, thrive)*”.<sup>156</sup> Security *from* and security *to* combined, entails both freedoms mentioned above. By situating individuals and communities as the referent of policy-decisions and analysis, security initiatives are better able to address inequalities, exclusion and structural violence, and more importantly it emphasise the importance of agency. Through empowerment of individuals and communities, agency as a prerequisite to bring about positive change in their own lives, can thus be facilitated. Broad notions of human security then, challenge the post-conflict structures to transform and include more gender-sensitive notions of peace and security. Freedom from fear and freedom from want or security from and security to, are all important in post-conflict contexts in order to rebuild your life, and importantly being able to participate meaningfully. It therefore goes beyond merely addressing physical or direct threats of violence, to addressing structural and indirect types of violence, both by individuals and by power structures in society. Consequently, it moves beyond addressing the symptoms of violence or exclusion, to aiming at addressing the drivers.

By situating humans at the centre, such a concept further underlines the importance of substantive equality, and not just formal equality. As stated throughout this chapter and in previous chapters, simply adding women to peacebuilding processes through quotas and equal opportunities or civil and political rights under the law, do not ensure meaningful participation on its own. By applying a gender-sensitive human security concept, with an expansive notion of peace as positive peace and centred around the actors within this context,

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<sup>156</sup> Ní Aoláin et.al. 2011: pp. 60-61

the importance of social and economic rights in order to achieve meaningful participation is disclosed.

#### 4.3.2 Social and Economic Empowerment – A Transformative Potential

Gender-sensitive human security with its expansive notions of peace thus make agency visible in relation to peacebuilding, and the structures which challenge this agency. Women cannot participate meaningfully without both freedom from fear and freedom from want. This highlights the importance of the various pillars within the WPS agenda. Women need protection, or freedom from fear. However, without the prevention pillar, or freedom from want, women can still not participate meaningfully in a peacebuilding process despite creative and important attempts at addressing the symptoms of exclusion. In other words, although civil and political rights are the cornerstones of participation, and do ensure formal equality within the realms of decision-making, social and economic rights are just as important. Social and economic inequalities constrain women's participation in various ways, most importantly by constraining their agency, and therefore their substantive equality.

If social and economic rights are to have a real influence on realising women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes, they consequently need to be permeated by substantive equality. However, social and economic empowerment are also by itself a means to achieve substantive equality. Substantive equality and social and economic empowerment are therefore mutually reinforcing. Such a focus is also helpful in remedying the critiques of "freedom from want" as a shopping-list, as it links these needs as drivers of women's inequality and exclusion. This would also entail reconceptualization of social and economic rights in order for such rights to take into account and tackle the gender-specific limitations women have in exercising these rights in a post-conflict context.<sup>157</sup> In other words, the actors must be central when analysing how to best ensure realisation of these rights, and hence improve the *de facto* position of women. Having rights, do not automatically lead to being able to exercise them. Prevention, or freedom from want, therefore holds a transformative potential within the WPS agenda. Defined in its broader, more fundamental sense, prevention

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<sup>157</sup> Fredman, 2013

is “addressing the underlying drivers of conflict such as the inequalities and injustices rooted in economic and political structures”.<sup>158</sup>

An analysis of funding for peacebuilding projects from 2010 reveals an overwhelming focus on political security and humanitarian assistance, over social and economic security and development. These latter areas are assumed to be the focus of later assistance.<sup>159</sup> However, human development projects aiming at social and economic security and empowerment in the immediate aftermath of conflict, could in practice serve as a bridge between conflict and positive peace. Social and economic empowerment of women, permeated by aims to create substantive equality, could thus be an avenue for meaningful participation, as they help build agency and hence promote emancipatory change. Social and economic inequality are both underlying drivers of violence and exclusion. Consequently, social and economic empowerment of women is not only a means to achieve meaningful participation, it has a transformative potential on its own.

#### 4.3.3 Women`s Movements as Change-Makers and Translators

Gender-sensitive human security and social and economic empowerment permeated by substantive equality are consequently powerful tools for achieving meaningful participation. However, such a rethinking of the pathways to meaningful participation, ultimately face at least one elementary challenge, namely political will. These tools will not be implemented into new peacebuilding approaches in practice without the political will of States, the warring parties, political elites and the international actors. Accordingly, an approach such as this without an element of or an avenue for changing political will, becomes just yet another theory. Importantly then, and in the spirit of the foundations of feminism, women`s movements as change-makers and translators of women`s rights, represents the last component of the feminist approach to meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes.

Growing evidence reveals the impact strong women`s movements can have on the realisation of women`s rights. They have pressed for laws and policies that protect and improve women`s rights and tackle discrimination, and ensured the implementation of these laws and policies.

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<sup>158</sup> Duncanson, 2016: p. 123

<sup>159</sup> Budlender, 2010



Often, they promote social change and provide services in supporting achievements and realisation of women`s equality and inclusion.<sup>160</sup> Related to peace there was a strong and vibrant feminist, women`s movement which pressured the UN and the Security Council to adopt resolution 1325 and the following resolutions within the WPS agenda. Later, it was women`s organisations that began to translate 1325 into various languages, enabling its use by local women`s organisations all over the world.<sup>161</sup>

Probably the greatest achievement of the WPS agenda is that it has given women and their organisations, networks and movements all over the world a normative framework they can gather around to achieve better protection, meaningful participation and prevention of the underlying drivers of conflict. The WPS agenda as a normative framework, have also given these organisations, networks and movements leverage in their search for meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes.

