

**LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Women's Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Lebanon: From  
the Civil War Through the Immediate Post-Conflict Period

By

Yassmin El Masri

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for the degree of Master of Arts in International Affairs

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## THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: Yassmin El-Masri I.D. #: 201206419

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The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in the major of International Affairs

Thesis Advisor's Name: Jennifer Skulte-Ouais, PhD	Signature: 	DATE: <u>10 / May / 2017</u> <small>Day Month Year</small>
Committee Member's Name: Sami Baroudi, PhD	Signature: 	DATE: <u>10 / 05 / 2017</u> <small>Day Month Year</small>
Committee Member's Name: Makram Ouais, PhD	Signature: 	DATE: <u>10 / 5 / 2017</u> <small>Day Month Year</small>



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## Dedication Page

To my parents, family and friends

## **Acknowledgement**

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people including the interviewees. Special thanks to Mr. Martti Antola, who offered a lot of help through the long process.

# Women's Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Lebanon: From the Civil War Through the Immediate Post-Conflict Period

Yassmin El Masri

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to identify the factors that influence the role women played in the peace process, both during the conflict and in the immediate post-conflict period (1990-1995) in Lebanon. It maps examples of women's contributions to peace processes from across the world and identifies key factors that influenced those contributions before analyzing those factors in order to better understand the Lebanese context. The analysis is based on a thorough literature review and semi-structured interviews. The thesis shows that while women in Lebanon were absent from the formal peace process, they did contribute to the informal peace process at the grassroots level—albeit not enough to make much of a change. The thesis concludes that the level of women's empowerment is a main driver for the increase of women's participation in peace processes at the national level.

Keywords: Civil War, Women, Peace, Armed Conflict, Lebanon, Peace Table, Factors

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Women have long been contributors to peace and peace processes across the world. The form, level and impact of their contributions changes from one context to another, however. There are several factors that influence these contributions and this thesis will explore them in order to understand the Lebanese women's experience with peacemaking during and after the civil war.

This chapter will provide an introduction to the thesis topic: the role women have played both during the conflict and in the post-conflict period. After discussing intrastate conflicts in general, the thesis turns to defining the term peacebuilding, with the help of some examples. The chapter will then provide a short overview of the role women played during the Lebanese civil war and the peacebuilding that followed. Finally, the chapter will outline the methodology of the study, identify the gaps in existing literature, and establish the significance and the limitations of the thesis.

### 1.1 An Overview: Women and Conflicts

Simone de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon have argued that wars liberate women and provide them with opportunities that can lead to their empowerment and emancipation, enabling them to play a greater role in their societies. When men leave their families and go to battle, women are left behind to play both male and female roles, thus providing them with more mobility and legitimacy to challenge the narrative that the male is the breadwinner. In the aftermath of wars, women have been able to access traditionally male dominated arenas such as politics and economic production.

Clearly, conflicts have always had an impact on women, just like women have always had an impact on conflicts. Following the end of the Second World War, however, the ways that wars are fought changed and intrastate conflicts have become more common than interstate conflicts; with this development, the degree of complexity and rate of civilian casualties have also increased. In the article “The Growing Importance of Civilians in armed conflicts”, Wenger and Mason (2008) state that since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the majority of victims in armed conflict are civilians. Furthermore, according to Wood et al. (2012) In “Armed intervention and civilian victimization in intrastate conflicts”, violence against civilians is currently a strategy of war, which explains this rise in civilian casualties. As the nature of conflict has changed, so has the way they affect women, as women have increasingly become the target of the violence against civilians. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf state in their assessment submitted to UNIFEM that “men and boys as well as women and girls are the victims of this targeting, but women, much more than men, suffer gender-based violence” (2002, p 10). In these wars, armed forces use violence, sexual assault and rape against women to demoralize and traumatize adversary groups.

Nevertheless, women can be more than just victims during a conflict; they can also be advocates of social transformation and fighters for peace. In these intrastate wars, the distinction between the active male and passive female stereotypes is blurry. In addition to being the victims, women have been playing many different roles as combatants, as members of an active resistance, or as pacifiers by working on peacebuilding initiatives and taking part in peace processes Johnson-Sirleaf (2002). Postmodern intrastate war, such as the conflicts in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia),

Guatemala, Liberia, Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian territories, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sri Lanka all witnessed women playing an active role.

## **1.2 Definition of Peacebuilding**

This section will present some of the most commonly accepted definitions of the concept of peacebuilding and discuss the related actions that aim to maintain global peace.

In 2007, the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee defined peacebuilding as "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives" (UNPF, 2016).

According to the United States Institute of Peace Press (USIP) "Peace Terms: A Glossary of Terms for Conflict Management and Peacebuilding", whereas "peacebuilding was originally conceived in the context of post-conflict recovery efforts to promote reconciliation and reconstruction, the term peacebuilding has more recently taken on a broader meaning. It may include providing humanitarian relief, protecting human rights, ensuring security, establishing nonviolent modes of resolving conflicts, fostering reconciliation, providing trauma healing services, repatriating refugees and resettling internally displaced persons, supporting broad-based education, and aiding in economic reconstruction. As such, it also includes conflict prevention in the sense of preventing the recurrence of violence, as well as conflict management and post-conflict recovery. In a larger sense, peacebuilding involves a transformation

toward more manageable, peaceful relationships and governance structures—the long-term process of addressing root causes and effects, reconciling differences, normalizing relations, and building institutions that can manage conflict without resorting to violence” (2011).

The term peacebuilding has become widespread since 1992, when Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali provided the following definition for four areas of peace actions in his report “An agenda for peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping”: ‘Preventive Diplomacy’, which entailed actions to prevent disputes from arising, escalating into conflicts or spreading; ‘Peacemaking’ as a process to bring conflicting parties to agreement through peaceful means, followed by; ‘Peacekeeping’, the disposition of a United Nations presence in the field, which was considered as a technique to increase the possibilities of conflict prevention and peacemaking, and; “Post-conflict Peacebuilding”, actions that aim to strengthen peace in order to avoid any deterioration of the situation, which might lead to the recurrence of violence (UN, 1992).

Goodhand, and Hulme (1999) argue in their paper assessing the methods of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, entitled “From Wars to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflict and Peacebuilding in the New World Disorder”, that peacebuilding is a strategy that attempts to reverse the vicious process associated with violence. They claim that currently it is a prevailing term generally used to indicate any activity implemented with the purpose of preventing, decreasing or resolving violence. They further argue that at the moment the UN differentiates between five main modes of peace intervention. As an addition to the four areas of peace actions identified in “*An Agenda for Peace*”, outlined above, they identify “Emergency Assistance” which includes humanitarian aids to the victims of wars.

Also, while they kept “Peacemaking”, “Peacekeeping” and “Preventive Diplomacy”, they replaced “Post-conflict Peacebuilding” with “Peacebuilding”, or the advancement of measures, at the local or national level, to address the fundamental roots of conflict. It is worth noting that the UN Peacekeeping Operations – Principles and Guidelines (2008) also replaced “Post-conflict Peacebuilding” with “Peacebuilding” and added “Peace Enforcement” as an activity to sustain international peace.

It can be said, therefore, that the prevailing definition of peacebuilding adopted by both academia and international practitioners includes a range of measures targeted to address the fundamental roots of conflict and to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by preventing, decreasing or resolving violence and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

### **1.3 Women and Peacebuilding**

Throughout history, women have demonstrated the capacity to play different roles in war and peace. Some like the sociobiologist E.O. Wilson argue that women are more peaceful by nature than men, yet many theorists, including feminist theorists, have argued the opposite (Goldestein, 2001). Nonetheless, women fight for peace because they are concerned about their lives, the lives of their children and the lives of other women; as such they are uniquely capable of reaching out to women in opposite groups (Brocke-Utne, 1985). History shows us that women have been able to overcome their divides, compromise and identify common issues in order to push forward peace processes.

In “Women at the peace table: Making a difference” Anderlini (2000, p.5) states that “the process of reconstructing a society emerging from war requires the equal contributions of men and women. Ensuring women’s participation in such negotiations enhances the legitimacy of the process by making it more democratic and

responsive to the priorities of all sectors of the affected population”. Although their contributions are often under-recognized and underestimated, women have been playing a greater role in making peace in countries entrenched in civil wars in recent history.

Women around the world have tried, within their own capacities and in spite of the challenges they face, to stop the violence of the armed conflicts in their countries by advocating for peace and pushing to be included in various peace interventions. They rely on several strategies and their efforts vary from initiatives at the grassroots level to contributions at the higher political levels. Women in El Salvador, for example, constituted the majority of the non-violent protests and strikes that lead to the settlement between the guerrilla forces and government troops (Vickers, 1993). Anderlini (2000) explains how women in the Philippines, the Balkans and Colombia were creative in their peace activism to stop the conflict and save their families. She further argues that “A common theme that emerges through this publication is that strong women’s civil society organizations cultivate skills and broaden opportunities for women to gain entry to the peace process.” (p. 12)

#### **1.4 Women, Civil War and Peace in Lebanon**

Like other postmodern intrastate conflicts, the Lebanese Civil War, which erupted in 1975, saw women play several roles. Lebanese women started calling for peace directly after the eruption of the war, yet they did not directly influence the peace process and did not play a major role in ending the violence in 1989. Maksoud (1996) claims, in “Lebanon Case” that women desired peace yet were bystanders who watched their country being destroyed. In “Communal Violence, Civil War and Foreign Occupation: Women in Lebanon”, Schulze (1998) claims that women were politically marginalized during the war and that only a small number of women played

a role in conflict resolution. Their initiatives had limited success as they lacked the power to truly influence actions by warring parties. She explains how "any female seeking greater political involvement, particularly on the national level, has to overcome the obstacles of religion, family patronage and gender" (p. 163). This is in stark contrast to for example women in Liberia, who were successful in forcing Liberian leaders to sign the Ghana-Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement – central to reaching a period of peace and free elections – through their non-violent peace activism that started in 2003, called “Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace”.

Clearly there are many differences and commonalities between countries that have undergone civil conflict, both in terms of the context of the conflicts and in terms of women’s involvement in the conflict itself or in peace initiatives and peace processes.

## **1.5 Methodology**

This thesis takes stock of the key factors identified by academics and policy makers as necessary for creating an enabling environment for women to play an effective role in peace processes, analyzes the extent to which these factors have been present in conflict situations where women have generally been considered to have played a key role, and examines the extent to which similar factors and dynamics played a role in facilitating or hindering women from playing a key role in the resolution of the Lebanese conflict and in the immediate post-conflict period.

In their report “Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes”, O’Reilly et al. (2015) argue that “qualitative and quantitative research indicates that women’s participation—especially when women were able to influence the process—increases the likelihood that an agreement will be reached in the short term while also making it more likely that the peace that results will be more

sustainable” (p. 31). Thus, this thesis seeks to answer the question: What factors inhibited the ability of Lebanese women to play an active role in the peace process and what roles did women play in maintaining the peace in the immediate post-conflict period from 1990 to 1995?

The hypothesis of this paper is that initiatives, organizations and networks that aim to empower women politically and introduce them to peace building and conflict transformation concepts and skills have a great impact on the ability of local women to play an active role in peace processes. Women in countries such as Liberia, Northern Ireland, Colombia, and Guatemala, among others, were exposed to and became involved in such initiatives and networks while women in Lebanon—though active in civil society in other ways—were not. This paper will compare the experience of Lebanese women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping to the experiences of women in other countries affected by armed conflicts through a literature review of comparative experiences and semi-structured interviews with various sources. It examines women's activism during the civil conflict and the immediate post-conflict period in Lebanon and assess the impact such activism had on the peace process. The paper then assesses women's participation in the peace negotiation and contrasts it with comparative experiences in other countries, making the argument that women in Lebanon were not sufficiently empowered to influence the negotiations.

This thesis undertakes a mapping of examples of women's contributions to peace processes and identifies key factors that influenced those contributions. In other words, this thesis examines how different societies have perceived the role of women and what the social, political and economic engagement of women in those societies was prior to conflict. The theoretical framework in which this thesis is positioned recognizes that context and history matter. While there are many similarities and

differences between civil wars across the world, each country's social context and experience of war must be considered. How women engaged and did not engage in these wars—and in society at large—are crucial to explaining why women in some countries such as Liberia, Burundi, Guatemala, Northern Ireland and Colombia, ended up playing a much larger role in the peacemaking process than women in Lebanon did.

The thesis then examines the role played by women in the peace process and post-conflict process in Lebanon and analyzes whether or not the factors identified before can help understand the Lebanese context.

As the Fourth World Conference on Women, or what later became known as Beijing conference, took place in 1995, the thesis looks at women's roles and contributions to peace in Lebanon from the civil war period, through the signature of the Taif Agreement up until 1995. This year is chosen as the end point of this thesis because following the Beijing conference women's organizations work in Lebanon shifted tremendously and consequently women's status and contributions to the society also shifted. To go beyond 1995 in this thesis would thus necessitate adding variables that go beyond the focus on the thesis as well as add considerably to its length.