As previously revealed, women have various roles and hence various interests and needs. Therefore, merely expecting that meaningful participation of individual female mediators, negotiators or witnesses, will by itself guarantee improvements in women`s rights, is naïve. This is not to say that empowering individual women in post-conflict contexts are not important, as revealed above, it is. Yet, evidence implies that women`s groups are more likely to voice concerns relevant to women, as well as concerns distinct from the priorities of the belligerents.<sup>162</sup> International support and coalition building with local women`s groups could thus be an avenue for promotion of women`s meaningful participation. Yet again, the power relations between such local women`s groups and international donors or supporters should be questioned and investigated. As revealed previously, power asymmetries are at play and condition agency. Yet, the real impact of women`s organisations, networks and movements cannot be denied. They translate international norms into the local context and are real change-makers, and represents a connection between gender and the peacebuilding process. Women`s organisations, networks and movements can both be seen as tools to achieve political will for the above-mentioned changes, and as participants in the peacebuilding process by themselves. Understanding their strategies, challenges, priorities, successes and

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<sup>160</sup> Womankind Worldwide, 2017

<sup>161</sup> Duncanson, 2016

<sup>162</sup> UN Women, 2012

shortcomings are therefore important for the success of meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding processes.

## 5 Experiences from Afghanistan and Colombia

Afghanistan has undergone conflict since the 1970s which complicates any analysis of underlying drivers of violence.<sup>163</sup> Making a distinction between original drivers and drivers that have escalated conflict is also difficult. Additionally, multiple international interventions add another element to the picture. Moreover, the country is fully dependent on foreign aid, which complicates the picture further. The actors and their relations within the Afghan context can be characterised by a highly complex political picture of strong Afghan elites, ambiguous footprints of the West, regional forces and a military logic of counter-insurgency, as well as constant tension between the various actors.<sup>164</sup> Still, the rhetoric they use are often framed within the same language of human rights, democracy, equality and especially within that of increasing the status of women and their inclusion.

Throughout much of the independent history of Colombia, the country has had democratically elected governments. Still it has been struck by several civil wars and structural violence.<sup>165</sup> Political exclusion and grievance over land rights have long been central drivers of violence within the country.<sup>166</sup> However, the conflict has transformed over time, with different actors and issues at the centre.<sup>167</sup> In September 2016 following more than five decades of conflict, the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC), finally signed a peace agreement. The agreement has since been highlighted as a model for inclusive peace processes, also in terms of gender.<sup>168</sup>

By exploring the processes at play within the different peacebuilding contexts, the general position of women and the potential for their meaningful participation, the cases provide important insights of the complexities at play.

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<sup>163</sup> Marsden, 2009

<sup>164</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>165</sup> Reimann, 2014

<sup>166</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>167</sup> González, 2004

<sup>168</sup> PRIO, 2016

## 5.1 Afghanistan – A Mixed Picture of Progress and Insecurity

The current conflict in the country dates back to 2001, and the US-led military intervention and the “war on terror” as a response to the 9/11 attacks. Arguments have been made that although violence still occurs, the intervention has been successful in establishing a democratic process and the return of refugees from neighbouring countries.<sup>169</sup> However, Afghanistan has still not reached a post-conflict situation. Throughout 2017 fighting between Taliban and the government intensified, resulting in high numbers of civilian casualties.<sup>170</sup>

An image of the international actors in Afghanistan as invaders also occurs. Not only among Taliban and other insurgency groups, but also among Afghans in general. This image has arguably complicated both government efforts at peace talks and western actor’s priorities.<sup>171</sup> Nevertheless, several external, government and community peacebuilding initiatives and strategies have been set in motion since 2001.<sup>172</sup> Ashraf Ghani, the President of the National Unity Government (NUG), has also defined an Afghan-led and owned peace as a foundational aspiration of his presidency.<sup>173</sup>

### 5.1.1 Building an Afghan-Led and Afghan-Owned Peace

The Bonn agreement signed in 2001, aimed at consolidating peace within three years.<sup>174</sup> However, Taliban were completely excluded.<sup>175</sup> Consequently, rather than laying the groundwork for peace, it marked continuing conflict. Further, as the agreement was based on a top-down, outside-in approach, it gained little momentum towards sustainable peace within the Afghan population.<sup>176</sup> In 2010 the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) was launched in order to promote inclusive peacebuilding. In 2015, the program was extended by the newly instated NUG.<sup>177</sup> The program originally conditioned the Taliban and other

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<sup>169</sup> Marsden, 2009

<sup>170</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2018a

<sup>171</sup> Wimpelmann, 2017

<sup>172</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>173</sup> Bengali and Latifi, 2015

<sup>174</sup> Richmond, 2005

<sup>175</sup> Quie, 2018

<sup>176</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>177</sup> APRP, 2015

armed opposition groups to put an end to violence and accept the Afghan constitution.<sup>178</sup> Such conditions could be seen as both necessary and problematic at the same time. For one, it signals that creating peace must include the democratic progress. However, it also pre-defines the peace that is to be achieved before any agreement to pursue peace has been reached. Including Taliban within this process, has been the key aim from the start, as well as the acknowledgement of inclusion, of Afghans in general, but also more regional actors, such as Pakistan. Most importantly, it aims at being Afghan-led and Afghan-owned.<sup>179</sup> Over the summer of 2017, the first meetings of the newly launched Kabul process began. At these meetings, the Afghan government called on all armed groups to start peace talks with them.<sup>180</sup> This spring as part of the ongoing Kabul process, the President again attempted to invite Taliban to the negotiation table. This time without placing conditions upon their inclusion.<sup>181</sup>

Elite ownership can be said to be strong in Afghanistan. Yet, this ownership has proven problematic for the wider society, as secrecy and exclusion of broader societal actors has been its characteristics.<sup>182</sup> As the post-Taliban power vacuum unfolded, some of the elites, including previous mujahedin-era strongmen were able to take advantage. Several of these new powerholders, and especially the mujahedin, had been or were connected to conservative Islamic movements, and many held illiberal views in terms of gender.<sup>183</sup> Consolidation of power and accommodating elitist interests, has arguably shaped and hindered a wider nationally owned conception of peace. The accommodation of these interests at the expense of consistency within the efforts at promoting peace, can also be seen within the international actors in Afghanistan.<sup>184</sup> The US-led invasion in 2001 and the following military operations broadly applied the aim to improve the conditions of Afghan women as a justification.<sup>185</sup> Frequently framing Afghan women as victims in need of outside saving, and suffering under a backward state.<sup>186</sup> Yet, with increasing discontent with the external invasion, other concerns has often been prioritised at the expense of improved conditions and inclusion of women. As