The thesis seeks to answer the following specific questions: What factors inhibited the ability of Lebanese women to play an active role in peace processes? Are women's role(s) in peace processes related to their roles and involvement during the war? Can peacebuilding and political empowerment initiatives encourage women to fight for their right to participate in peacebuilding?

As little literature is available on women and civil war in Lebanon, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with women activists who survived the war and were involved in the war to obtain their input and opinions regarding the factors that affected the role and involvement of women in the Lebanese context. The interviews

also focused on how these women assess the role played by women in the war and if there were any peace building programs targeting women prior to or during the war. An additional semi-structured interview was conducted with an expert who is specialists in the Lebanese war, gender issues and feminist perspectives on post-conflict recovery in order to understand the relation between war, peace and gender. Finally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts from international peace-building organizations who have been involved in designing and implementing initiatives focused on women in order to understand how these initiatives affect women in conflicts. The nine women were selected based on their extensive knowledge and experience besides their availability during the timeframe dedicated for conducting the interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews, the required on-line training “Protecting Human Research Participants” was completed and a Certificate of Completion and an approval from the “Institutional Review Board” (IRB) (Please refer to Appendix 1) at the Lebanese American University (LAU) were received.

## **1.6 Gaps and Significance of Study**

Much of the literature on women and war focuses on women as victims of wars. As Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) state, “women are victims of unbelievably horrific atrocities and injustices in conflict situations; this is indisputable” (p. 1). In many societies, women are not equally empowered as men are, and therefore often become victims of violence and, together with children, constitute the majority of displaced persons in refugee camps and conflict zones. Consequently, many narratives focus on exposing the abuse – whether physical, psychological or sexual – women suffer during

conflicts, including murder, infection with HIV/AIDS, and other degrading actions such as mutilation, slavery, abduction, rape and forced pregnancy and prostitution.

However, especially after the recognition of women's role in peace and security in UN Security Council Resolution 1325, scholars have started to increasingly acknowledge and highlight the role of women in bringing an end to conflicts. For example, scholars such as Fuest (2008) in a chapter entitled "This is the time to get in front: Changing roles and opportunities for women in Liberia", Sewell (2007) in her article "Women Building Peace: The Liberian Women's Peace" and Jordan (2003) in "Women and conflict transformation: Influences, roles, and experiences" recognize the will and creativity demonstrated by Liberian women in actively pursuing ways to end violence and rebuild their war-torn country. In her book *Women Building Peace – What They Do, Why it Matters*, Anderlini states that "this book is about those women who are working for peace and striving to engage in the formal processes. It is about those who bring new perspectives and commitment to issues of conflict prevention, peacemaking and reconstruction, and the differences they are making"(2007).

Moreover, very limited literature exists on the role Lebanese women played in ending the civil war and on their participation in, or their influence on, the peace process and the Taif agreement such as Sehadeh (1999) in *Women and War in Lebanon* and Accad (1989) in "Feminist Perspective on the War in Lebanon". Even fewer are the academic works that address women's political empowerment and peace-building initiatives before and during the civil conflict in Lebanon except for UN Reports and Abu Saba and Bentley (1999) in "Human Needs and Women Peacebuilding in Lebanon".

Drawing upon comparative experiences where women are recognized to have played a key role in ending conflict, this thesis seeks to contribute to existing research

by identifying the factors that hindered Lebanese women from playing an active role in the peace process and immediate post-conflict recovery, with the aim of identifying possible lessons learned for future peace processes.

## **1.7 Limitations**

This thesis is meant to be comparative in nature, drawing general lessons from different national contexts and applying them to the case of Lebanon. The purpose is not to focus on the specificities of the different conflicts and their contexts, but rather to identify general factors that have contributed to the success of women's involvement in peacebuilding in different context and then to discuss the extent to which these factors could help to shed light on why the contributions to peacebuilding in Lebanon were so limited.

The following chapter will focus on the relation between women and peacebuilding on both theoretical and practical level. It will present women's key types of contributions to peacebuilding in several conflicts across the world. This will allow mapping the factors that positively or negatively influence this relation.

# Chapter 2

## Women and Peace

This chapter will provide a literature review of the roles women have played in and the contributions they have made to peacebuilding in civil wars. It will begin by presenting different feminist theories on women and peacebuilding and identify the theoretical framework that will frame the study. It will then offer a historical overview of the contributions women have made to peace to demonstrate that this issue is not something recent and that women have been central to both conflict and peace for a long time. The third section of this chapter will then identify and categorize the key types of contributions women have made and the kinds of obstacles they have faced in participating in peace processes. This will be followed by a general review of examples of contributions made by women in specific peace processes both during and in the aftermath of armed civil conflicts in different countries. Finally, the chapter will conclude by mapping the factors that have allowed women to successfully contribute to peace processes and immediate post-conflict periods.

### **2.1 Feminist Theories: Women and Peacebuilding**

There is general agreement with the liberal theory that argues women are not by nature more peaceful than men. Goldstein (2001) writes that “liberal feminists argue that women equal men in ability, and that the gendering of war reflects male discrimination against women” (p. 39). Women are not biologically susceptible to pacifism any more than men are susceptible to aggression (Reardon, 1993; Mazurana & McKay, 2001). As Carroll (1987) argues, there is enough evidence that some women, when given the choice, do take up arms, enter the battlefield and kill. Indeed, women

have proven to be aggressive combatants in several armed conflicts like Algeria, Nicaragua and Sri Lanka (Porter, 2007).

Where this agreement generally ends, however, is on the question of feminism, pacifism, militarism and war. To start with, feminism is an ideology that stresses the equality between men and women in terms of value and that this equality should be acknowledged by all societies (Mazurana & Mckay, 2001). Secondly, when it comes to the word 'peace', the most common meaning associated to it is Galtung's concept of negative peace or the absence of widespread violent conflict, which is also the definition adopted by this paper (Pankhurst, 2003). Whereas some feminists are convinced that women often oppose war and are more likely to be pacifiers, others maintain that both men and women have supported wars and showed opposition to them. Reardon (1993) provides an example of the support women showed to the various national armies during the Second World War, for example by working in factories producing weapons and ammunition. Consequently, and as argued by Jan. J. Pettman, wars cannot be considered as men's business in view of the increase in casualties among women civilians since the First World War, the increase of women in militaries, and the role played by women as taxpayers and supporters of war (Honor, 1999):

“She further argues here that women have everything to do with war, that war would not be possible without women's co-operation at all practical levels. At the symbolic level women force men to fight. At the level of citizenship women as taxpayers, voters and citizens are necessary for warring. At the practical level the number of women joining state militaries is on the increase (p. 2-3)

Subsequently, at a first glance the bond that connects pacifism and feminism together seems essential and logical, as their goals of equitable human and social conditions appear to be in harmony – as Carroll (1987) states “there is some fundamental bond between feminism and pacifism, some inherent and inevitable logic that binds them ultimately together” (p. 2). For example, Vickers (1993) suggests that “it is now generally accepted that ending discrimination against women and achieving a nonviolent world are mutually interdependent, inseparable goals. It is also generally recognized that effective development and an end to structural violence require the full participation of women. The relationship between women’s rights, social and economic justice, and nonviolent conflict resolution has not only become clearer over the years, but it is now seen as of the greatest importance to all, not only to women” (p.149). Furthermore, American feminist Leslie Cagan argues that “feminism rests on a belief that we can live in a world without hierarchies of control and domination, that people can exercise control over their own lives and live in harmony with others, and that women can share equality of opportunity and freedom” (Reardon, 1993, p.18). “The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies” states that “peace includes not only the absence of war, violence, and hostilities at the national and international levels but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality, and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society” (Reardon, 1993, p. 19). However, when women peace activist tried to combine feminism and pacifism, in an attempt to promote peace as a feminist issue and as a response to male control in the peace movement, they faced considerable opposition. For example, Emily Stoper and Roberta Ann Johnson’s theory that women are morally superior to men and had a greater role as peacemakers was refused by many feminists. As Tickner (1999) states:

“Most IR [International Relations] feminists would deny the assertion that women are morally superior to men. Indeed, many of them have claimed that the association of women with peace and moral superiority has a long history of keeping women out of power, going back to the debates about the merits of female suffrage in the early part of the century.” (p. 4).

This study is of two minds about the opponents of the theory, who claim that women sticking to the role of pacifist and choosing not to participate in militarism constitutes a failure in their responsibilities. On the one hand, men and women should have equal opportunities to participate in societal affairs, which means that when women refuse to take part in combat, they leave power and force as a singularly male dominated arena. Moreover, according to Judith Stiehm, women’s refusal to fight further strengthens the impression of women as victims and men as aggressors adapted to the use of force (Carroll, 1987). Tickner (1999) agrees when she argues that linking women to peace can reinforce gender stereotypes that consider men as active and rational, as opposed to women who are passive, victims and emotional. She adds that these stereotypes have a negative impact on women and their credibility when it comes to international politics and also on peace. On the other hand, the argument could also be made that militarism and its economy are hardly in favor of women or feminist values.

Moreover, during the 1980s, many feminists strongly opposed the women’s peace movement, accusing it of reinforcing gender stereotypes and portraying women as natural peacemakers instead of influential activists fighting for change. There has always been a tension between the feminist movement and activists in the women’s peace movement around the traditional image of women as mothers and custodians of the life and the future of their children (Carroll, 1987). This study does not adopt the

feminist theory that “women have a distinct way of knowing different from that of men” (Intemann, 2010, p.783). It particularly confutes Sara Ruddick’s thinking that those involved in mothering work have a distinct rationale for refusing war, distinct ability to adopt non-violence in resolving conflicts and a unique approach in criticizing military thinking (Bailey, 1996). But this study also challenges those feminists who do not admit the key roles women can play and have played in peacemaking, purely on the grounds that it could be seen to reinforce women’s image as natural peacemakers and men as perpetrators of violence. Porter (2007) is certainly right that women are the prime nurturers in relationships, families and communities, which allow them to play a key role in peacebuilding – even if these roles are the result of inherent inequalities between genders.

I believe that the nature of the relationship between women, war and peace is best considered from a deconstructionist perspective. The poststructuralist perspective allows us to adopt a non-essentialist approach to identity constitution and to understand the relation between women and peace. Poststructuralists claim that identity is changeable, constantly under construction and disintegrated through numerous discourses. Basically it implies that war is gendered and that the gendered nature of war influences fighting at the level of cultural and discursive construction (Honor, 1999). Honor (1999) refers to the Argentinean experience of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires to highlight the complexity of the connection between gender and war. She explains how women used their gendered role as mothers to oppose the militaries and their weakness was in fact their strength, in the sense that soldiers would not use physical violence against mothers and grandmothers in public in order to protect their masculinity. Here many feminists would object and consider it as a reinforcement of

traditional roles. However, I agree with Honor (1999) that those women were able to engender political identity and revolutionize motherhood.

As such, this study builds on the argument presented by feminist researchers such as Elise Boudling (past president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)) that women have been disarmed throughout the civilized history, as a result they have seen the society with a different eye, and can offer alternative models to resolve conflicts. She further explains that women, as a marginalized group that is excluded from power and has acquired daily skills at the micro level, can be the agents of social transformation (Carroll, 1987). Reardon (1993) agrees with this view when she notes that "it is women who continue to envision human alternatives for world society. It is women whose resistance to war and struggle for social justice and human rights have in fact provided many of our concepts of positive peace, of the condition of human society that permit to all live authentically human lives" (p. 2). Finally, it is also similar to the argument of Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) that women's vision of peace is rooted in the respect for the dignity of the individual, irrespective of ethnicity, race, nationality, or economic situation.

As was previously stated, the purpose of this thesis is to highlight the importance of women's contribution to peace. In the book "Women and Peace: Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives", a collection of papers by women educators, activists and scholars, Pierson (1987) emphasize the need to counter the prevailing understanding that women's ideas and activities are marginal and that preparation for war is more vital than preparation for peace.

Overall, the thesis will base on the approach that women, as a result of marginalization, are equipped with skills and perceptions that allow them to suggest alternatives to resolve armed conflicts and to become agents of change even within

traditional gender roles. Consequently, the thesis will focus on women in conflicts where they managed to contribute to peace through participation in peace talks and organizing innovative local and regional initiatives. Although these initiatives and some of the driving factors seemed to be reinforcing gender stereotypes such as the women nurturer, yet it is bringing a new dimension and power to womanhood. An Asian activist once stated describing a situation when repression escalates “The men retreat because they are too vulnerable. Instead the women come out in their traditional roles as nurturers and as protectors of the community” (Anderlini, 2007, p.54)

## **2.2 Historical Overview – Global Level**

A number of scholars have suggested that women and peace have been interconnected throughout history. In *Women and War*, a book that investigates the impact of war on women and how women can contribute to peace, Vickers (1993) argues that since ancient history there has been a link between women and peace, citing the Greek comedy *Lysistrata* as an example. As a matter of fact, Reardon (1993) also refers in her book *Women and Peace – Feminist Visions of Global Security* to *Lysistrata* in order to demonstrate women’s historical efforts in battling for peace.