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<sup>178</sup> Quie, 2018

<sup>179</sup> *ibid*

<sup>180</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2018

<sup>181</sup> Shalizi and Mackenzie, 2018

<sup>182</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>183</sup> Chaudhary et.al. 2011

<sup>184</sup> Donais, 2012

<sup>185</sup> Chaudhary et.al., 2011

<sup>186</sup> Wimpelmann, 2017

a result, such rhetoric has been ambiguous from the very beginning.<sup>187</sup> As revealed in previous chapters, the need to create stability, or negative peace, are often prioritised at the expense of other peacebuilding priorities, and the case of Afghanistan provides a good example of such a situation. Local ownership within the Afghan efforts at building peace may thus be questioned. It can at least be framed as a dilemma of who the peace is being built for. During the first meetings of the Kabul process in 2017, only two out of 47 participants were women.<sup>188</sup> Revealingly, a 2014 report discovered that within 23 peace talks between the Afghan government and oppositional armed forces between 2005 and 2014, women were just included on two occasions.<sup>189</sup>

### 5.1.2 Victimising the Afghan Woman

Post-2001, violence against women has materialised as an imperative focus area for both women right`s advocates and design of gender programming.<sup>190</sup> In the 2017 Asia Foundation survey of the Afghan people, women report that fear for domestic violence is among the greatest issues facing their everyday lives.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, violence against women is a significant issue that needs to be tackled in Afghanistan in order for women to participate in decision-making in a meaningful way. Still, some scholars contend that the image of the Afghan woman in need of saving, have done more damage than it has resulted in societal change.<sup>192</sup> Quie argue that “*the objectification of Afghan women as victims and use of this idea to legitimize military action have complicated the pursuit of women`s rights*” within the peacebuilding process.<sup>193</sup> Wimpelmann states that the status and progress of women, somehow have ended up in the middle of the power struggle between Afghan elites and Western diplomats. Whereas central political actors “give” some rights to women on the one hand to ease the international actors, while “giving” more conservative voices their will on the other, in a balancing game of accommodating various interests and maintaining their support.<sup>194</sup> The various actors attaining power after the fall of Taliban were as stated generally

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<sup>187</sup> Chaudhary et.al., 2011

<sup>188</sup> Barr, 2017

<sup>189</sup> Oxfam, 2014

<sup>190</sup> Wimpelmann, 2014

<sup>191</sup> Akseer et.al., 2017

<sup>192</sup> See for example: Chaudhary et.al., 2011; Wimpelmann, 2017; Quie, 2018

<sup>193</sup> Quie, 2018: p. 29

<sup>194</sup> Wimpelmann, 2017

conservative, hence the immediate aftermath of invasion was somewhat fixed against women`s rights promoters.<sup>195</sup>

Afghan women are also disproportionately affected by discrimination and poverty, or in the words of UN Women, *“the path to economic empowerment for Afghan women remains riddled with discrimination, violence and unequal access to opportunities. The biggest hurdle in front of them are negative perceptions and stereotypes”*.<sup>196</sup> However, post-intervention and after Taliban`s systematic attempts at preventing women`s education, employment and public life, significant progress has been made. Not only in securing women`s equal rights under the law, but also through the government`s acknowledgement of the importance of women`s participation in order to achieve sustainable peace.<sup>197</sup> In 2016 22% of the civil service were women, and it is expected that between 2018 and 2020, the number of women in government posts will increase to 22% as well. Further, 28 % of members of parliament are today women.<sup>198</sup> The 2017 survey also revealed that a large majority of Afghans (89%) believe that women should be allowed to vote and express support for female leadership. Still, it is also revealing that fewer (59%) believe that women should be able to vote without male influence. This percentage have also somewhat been in a standstill since 2008.<sup>199</sup>

CEDAW was ratified in 2003, and the following year equal rights for both women and men were enshrined in the constitution. Article 22 of the Afghan constitution requires that *“any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law”*.<sup>200</sup> Gender has also long been a cross-cutting strategy, as revealed by the ten-year National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). Released in 2008, it pledges the government`s commitment to gender equality and women`s empowerment.<sup>201</sup> Among the often-celebrated achievements under the NUG, is the National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS, launched by the President June 30, 2015.<sup>202</sup> However, it neither included an allocated or

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<sup>195</sup> Chaudhary et.al., 2011

<sup>196</sup> UN Women, 2016

<sup>197</sup> EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD), 2015

<sup>198</sup> Akseer et.al., 2017

<sup>199</sup> ibid

<sup>200</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2004: article 22

<sup>201</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2008

<sup>202</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2015

estimated budget, nor a clear implementation plan. At the Brussels Conference in 2016 on Afghanistan, where donors agreed on increasing the aid budget over the next four years, the Afghan Government promised as one of the benchmarks to demonstrate progress in implementing the NAP.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, the implementation was further delayed in 2017.<sup>204</sup> These measures have increased the number of women participating within decision-making, yet by looking at the Governments progress report on women`s status and empowerment and NAP 1325 from 2016<sup>205</sup>, it can be argued that these measures have not went beyond counting women, to actually making them count. Throughout the report, the number of women within various positions are emphasised, yet real substantive gains are not particularly highlighted.

In 2015, 150 women and men from all over Afghanistan joined together to discuss women`s role in the peacebuilding process and how they themselves could contribute to bring about transformation in their own lives. The conference participants included women`s organisations representatives, both from Kabul and rural areas, youth and some international and government representatives, aiming at stimulating a dialogue between them.<sup>206</sup> The fact that the conference contained such various actors, could be seen as a welcoming sign in terms of a consensus around a need for change. The resulting “Afghan Women`s Roadmap to Peace” containing a ten-point list lay a strong emphasis on actions that Afghan women themselves can directly undertake, rather than as recommendations for external parties or the government. Education was identified as key for both the stable and peaceful future for Afghanistan and for women`s participation in the peace process.<sup>207</sup> This is also confirmed by the 2017 survey which identifies education and illiteracy, with unemployment coming second, as the biggest problems facing women, cited across gender, age, ethnicity, and the rural/urban divide.<sup>208</sup> What these legal and policy developments discloses, is progress, yet still a gap between de facto and de jure equality and security for women in Afghanistan.