In more recent history, women have been involved in peace actions as early as 1820, when women’s peace societies were established in England. Women were speakers in the first international peace congress in Brussels in 1848. Afterwards, and as stated by Cooper (1987) “Women participated in the peace movement from the 1880s to 1914 in all possible ways” (p. 56). In particular, women have been advocating for conflict resolution through arbitration and law. They later adopted more cautious actions and played new roles such campaigners and informal negotiators (Vickers, 1993). One of the leading women peace activists during this period was Bertha von

Suttner, an Austrian journalist, author, translator and political commentator, who was the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905 (Cooper, 1987; Vickers, 1993).

Nevertheless, the International Women's Peace Movement was officially launched in 1915. When the First World War was fuming across Europe, a group of women activists could no longer accept the atrocities. They crossed the borders to The Hague where they gathered thousands of women from 12 belligerent and neutral countries and organized the first International Congress of Women (ICW). The ICW was later turned into Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which is still active today and plays a role in advocating for the inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes (Cooper, 1987; Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002; Vickers, 1993). Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) claim that women had a role in ending the First World War and highlight the fact that many of the "14 points" that US President Woodrow Wilson brought to the Versailles talks was based on recommendations from ICW president Jane Addams. Moreover, women were very active in campaigning for disarmament. Vickers (1993) explains how women were able in 1932 to collect nine million signatures on a petition calling for universal disarmament. Later, many women were among the pioneers of the anti-nuclear movement.

After the end of Cold War, and the rise of civil armed conflicts, as Vickers (1993) demonstrates through examples from Sri Lanka, Argentina, El Salvador, Northern Ireland and Serbia, women have been the leading peace activists at the grassroots level. To make a long story short, until this day women are still active, and their contribution to peace is still just as vital. They have fought against the use of force, the production and trade of small arms, nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. They have challenged militarism and insisted on peace and reconciliation over vengeance.

## **2.3 Forms of and Obstacles to Women's Contributions to Peace**

### **2.3.1 Forms of Women's Contributions to Peace**

This section will address some of the ways in which women have contributed to peace at both the informal and formal levels. Indeed, the UN defines a peace process as a process consisting of “a complex range of informal and formal activities... Informal activities include peace marches and protests, intergroup dialogue, the promotion of intercultural tolerance and understanding and the empowerment of ordinary citizens in economic, social, cultural and political spheres... Formal peace processes generally include early warning, preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-building and global disarmament. Activities include, inter alia, conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, reconstruction of infrastructure and the provision of humanitarian aid.”(UN, 2002, p. 53)

Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue that although their efforts are hardly acknowledged or supported, women have contributed to peace as civic activists, as community leaders, and as survivors of the most dreadful wars. They have contributed to peace in different parts of the world by uniting across political, religious and ethnic differences.

In fact, women work adamantly and fearlessly in the middle of deadly conflicts. They have sacrificed their lives for peace. In their assessment of the impact conflicts have had on women and the role women have played in peacebuilding, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, (2002) describe how women have taken risks in pursuance of putting communities and families back together. Women's involvement in peace in countries experiencing armed civil conflicts has taken several forms. The first form considered as part of the informal peace process is women's activism to end hostilities, which

women often engage in by working at the grassroots level within their communities. The second form, part of formal peacemaking, is engaging in pre-negotiations or the preparation period where the selection of negotiating parties takes place. The third form also considered as formal peacemaking is women's contribution at the peace table itself. The fourth and last form is the role of maintaining peace played by women during the post-conflict period, often through informal channels. The Broadening Participation research (2015) presents several roles and rationales for participation in these different forms.

Women's activism at the grassroots level takes several forms. Often it starts by women adopting traditional nurturing roles such as providing food, education and shelter for their families and communities. When warfare reaches women's private sphere, women's activism acquires new forms and moves to the public sphere (Anderlini, 2007); according to both Mazurana and McKay (2001) and Anderlini (2007) resistance to militarization is a prominent example of such a public activity engaged in by several grassroots women's organizations. In fact, in Colombia, the Balkans and Palestine, women have lied to authorities, hidden the men in their families and even dragged them home from the frontlines.

Consequently, Mazurana and McKay (2001) argue that:

“Women's grassroots peacebuilding is frequently personal, interpersonal, creative and political. It may use imaginative activities to protest violence and advocate peace such as the wearing of black to protest violence, employing street theater, holding demonstrations, vigils, peace camps, and peace walks” (p. 6).

Anderlini (2007) argues that mass public demonstrations are one of the first invasions of public space to demand peace. She uses the case of the Balkans, where

Women in Black demonstrated tirelessly in silence, as an example of such activity. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) provide additional examples of how women have offered recovery and healing services and arranged solidarity networks across ethnic, class and cultural gaps. They also refer to women's resistance to war through writing, lobbying for ceasefires, educating each other, and organizing public demonstrations and civil disobedience. Jordan (2003) also adds several examples of information contributions women have made to peace through programs focusing on creative approaches such as arts and storytelling, training and education, information exchange and solidarity.

Another focus of women's work at the grassroots level is what Pankhurst (2003) describes as women trying to prevent the collapse of the social fabric. She provides examples from Northern Ireland, El Salvador, Guatemala, Rwanda, and Burundi where women developed several forms of welfare plans and community organization in refugee camps. Another significant focus of some grassroots women's organizations has been the empowerment of women in order to increase their presence in national, regional and international decision-making bodies and reinforce of competent participation (Mazurana & McKay, 2001).

Finally, one of the forms through which women contribute to peace at the grassroots level is through alliances with different stakeholders to strengthen their peace activism. Women are skilled at building coalitions for the sake of peace; they have the capacity to mobilize different groups in society and work across cultural, religious, ethnic, and political divides. (O'Reilly, 2015)

Regarding women as peacemakers, Anderlini (2007) argues that there are two key dimensions of women's peacemaking initiatives: one is ensuring political and public backing for peace talks, and the other is their direct contribution to peace talks.

Women's contributions to peace talks can vary from direct representation to observation, consultation, inclusive commissions, high-level problem workshops, referenda and mass action (Paffenholz et al., 2015). In this regard, O'Reilly et al. (2015) argue that during formal peace negotiations, when women at the peace table face strong resistance, it can be more beneficial for women's groups to stay outside of official talks, as they can rely on the media or mass action to create leverage and pressure.

When it comes to maintaining peace, Mazurana and McKay (2001) argue that reconciliation in post-conflict countries is one of the main sectors where women make valuable contributions at the grassroots levels. Furthermore, McKay (2004) argues that women peace builders try to reinstate normalcy in post-war countries by stressing the importance of processes such as reconciliation: "Peace-building is viewed as an important role of women during post-conflict reconstruction and an opportunity to improve girls' and women's human security." (p. 166). In fact, during the post-conflict period, women's activism can take the form of peace development, education, reintegration of former child soldiers, and the establishment of NGOs to strengthen civil society in addition to community reconciliation and reconstruction initiatives, (Noma, 2007; Mazurana & Proctor, 2013).

In short, women can contribute to peace during all its phases in many different ways. The thesis will base on the activities mentioned in this section to review the examples of contributions made by women in peace processes in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia), Guatemala, Liberia, Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian territories, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sri Lanka both during and in the aftermath of armed civil conflicts at the grassroots level and at the peace table.

### **2.3.2 Obstacles to Women's Contributions to Peace**

This section will address some of the constraints facing women who wish to engage in local peace activism or even hindering their participation in formal peace talks. An overview of key literature regarding the role of women in peace building reveals a broad range of obstacles and challenges women have faced in different contexts; both at the grassroots level and at the formal or political level.

The first obstacle women face often comes from within their families. As a result of the changing gender dynamics within patriarchal societies, greater activism by women can either be opposed by male family members – at worst even resulting in gender based violence – or women may feel overwhelmed by the additional responsibilities that would come with taking on traditionally male roles outside their houses, in addition to the traditionally female roles they would be expected to continue to fill within the private sphere. Moreover, assuming a more active role with their communities can even have an impact on the ability of women who have had to live with physical and emotional burden as caregivers within tough conditions, to receive assistance; according to UNHCR, women are the victims of discriminatory practices such as getting smaller food portions, becoming victims of contagious disease and losing the chance to receive medical attention when standing in a queue to collect food or water for their family (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). All of these hurdles have both a physical and psychological impact on some women, who are left to be fragile and devastated, with no energy to participate in any kind of activities, including engaging in peacebuilding.

The second challenge women often face is at the societal level, in the form of resistance within their communities. In her research “Hidden Voices: Working Towards a Culture of Peace”, where she collected testimonies of women peacebuilders

in several countries, Jordan (2003) concludes that some women peacebuilders have experienced great resentment towards their actions by their communities and even received threats. She notes that “some women, for example, have experienced great antagonism towards them, while two have received threats. All of those working in teams or organisations have experienced conflict within the teams” (p. 249)

Finally, there are the challenges resulting from the lack of political representation women still experience in many societies, where women lack any decision-making power or direct influence on the violence and have little or no internal or international support at the psychological, financial and socio-economic levels.

With regard to formal peacebuilding, one of the obstacles to women’s participation in formal negotiations is actually the selection process of participants itself. O’Reilly et al. (2015) argue that women’s participation in formal peace negotiations is related to the purpose of peacemaking. They explain that if the aim is solely to stop violence, women are ineligible to be part of the participants since they are rarely the militants. In fact some of the mediators do exclude all civil society actors in order to avoid complicating the process and save time. Another is the lack of political will, demonstrated by the fact that the international community often submits to the demands of local government and warring parties of not having women at the table. (O’Reilly et al. 2015). Finally, one of the constraints is logistical; O’Reilly et al. (2015) argue that “[women] may need to organize childcare; they may not have access to funds to travel; they may need additional security provisions to ensure that their safety won’t be jeopardized as a result of their participation, even on their return home” (p. 30).

To conclude, as seen in the previous section women contribution to peace takes several forms and in fact women face challenges while doing all of the peace activities

and on different levels. The thesis will analyze further these obstacles as part of mapping the factors that have an impact on women's contribution to peace.

## **2.4 Women and Peace in Civil Armed Conflict**

### **2.4.1 Female Activism**

Both men and women have the capacity for peacemaking and should be responsible to build and keep peace. However, as was previously stated, as a result of marginalization, women are often equipped with skills and opinions that allow them to suggest and initiate non-violent alternatives to call for a halt to the violence and resolve armed conflicts. Mazurana and McKay (2001) argue that knowing that women and children are the main casualties of all violence during armed conflicts; grassroots women's groups involve themselves in peacemaking and peacebuilding, because they are motivated by their concerns for the security of their children and families. They further claim that grassroots women's peace organizations usually adopt nonviolent approaches in their peacebuilding activities, while acknowledging human rights and promoting tolerance and the full participation and socio-economic, cultural and political empowerment of women.

In fact, Mazurana and Proctor (2013) argue, in "Gender, Conflict and Peace - Occasional Paper" by World Peace Foundation, that women are crucial actors in building peace in conflict-affected countries, as shown by feminist research over the past decades. They explain that:

"As human rights and peace activists, women are on the front line of conflicts around the world, they possess a deep understanding of devastation of war and the long-term efforts needed to rebuild a more just society. Women in grassroots organizations are also well-positioned to understand and, at times,

represent the needs of conflict---affected populations—before, during and after the fighting” (p. 21).

Similarly, in her book *Women Building Peace: What they do, why it matters*, which provides a cross-regional examination of women’s peacebuilding initiatives from around the world, Anderlini (2007) argues that women, like all other members of society, suffer under authoritarian regimes. As a result, some have been involved in provoking violence and taking up arms. Nevertheless, women’s activism for peace is frequently more prevalent but also less noticeable. Women are usually among the first to raise their concerns and voices against war and try to prevent any escalation of violence. In fact, even though women rarely are in positions of power, they have been at the forefront of informal global peace movements.

As this thesis has demonstrated in previous sections, there are several forms of women’s grassroots activism, with aims varying from ending violence to mediation, advocating for accountability, reconciliation, mobilization for peace talks and, finally, pushing belligerents to sign peace accords. This section will present detailed examples of the experiences of women’s activism from Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia), Liberia, Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

#### 2.4.1.1 Mobilization and Unity across the Dividing Lines

To start with, some women refuse to give up the pursuit of peace and are extremely devoted to preventing, ending, and recovering from armed conflicts. As Anderlini (2007) claims, women are the voice of the silent majority longing for peace. She offers examples from 1995, when women in Northern Ireland and the Middle East stepped over invisible lines, accepted the ‘other’ and mobilized people around peace.