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<sup>203</sup> Barr, 2016

<sup>204</sup> HRW, 2018a

<sup>205</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2016

<sup>206</sup> EPD, 2015

<sup>207</sup> EPD, 2015

<sup>208</sup> Akseer et.al., 2017

## 5.2 Colombia – A Celebrated Model for Inclusive Peace Processes

Colombia has experienced numerous peace processes and signing of peace agreements, some with successful results in terms of demobilisations, yet others have been incomplete.<sup>209</sup> The negotiation process from 2010 onwards and the resulting agreement between the Colombian Government and FARC, was therefore the last in a long row of attempts at creating peace. After the five-year long negotiation process however, the peace agreement was rejected by the Colombian people in a 2016 referendum. The opposition argued against the agreement partly because of the progressive language about gender and the inclusion of other marginalised voices. It was argued that the agreement text included parts which went against traditional Colombian family values.<sup>210</sup> The revised agreement, signed in November the same year, did not exclude gender issues to please the opposition. Rather, some argue that the content actually ended up clearer and specified.<sup>211</sup> This marks a stark change, as in previous peace processes, women have been fairly absent.<sup>212</sup>

The conflict has transformed over time, with different actors and with different issues at the centre.<sup>213</sup> However, a recurrent theme throughout, is the constant practice of exclusion, characterising the elite political culture.<sup>214</sup> In many ways the Colombian conflict could therefore be characterised as a fight over power. Political power, as well as power over land. Marginalisation of various sectors of Colombian society and inadequate allocation of land are often brought forward as underlying drivers of the conflict. As land distribution reform and political participation were included in the peace agreement, this could be seen as a sign of willingness to address the drivers.<sup>215</sup> Another is the fact that women and other marginalised groups were represented during the process, and had various influence over the end result.<sup>216</sup> Arguably then, the Colombian experience could offer an opportunity for valuable learning of how to design an inclusive peace process, aiming at building stable and sustainable peace.

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<sup>209</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>210</sup> Salvesen and Nylander, 2017

<sup>211</sup> *ibid*

<sup>212</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>213</sup> González, 2004

<sup>214</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>215</sup> Nylander et.al., 2018

<sup>216</sup> Bouvier, 2016



### 5.2.1 The Path Towards an Inclusive Peace Agreement

When the peace process went public in 2012, women were absent.<sup>217</sup> Until that date, there had been secret preparatory and exploratory talks between the newly elected President Juan Manuel Santos and FARC since 2010.<sup>218</sup> Importantly however, the negotiations were Colombian-owned from the beginning, complemented with Cuba and Norway as facilitators.<sup>219</sup> Nylander et.al. argues that some of the most important steps taken in the initial phases of the process were the trust built between the parties, and the political will established to end the conflict and stay at the table no matter what happened on the ground.<sup>220</sup> These preliminary phases laid the basis for the rest of the negotiation. Arguably then, excluding the wider society at that point placed the negotiation at risk of not addressing interest's other than the warring parties. However, these first phases contained issues that were strictly necessary to end conflict, creating negative peace, and did not map out the road ahead. Consequently, including other actors at that point might have further complicated an already highly complex situation.

The first sign of change, in terms of inclusion of women, came after the National Summit of Women for Peace in October 2013. At the summit nine Colombian women's organisations representing different ethnic, regional and political backgrounds, were able to unite behind three key demands: that women should be included, that their needs and interests should be taken into account during the negotiations and lastly that this time, the negotiating parties should continue until an agreement was made.<sup>221</sup> By the end of the year, both the Government and FARC had appointed women as participants.<sup>222</sup> In 2014 a sub-commission on gender was also created.<sup>223</sup> They were tasked to review the agreement from a gender perspective, and consequently had an important impact upon the final agreement's focus.<sup>224</sup> Further, victims and several minority groups were invited to the peace talks, and the participation of women

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<sup>217</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>218</sup> Nylander et.al., 2018

<sup>219</sup> *ibid*

<sup>220</sup> *ibid*

<sup>221</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>222</sup> Nylander et.al., 2018

<sup>223</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>224</sup> Nylander et.al., 2018

grew. By February 2015 for example, the FARC delegation was represented by more than 40 % women.<sup>225</sup>

Some of the highlighted key factors of the success, both in terms of coming to an agreement in the first place, as well as being gender-inclusive, have been identified as first, the warring parties unwavering goal of staying at the negotiation table and the political will for achieving peace. Second, that Colombian women's groups themselves pushed for their inclusion from the inception of the peace talks being publicly known. However, a signed agreement does not guarantee sustainable peace and continuous inclusion of women or other marginalised groups. Implementing the agreement will eventually be the main challenge. As presidential elections are coming up, and FARC will participate as a political party, this will be the first revealing test of the agreement's aim at inclusive peacebuilding. Implementation will probably be among the central issues, and the results will most likely be highly influential for the further development towards a positive, sustainable peace.<sup>226</sup>

### 5.2.2 Colombian Women Preparing the Grounds

On paper, Colombian women enjoy a broad range of rights. Through progressive legislation and several judicial decisions and laws, women's rights stand strong. Further, a far-reaching approach to address sexual and gender-based violence have been developed. Additionally, the Constitution secure women's political participation, also in peacebuilding.<sup>227</sup> However, gender-based violence for example is extensive, and the offenders are rarely prosecuted.<sup>228</sup> The political culture in Colombia is also characterised by elites and exclusion of other groups, especially of women. Patriarchal attitudes furthermore permeate the society and gender stereotypes and marginalisation of women provides barriers for women's substantive equality, although their formal equality is established by law.<sup>229</sup> These structural barriers also have intersectional and geographical dimensions. Indigenous and rural women experience high levels of discrimination and poverty, and consequent additional exclusionary barriers.<sup>230</sup> Indigenous and rural communities have also been among the worst affected by conflict, as

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<sup>225</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>226</sup> Ramírez, 2018

<sup>227</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>228</sup> HRW, 2018b