In an “Inclusive Security: Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies”, O’Reilly (2015) refers to a psychosocial study that evaluated the response of more than 50 thousand people from 22 countries across five continents. The results of the study show that women are more likely than men to discard hierarchies based on belonging to groups, which explains their success in building coalitions across dividing lines. She further shows that the experiences of women crossing divides and uniting ‘the others’ has been documented in Colombia, Guatemala, Northern Ireland and Somalia, among others. She states that “women promote dialogue and build trust. They consistently bridge divides and build coalitions for peace. They bring different perspectives to bear on what peace and security mean and how they can be realized...” (p. 11).

Indeed, women in Liberia were able to unite during the early years of the civil war, when Concerned Women of Liberia – a group based in Monrovia – reached out to women in areas under the control of warring factions (Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012). Another example would be the joint Israeli-Palestinian women’s peace activism, which was stimulated by the First Intifada that lasted from 1987 till 1993 (Pope, 1993; Richter-Devoe, 2009). At the beginning, they organized solidarity-based protests which created a certain bonding, followed by dialogue groups and local and international conferences (Richter-Devoe, 2009). One of the joint grassroots peace initiatives was the Jerusalem Link, an alliance built in 1994 between the Palestinian “Jerusalem Center for Women” and the Israeli “Bat Shalom” (Richter-Devoe, 2009; Mazurana & McKay, 2001). Mazurana and McKay (2001) describe the efforts done by the Jerusalem Link to create peace activities. In particular, they note that activities have been:

“organized around several major areas: human rights education and advocacy, peace education, dialogue groups of Israeli and Palestinian women, youth and

young women making peace, and the engagement of women political leaders on both sides. Most activities are joint efforts, but sometimes they are conducted for either Palestinian or Israeli women. One project of Jerusalem Link is a media campaign. Jerusalem Link has recognized the critical role domestic and international media play in shifting public opinion and has published petitions and joint letters, focusing upon both print and electronic media.” (p. 14).

Another example of an individual woman who was able to build peace by working across the dividing lines is Visaka Dharmadasa from Sri Lanka, whose son disappeared in 1998 and who then founded the organization Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and Association of War Affected Women. She worked to end the civil war by reaching out to Tamil mothers and was able to lead a march where 12,000 women from both sides took part to remind the government about the disappeared (Anderlini, 2007). She also organized workshops to rehabilitate soldiers and educate them, along with youth and community leaders, about international standards of conduct in war (Inclusive Security, 2015; Anderlini, 2007). She also promoted the economic and social empowerment of women across dividing lines and their inclusion in the peace process. As a result, she created a deep connection and a relationship of trust with the Tamils, which was proven during the formal peace talks, when she was asked by the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) to carry a message to the government (Anderlini, 2007; Inclusive Security, 2015).

A fourth example would be from Northern Ireland, where despite the fading of the women’s peace movement in the 1970s, women continued their peace efforts and in the 1980s started working together on joint concerns such as child care and equal pay. As a result, religious differences faded away and trust was built, leading to the

eventual creation of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition (NIWC) – the first women's political party that won two seats at the peace table (Anderlini, 2007).

#### 2.4.1.2 Mediation

O'Reilly (2015) argues that women can resolve conflicts and play the role of mediators also for dispute at the community level. She provides an example from Somalia, where women have greater freedom of mobility between conflicting groups—partially due to the prevalence of intermarriages between clans—and as a result are known for being first-line diplomats who help settle disputes by carrying messages between conflicting clans.

Another example of the contributions to peace made by women's organizations can be found in West Africa, where the Mano River Union Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET) is known to be working in urban and rural areas with different groups, such as civil society, religious figures and political leaders, to resolve inter-ethnic feuds by relying on a combination of modern and traditional approaches. They work on conflict prevention by raising awareness about hate messages and lobbying against violence and taking up arms. They organize conflict resolution workshops at the grassroots level whilst at the same time advocating at the political level for dialogue (Conaway & Sen, 2005). Women in Burundi also played a major role in conflict prevention in 1995, especially after the genocide in neighboring Rwanda (Anderlini, 2007). Anderlini reports how women activists raised awareness in schools and journalist wrote against the government's brainwashing that fueled generated hatred between the Tutsi and Hutu. In fact many international NGOs launched peacebuilding projects targeting women, which according to some observers lead to a decrease in violence (Anderlini, 2007; Mazurana & Mckay, 2001).

In Colombia, women are leading grassroots peace building initiatives at the level of local communities, encouraging them to proclaim themselves free from conflict. The so-called “peace communities” then negotiate with armed groups for establishing neutral zones in their communities. Women groups such as the Association of Organized Women of Easter Antioquia (AMOR) play the role of direct negotiators. Such initiatives are essential to build confidence and can grow to bring about a ceasefire. As evidence of the significant role played by women peace builders, they increasingly became targets of the armed factions in Colombia (Conaway & Sen, 2005).

#### 2.4.1.3 Calling for Accountability and Ending the Violence

In addition to working to maintain a connection between warring groups, women often organize grassroots activities such as workshops, demonstrations, protests, petitions and campaigns calling to end violence and demand accountability. For example, in 1970, women in Northern Ireland organized a public demonstration where around 3,000 women pushed strollers of food for those who did not have any, which caused confusion among the British army. Later, in 1976 after the deaths of four children, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan mobilized the public and started signing petitions and calling for peace. Williams and Corrigan won the Nobel peace prize in 1977 (Anderlini, 2007). Similarly, in Liberia, the Women's Peace Network (WIPNET) along with Women in Peace and Security Network-Africa and other partners reacted to the 2003 crisis by organizing mass protests where thousands of women wearing white t-shirts stayed in the streets for weeks. They finally managed to present to President Taylor a petition condemning the violence and calling for peace (Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012).

Another example is provided by Warnock and Bexley in *Arms to Fight, Arms to Protect: Women speak out about conflict* (1995), where they report the experiences of feminist activists in Sri Lanka, who created Women for Peace in October 1984. As the conflict escalated between the government and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE), Women for Peace started a signature campaign calling for a negotiated solution to the conflict. The campaign reached different communities throughout the country and was able to collect around 10,000 signatures (Anderlini, 2007; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Also in Sri Lanka in 2001, after almost twenty years of violent armed conflict, activist and businesswoman Neela Marikkar launched a campaign asking Sri Lankans to take to the streets and hold hands to prove to the government that they want peace. Indeed, one million people (5% of the population) responded and stood in the streets on September 19, 2001 holding hands for fifteen minutes. As a result, within two weeks the government was dissolved (Anderlini, 2007).