<sup>229</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>230</sup> UN Women, 2017

much of the conflict took place within these areas and several insurgent groups had their strongholds in these areas.<sup>231</sup> For women in general, and especially for rural and indigenous, the structural exclusion, inequality and discrimination, were all pre-existing patterns. Yet, conflict can and have aggravated such patterns.<sup>232</sup> The realities of women`s lives and their experiences of conflict are therefore complex. As actors within the conflicts they have played multiple roles, not only as peacemakers and peacebuilders, victims and care-takers, but also as combatants and war supporters.<sup>233</sup>

Throughout Colombia`s history of peace processes, women have rarely been included until now. Still, research has revealed how with every new process Colombian women`s organisations have built on the previous, and found new ways to pressure for their priorities and gain influence.<sup>234</sup> Off the peace table these various organisations have insisted on finding political solutions to the conflict, and arguably prepared the ground for peace. Not only have they fought for their own substantive equality, they have lobbied for human rights and legislation, promoted a public discourse of peace through the media and helped repair relations in communities. Further, they have used the WPS agenda to hold the government accountable to their international commitments under the resolutions. These efforts for example secured participation of women`s organisations in different national and local dialogues related to conflict prevention, under the National Development Plan.<sup>235</sup> This is a good reminder that the formal peacebuilding `table` is only one arena for building sustainable peace. Another important example of this is the role the women`s organisations and victims that were included during the negotiation process took upon returning to Colombia: When the talks went through setbacks or when the media began criticising the talks, these voices became important in publicly supporting the process and demanding that the parties were to stay at the table.<sup>236</sup> The fact that the international actors supported the women`s organisation`s claims for inclusion, is probably an important factor for their inclusion and the creation of a sub-commission on gender.<sup>237</sup> Yet the fact that several organisations, representing various women`s voices from different ethnic, regional and political backgrounds, were able to unite,

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<sup>231</sup> UN Women, 2018

<sup>232</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>233</sup> Bouvier, 2016

<sup>234</sup> *ibid*

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*

<sup>236</sup> Nylander et.al., 2018

<sup>237</sup> Salvesen and Nylander, 2017

and form a movement with three key goals, is probably just as, if not more, important. This development gave them force and a common direction.

## **6 Rethinking the Objectives of and the Pathways to Peace**

This chapter is structured around the four guiding assumptions outlined in chapter two. These assumptions have guided the choices of methodology and laid the basis for the feminist approach to meaningful participation. In the sections below, the assumptions will be revisited one by one, now informed by the investigations of a feminist approach to meaningful participation, and the experiences from Afghanistan and Colombia.

### **6.1 The Process of Sustainable Peace**

Achieving negative peace is important. Absence of direct violence, stability and some sense of security, is foundational for a peaceful society. Afghan women themselves identified domestic violence as one of the most important obstacles for everyday peace, and as Afghanistan faces a constant threat of violence and terrorism, rebuilding lives and develop a peaceful society, is not easy. In Colombia as well, direct violence against women is widespread, and constant threats and fear of violence starkly influence the society. Consequently, aiming at creating stability and an end to direct and physical violence should be obvious priorities within these contexts. Maybe the liberal aim at state-building through democratic elections, liberalisations of markets, good governance and effective and accountable institutions, is not that far-out after all? Maybe the reality of prioritising stability, is not such a wrong priority. After all, people need security in the aftermath of conflict to rebuild their lives. They need security to be able to participate in building peace.

However, conceptualising peace as an outcome, something we achieve after conflict has been resolved by the warring parties, frames peace as negative and partly neglects the underlying drivers of violence. When the Bonn agreement on Afghanistan in 2001 excluded Taliban, it laid the foundation for continuous conflict. Although the country has had fairly democratic elections, some sort of political stability, progress in terms of women's rights and implemented quotas in order to ensure women's political participation, Afghanistan is still a country of structural violence, both direct and indirect. Afghans do not have freedom from

fear, and at least not freedom from want. Peace was not realised through the US-led intervention won. It was neither achieved when external actors and the political elites implemented liberal and democratic institutions, or when women to a certain degree gained formal equality.

As revealed by the 2010-2016 peace process in Colombia, a peace process can be more than signing an agreement at the negotiation table. It is a process with opportunities to lay a basis for social change, where underlying inequalities and injustices in society, can be addressed. However, an agreement is just a piece of paper if not implemented. No matter the included issues, without implementation or the ability of actors to use the contents of an agreement to forge change, only negative peace has been achieved. And as revealed within the feminist approach, negative peace can be a fragile peace. Still, the inclusiveness of the Colombian peace process has laid an important foundation for such a change, and should not be underestimated. Subsequently, the cases have shown the importance of sustainable, positive peace. If the aim is to achieve positive and sustainable peace, it becomes naturally to include actors beyond the warring parties, and to think more in terms of development, and not just stability.

Paffenholz have explored the development-conflict nexus, and comes to the conclusion that there is not one development variable which causes or intensify conflict, yet combined, these development variables foster conflict. These variables vary among poverty, inequality, resource scarcity, unequal distribution and political, economic or social exclusion. Yet as she underlines, these drivers of violence always have contextual variants and elements.<sup>238</sup> Hence, addressing underlying drivers of structural violence is contextual, and cannot be based upon a universal recipe of peacebuilding. Further, she argues that this nexus underlines the importance of development policies and efforts as an integral part of the peacebuilding agenda, and not as something that comes after peace is built.<sup>239</sup> Positive peace will not be built without development initiatives. This also discloses the important work Colombian women`s organisation`s did by addressing local and national human rights, development and justice issues. They helped prepare the grounds for both an inclusive peace process, and for a

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<sup>238</sup> Paffenholz, 2009

<sup>239</sup> *ibid*

process of positive peace. Structural change takes time. Therefore, building sustainable peace does as well.

Applying an expansive conceptualisation of peacebuilding where peace is framed as positive peace, should be an overall aim. Achieving negative peace is highly necessary as a short-term goal or an important milestone within this process. In other words, positive peace contains various short-term and long-term goals, which at various points throughout the process gain priority. Addressing the symptoms of structural violence, through ending direct violence, implement quotas to decision-making or achieving formal equality under the law, are all important milestones within a process of creating sustainable peace. Still, deeper, more underlying drivers of violence must also be continuously addressed as more long-term goals.

## **6.2 Meaningful Participation of Actors within the Peacebuilding Structures**

When peace is framed as positive, aiming at enhancing sustainable outcomes, it becomes natural to include actors beyond the warring parties. Further, when aiming at identifying and addressing the underlying drivers of structural violence, those who experience the structural violence should be included, and hence influence the consensus-building process around the peace that is to be built. A recent World Bank report emphasised that effective prevention of underlying drivers of structural violence, where most likely to happen if it were led and owned domestically and based upon a collective effort, supported by international and regional actors.<sup>240</sup> However, when included, an actor does not inevitably gain meaningful inclusion, neither will an included actor with meaningful participation necessarily promote structural change. Consequently, better understanding of the actors and structures within a post-conflict context and the relations between them, are important.

Meaningful participation in a peacebuilding process, is both a means to achieve other important aims, and an end in itself. It is a means to promote sustainable outcomes of an inclusive peacebuilding process. A means to identify and then address the needs and priorities of women, and other marginalised or excluded groups in a society. It is an important tool to first identify and then address underlying political, social and economic inequalities and injustices. Further, it can be used by political elites and international actors as a means to gain

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<sup>240</sup> World Bank, 2018

legitimacy and popular support, as it helps build local ownership. On its own, meaningful participation is an end, where actors are able to have voice and influence upon processes which influence them. It is an end where actors, through agency, can themselves create emancipatory change. Meaningful participation is thus transformative, both directly and indirectly.

However, during the first years of the Colombian peace process, the fact that the process was secret and excluded actors and issues outside the warring parties, was instrumental in achieving first a ceasefire, and later the peace agreement. The secrecy and exclusion, helped place the focus upon what was strictly necessary at that time, without creating a more complex process than required. The fact that the Afghan Government until this spring have placed conditions upon Taliban to enter peace talks, has arguably further complicated such talks, as well as somehow confirmed Taliban's claim that Afghanistan has been invaded and are run by outsiders. Inviting Taliban to talk peace without conditions, might be a necessary first step towards a consensus of building peace. However, when the consensus-building process around what that peace will entail begins, broader and meaningful inclusion will be necessary to make it sustainable.

The cases also provided important lessons of the peacebuilding mechanisms at play which needs to be understood in order to ensure meaningful participation, especially of more marginalised actors. As the Afghan, political elites are key for the external actors in ensuring further stability, they have a large degree of leverage and power within the Afghan context. This discloses the importance of and the central role of elites within such contexts. Without their cooperation and political will, external actors' space for manoeuvre are limited. Nevertheless, as also unveiled in the case of Afghanistan, because of the complete aid-dependence, central political actors have had to please these external actors, while also pleasing other political actors in order to consolidate their own power. It is consequently a game of power balancing. Vertically integrating actors into this game of power balancing is therefore challenging, as the integration itself is hierarchical and hence permeated by power asymmetries. The fact that women's organisations in Colombia over time built up their influence from one peace process to the next, enabled them to be empowered, gain voice and the ability to pressure for their inclusion. Political will and the ability to change it, is consequently essential.

Revealingly then, meaningful inclusion is probably one of the most important steps towards sustainable peace, as it helps identify and address underlying drivers of structural violence. At the same time however, meaningful participation outside the elites and warring parties, are not inevitably either possible or wise at the inception of peace talks. Exclusion and secrecy might actually be strictly essential means, in order to construct a foundation which later can promote meaningful participation of broader societal actors and issues. For the leading actors within a peacebuilding process to be reflexive of such needs, of dividing between short-term and long-term aims, while still keeping them in mind, are strictly necessary.

### **6.3 The WPS Agenda, Prevention and Substantive Equality**

The WPS agenda could be seen as an attempt to conceptualise the actors and structures, and the relations between these actors and structures. Analysing this framework combined with the holistic and transformative elements within CEDAW have significant advantages. It reveals the dependent relationship of the pillars. Substantive equality will not be achieved within a peacebuilding context without addressing protection, participation and prevention as interdependent. Further, it underlines the framework's human rights feature. It is a human rights-based approach to women's peace and security. Moreover, the two frameworks offer different, yet supporting tools for implementation, monitoring and ensuring accountability. Combined then, the two frameworks are better able to promote substantive equality and women's human rights within the transition from conflict to positive peace. This underlines the importance of GR 30, and of further linkages.

Another important development occurred the same day as the CEDAW committee issued GR 30 in 2013: The eighth resolution within the WPS agenda, SCR 2122. SCR 2122 explicitly states the pivotal need to address the underlying drivers of conflict.<sup>241</sup> Consequently, it signals a possible move back to a more holistic approach to women's peace and security, and away from prioritising the pillars differently. Further, it recognises the need for an integrated approach that includes development issues, such as empowerment, in order to build sustainable peace.<sup>242</sup> GR 30 and SCR 2122, when seen together therefore helps remedy some

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<sup>241</sup> Security Council, 2013

<sup>242</sup> *ibid*



of the feminist critiques of the WPS agenda, and might offer valuable opportunities for future implementation, enforcement and state compliance.

However, addressing substantive equality, participation and prevention from women's perspectives in practice have proven challenging. In Afghanistan, the status of women has become a strong mechanism within the rhetoric of the government and most of all, the external actors within the context. Arguably this attention has not only had productive results. Women's rights advocacy within the Afghan context could therefore entail being labelled as pro-occupiers, or at least advocating for Western norms over Afghan ones. This also emphasise the importance of local ownership, or more correctly, the perceptions of local ownership. As seen, through the initiative of the "Afghan Women's Roadmap to Peace", there is local ownership around a need for increasing substantive equality. Additionally, the survey mentioned earlier, confirmed that Afghan's in general conceive education and unemployment as important issues facing women. Further, support for women's leadership were expressed.<sup>243</sup> The question at hand seems to be how to solve the balance of advocating for progress in the 'right' or 'wrong' way. Ownership, or perceptions of it, matters. Consequently, the assumption that linking the WPS agenda with women's rights, with an emphasis on promoting substantive equality would help remedy the weaknesses of the WPS agenda, might be true. However, as seen in the Afghan context, such an aim faces several obstacles and a complex picture where the status and progress of women have ended up in the middle of the struggle.

However, a complex picture of power balancing, does not remove the importance of prevention. Especially Colombia, have in these terms reminded us that much can be done before, during and after an official peace process at various levels in society, in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Fredman's four-dimensional approach to substantive equality is illustrative of this.<sup>244</sup> She emphasises the fact that even when equality is formalised by law, disadvantages may still exist. In order to clarify the multi-faceted nature of inequality and injustices in society, she hence states that substantive equality should first address disadvantage.<sup>245</sup> Quotas can be seen as an example of this. As women face disadvantages in order to participate politically, quotas can be an effective and immediate

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<sup>243</sup> Akseer et.al., 2017

<sup>244</sup> Fredman, 2016

<sup>245</sup> *ibid*

measure for political inclusion. In Afghanistan quotas have been effective in opening up space for women within decision-making. Second, substantive equality must aim to counter prejudice, stereotyping and violence based on certain characteristics or perceptions of gender, ethnicity, or other social categories.<sup>246</sup> This demands both short-term and longer-term measures. On a short term, establishing formal equality and non-discrimination under the law helps demonstrate that such prejudice, stereotyping and violence are illegal. Yet, such prejudice, stereotypes and violence are also often embedded in societal structures which takes time to change. Empowering the marginalised actors themselves, especially socially and economically, could therefore have a transformative potential. In Colombia, formal equality and non-discrimination were established quite early, yet women still face inequality and discrimination because they are women. Though, the fact that women's organisations over the years carved out their own space within the construction of peace, have slowly helped remedying some of these societal structures. Thirdly, Fredman emphasise voice and participation, to counter political and social exclusion.<sup>247</sup> Consequently, opening up avenues for participation and thus enabling voice are important short-term measures, yet empowerment, changing stereotypes and discrimination on the long-term is necessary in order to not only address the symptoms of suppressed voice and exclusion. The creation of a sub-commission on gender during the Colombian peace process enabled women's voices to be heard. However, participation is not just about space within the political elites. Young demonstrates how inclusion of marginalised groups such as women must come both from above, by inclusion in the political elites, and from below, through diverse social movements and civil society. She argues that "empowerment" is inclusion, as it builds agency.<sup>248</sup> This also relates to the importance of participation as representation and deliberation within the WPS agenda, as presented by O'Rourke.<sup>249</sup> As seen in both countries, although creative measures to include women have been implemented and formal equality have been established to a certain extent under the law, women in Afghanistan and Colombia do not have, at least not fully, substantive equality. Therefore, as the fourth dimension, structural change is needed. Fredman states that structures should accommodate difference, rather than

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<sup>246</sup> *ibid*

<sup>247</sup> *ibid*

<sup>248</sup> Young, 1990

<sup>249</sup> O'Rourke, 2014

requiring actors to conform.<sup>250</sup> Structures can after all be created, sustained and changed by agency.<sup>251</sup>

Achieving substantive equality through various short-term and long-term measures, may therefore help remedying inequality, exclusion and injustices. Having an actor-centric focus in peacebuilding, where short- and long-term measures are based on the needs and priorities of the actors, and especially those most marginalised, is thus necessary in order to promote meaningful participation. In other words, meaningful participation enables addressing the underlying drivers of structural violence, yet measures to address structural violence also promote meaningful participation as it stimulates substantive equality.

#### **6.4 The Added Value of Feminism**

The causal mechanisms at play within the transition from conflict to sustainable peace are complex. Not only are there multiple actors involved, with various needs and interests. There are also several structures and power asymmetries that impacts the actor`s ability to contribute in a meaningful way. Peacebuilding also unfolds at multiple levels at the same time. It is therefore a multidimensional endeavour. Moreover, contextual factors further complicate this picture, and makes universal approaches impossible. One size does not fit all. Still, as revealed throughout the discussions of this thesis, some general mechanisms within this transition are at play which block positive peace, and some could facilitate solutions in order to ensure the desirable effect of sustainable peace. Meaningful participation is central within such solutions.

Galtung`s conceptualisation of peace as positive, and hence expansive, and the need to bring an end to structural violence, represents an important insight. Still, his emphasis on structures, without adding the relation between actors and structures to the mix, neglects a pivotal part of any peacebuilding process. This is the first added value of feminism. Feminism conceptualise peace as expansive, as positive, were development represents an important element within the peacebuilding dimensions. Moreover, feminism is actor-centric, and begins the investigation of the necessary initiatives and measures to be included at the micro-level. Through the actor-

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<sup>250</sup> Fredman, 2016

<sup>251</sup> Giddens, 1984

centric analysis, feminism is able to reveal suppressive and unequal structures in society which hinders agency. This makes feminist perspectives reflexive to a broad range of marginalised actors in society, in other words the second added value. Feminism offers tools for understanding of actors and structures within a given context, and the instruments for enabling emancipatory, social change.

In this way, feminism broadens the objectives of peacebuilding through requiring a rethinking of the objectives to include elements such as gender-sensitive human security and social and economic empowerment. With its actor-centric focus, and broader conceptualisations of “security”, gender-sensitive human security as a concept are more aligned with the needs, interests and priorities of a society as a whole within a peacebuilding context. By broadening the security concept, building peace could better embrace both the direct and more indirect security needs. Moreover, social and economic empowerment infused with substantive equality, are fruitful when aiming at addressing the underlying drivers of violence, as seen above. In both case studies, disadvantages, stereotypes and injustices, lack of inclusion and voice and structural barriers to women`s meaningful participation, were all evident. It was also unveiled that having rights do not automatically facilitate the exercise of these rights. Prevention of structural violence, through broader notions of security and social and economic empowerment hence represents a way to bridge the fragile negative peace with sustainable peace, through a process of positive peace. At the heart of feminism then, is meaningful participation, as what these mechanisms aims to cause, are promotion of agency. At first sight, empowerment entail promotion of actors` capacities within unequal and oppressive structures. Yet ultimately it is about enabling these actors to question the structures, and begin to act to change them. Such an approach thus solves the “add and stir” fallacy of inclusive peacebuilding.

However, as argued within the feminist approach, without political will, these elements will not be implemented from above. Consequently, the importance of vibrant women`s movements were suggested. Their role as change-makers and translators of international norms were obvious in the case of Colombia, where united women`s organisations with international support were able to push for their inclusion. Their role in not only making the process inclusive for women, but also other actors, exposes the essential role such movements can have. Further, their various roles off the peace table as well, were highly significant. Not only in maintaining public support of the process itself and in obliging the negotiating

partners to stay at the table, but also in the multidimensional work women's organisation performed over decades preceding the peace process. Afghanistan however, offers a bit of a mixed picture when it comes to women's movements. As revealed, advocating for heightened status of women is complicated and steps must be carefully chosen. The fact that the status of women has come to be closely related to the western intervention, further complicates this picture. This underlines the importance of local-led and –owned processes, as well as contextualisation.

Feminist peacebuilding is thus inclusive, expansive and transformative. Additionally, feminist peacebuilding is actor-centric and reflexive to inequality, suppression and obstacles to agency. Feminism, with meaningful participation at its core, therefore offers several insights to the objectives of and pathways to sustainable peace.

## **7 Conclusions and Recommendations for a Feminist Perspective on Peacebuilding**

An inclusive process, will not automatically lead to inclusive and sustainable outcomes. Meaningful participation of actors and issues within these processes, is what matters, as it represents an effective means to promote inclusive and sustainable outcomes, and an end in itself. Departing from what we have seen above, peace must therefore be conceptualised as positive, as a process, that includes several short- and long-term goals. These goals range from achieving negative peace or an end to direct and physical violence to tackling several development targets. From addressing political, economic and social disadvantages, to framing security as gender-sensitive human security. Positive peace is therefore a process of deconstructing the structures of violence and constructing the structures of peace. Expanding the notions of what peace is, better conceptualise the task at hand when aiming at meaningful participation and building sustainable peace. By applying expansive notions of peace and gender-sensitive human security, agency is made visible in relation to peacebuilding, and the structural barriers that challenge this agency.

To ensure meaningful participation of actors and issues, inclusive peacebuilding processes must therefore expand the notion of what peace entails by addressing societal structures of political, economic and social exclusion. Meaningful participation beyond the warring parties

enables addressing the underlying drivers of structural violence. However, by addressing structural violence, meaningful participation is also promoted, as it stimulates substantive equality. Approaching peacebuilding in this way, by rethinking the means and ends of peace and addressing deeper societal resistance, the transition process from conflict to sustainable, positive peace have a transformative potential.

As actors are central within this process, approaching the overall research question through the sub-question on inclusion of women`s voices from the grassroots, have given several valuable and practical insights that could help inform inclusion of other actors and issues in the future. It revealed that women often build peace from below, and that much can be done before an official peace process, as well as off the official peace table. These contributions are highly relevant and decisive in peacebuilding processes, and should not be neglected. Consequently, investments in such initiatives are important to “prepare the grounds” for inclusive and sustainable outcomes of a peace process. However, women must also be represented in formal peacebuilding policies and practices. Actor-centric, inclusive, expansive and transformative peacebuilding, combined with political will or the ability to change it, are crucial elements in including grassroots women in a meaningful way.

Through the feminist approach, case studies and further analysis, some important lessons can therefore be learned. It is clear that external actors cannot come from the outside and implement “their” structures without any complications. Rather external actors need to and are interacting with both national elites and the wider society. As experienced in Colombia, opening avenues for women`s organisations and supporting their claims can have transformative results. While, Afghanistan revealed how such support could become problematic. An important lesson then, is that the work of external actors, or their interventions, cannot be perceived as empowering women, or other actors, even if social and economic empowerment is the objective. Rather, it should be conceived as an opportunity to remedy some of the obstacles and providing sustenance for actors as they are empowering themselves. Empowerment is a process, and cannot be broken down into specific targets. Yet several enabling factors, as seen within this thesis, can be revealed by beginning the analysis at the micro-level. Also, local ownership, as well as domestically-led processes are key. Promoting and empowering strong civil society organisations, networks and movements` agency, and especially women`s, might open avenues for bridging the feminist approach to meaningful participation and the most intractable barrier for change, namely political will.

Alliance-building and opening spaces are thus valuable enabling factors in such a context. A united civil society movement, with clear goals, could be seen as one of the most decisive tools in ensuring meaningful participation.

By applying the insights of the feminist approach to meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes, and the analysis presented in the various chapters, this thesis provides a more focused framework for future research. Women are only one central actor within this context, exploring the roles, experiences, needs and priorities of other actors, such as youth and ethnic minorities, through a feminist perspective, could add to these insights. It could add to the understanding of the actors within these contexts, and how power and other structural barriers sustain, challenges or enables their agency. Contextualising the insights through thorough case study analysis, could also bring additional and important lessons, which future peacebuilding processes could build on. Further, such analysis could provide better understanding of how substantive equality and meaningful participation are best addressed in a context-sensitive way.

Sustainable peace is a long-term process, containing several short-term and long-term goals. It is a multi-dimensional process, where important gains are achieved both on and off the official peace table. Framing peace through a feminist perspective with its actor-centric focus and its expansive, inclusive and transformative dimensions, offers important tools for meaningful participation of actors and issues within peacebuilding processes. As such, feminism present a means of going beyond the “add and stir” fallacy of inclusive peacebuilding. Not only of women, as feminism bring into the equation other questions, oppressions and differences, be it ethnicity, marginalisation, age or sexuality. In the age of “new wars”, addressing the underlying drivers of violence demands a rethinking of the objectives of and pathways to peace. It demands meaningful participation and substantive equality to reach the goal of sustainable peace.

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