Despite dangerous conditions, women have employed creative methods and protested when no one else dared, to call for an end of violence and demand accountability, such as the Women in Black movement in Belgrade (former Yugoslavia) (Mazurana & McKay, 2001). Conaway and Sen (2005) argue that women's groups played a major role during the late 1990s in compelling Slobodan Milosevic to resign. Similarly, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) describe how members of Women in Black protested for years in silence in front of government offices, holding banners calling for peace and condemning the Milosevic government, despite the fact that they were regularly beaten and arrested. According to Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002), Women in Black coordinated with other women's organizations to build a solidarity network; as stated by one of their members "we created alternative women's policy on the local, regional and global level, entering

women's resistance to war and militarism into alternative history" (p. 76). Afterwards, they started to rally for accountability as they considered that there can be no reconciliation without accountability. They further organized various activities, including signature collections, campaigns, workshops, seminars and protests (Conaway & Sen, 2005). The final example is in Colombia, where women used to travel for hours to join protests organized by the National Movement of Women Against the War that gathered thousands of women from across the country. Women in protests such as "we won't give birth to more sons to send to war" demanded a negotiated end to the conflict that was killing thousands per year (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). This is in line with Anderlini's (2007) reporting on women activists and organizations playing a leading role in the "Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom Campaign" in 1996.

#### 2.4.1.4 Development, Education and Women's Empowerment

In addition to peace building, women's organizations and movements also focus on democratic development and peace education. For instance, women activist in former Yugoslavian countries founded groups such as MOST, the Association of Cooperation and Mediation, a group of educational psychologists specialized in democratic development and peace education in the former Yugoslavia (Noma, 2007). In Afghanistan, women activists were motivated by the Taliban's exclusion of women from secondary education and most employment to establish literacy programs and underground schools where many of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) now working in Kabul have been initiated (Mckay, 2004).

Moreover, as part of their contribution to peace, women work indirectly to produce agendas, to empower other women and to advocate for human rights. For

example, the numerous organizations and national networks in Colombia allowed women to use different methodologies and approaches to implement various types of peace works. In the Chapter “Women and Peacebuilding in Colombia: Resistance to War, Creativity for Peace” (Bouvier ,2009, 207) Catalina Rojas argues that women in Colombia were able to focus on the root causes of the armed conflict, build a peace constituency and generate common agendas that were able to unite Colombians across class, geographical and racial dividing lines. Furthermore, Warnock and Bexley (1995) report how organizations such as the National Women's Commission in Liberia worked on women’s empowerment by encouraging women to form working groups at the grassroots level and then channeled activities and projects to those working groups. The projects included community-based clinics, peer counseling, and home economics communities.

#### 2.4.1.5 Women’s Voices

Increasingly, women activists and women’s organizations are relying on innovative tools such as comic books, newspapers, call-in radio shows, videos, street theatre, and traditional storytelling to build peace. They use these tools to document violations of human rights, tell their own stories and provide an alternative voice to the mainstream rhetoric. Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) report two examples, the first from Afghanistan, where five women created a newspaper “Seerat”, lobbying for women and advocating for their rights. The second example is from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, where a group of women launched a public media correspondence through which organizations from both sides published letters. The women involved considered this as a collective attempt to advocate for the

acknowledgment of individual and collective rights and challenge the concept that peace is impossible in this context.

#### 2.4.1.6 Pushing for Peace Talks and Peace Accords

Finally, women activism can aim to push for formal peace talks as well as the signing of peace agreements. One of the best-known examples of women's grassroots activism can be found in Liberia, where women played a major role in pushing for peace talks and the signing of the peace agreements during the first and the second civil wars. They did so through nonviolent sit-ins and unusual tactics like blocking doors or even refusing sex from their husbands (O'Reilly, 2015). The Liberian civil war lasted for fourteen years from 1989 until 2003 and was the result of ethnic polarization between Americo-Liberian and Africo-Liberian ethnic groups as well as religious resentment between Christians and Muslims. As a consequence, Liberia witnessed the emergence of a women's peace movement, which culminated in the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as first female president in Africa in 2005. The women's movement was characterized by being active and determined (Fuest, 2008). Following the eruption of the civil war in 1990, a number of women's organizations were formed to respond to local needs and problems. These organizations were based on social inclusiveness and had a remarkable capacity for peacebuilding, as they were able to embrace people from different socioeconomic and ethnic groups (Ellis & Van Kessel, 2009; Fuest, 2008; Moran and Pitcher, 2004). In fact, according to Sewell (2007), women's political activism and advocacy efforts enabled the creation of a platform that in turn drove the movement forward. They were able to reach out to leaders of the Economic Community of West African States, United Nations (UN) agencies, US agencies, and the US Embassy in Liberia in order to advocate for the

work they were undertaking. The establishment of the Liberian Women's Initiative LWI, a coalition of organizations that brought together a larger representative of women of Liberia, in 1994 advanced and strengthened the women's movement by forming various platforms, which eventually lead to the emergence of several peace focused groups such as the Women in Peacebuilding Network, Mano River Union Women Peace Network MARWOPNET and the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) (Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012; Sewell, 2007). The MARWOPNET is a group of women from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone who joined together in May 2000 to promote their participation in peace processes across West Africa (Conaway & Sen, 2005).

Anderlini (2007) describes how women called for public meetings through the radio and then started to demonstrate and lobby for the people – they even managed to crowd fund their attendance of the peace talks. Scholars consider the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI) a leading organization in women's advocacy and political activities and critical to the progress of ending the fighting, holding the 1996 elections and influencing the 1997 Abuja Peace Accord. Members of LWI went campaigning door to door, took to the streets and mobilized diverse groups of Liberian women (Anderlini, 2007; Mama & Okazawa-Rey, 2012; Sewell, 2007). Later on, through their initiatives, they were successful in getting warring groups to work together in peacebuilding workshops (Anderlini, 2007). Mama and Okazawa-Rey (2012) report how the Women's Peace Network (WIPNET) organized protests and advocated heavily during peace talks that ended the second Liberian civil war to ensure the success of the negotiations. After weeks of protests and advocacy, a group of women blocked the negotiators in the hotel so the talks would progress. According to Mama and Okazawa-Rey, one of the three main reasons that pushed Charles Taylor to accept

asylum in Nigeria was women's relentless activism and its escalation during the talks. Eventually the warring parties signed the Ghana-Accra peace agreement and the war ended. In fact, Liberian woman activist Leymah Gbowee and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 for their nonviolent peacebuilding work. (O'Reilly, 2015)

To conclude, as Anderlini states, “at a minimum, women’s activism does sensitize the public about injustice, and demands of accountability from their governments do raise awareness, at a maximum, their actions have catalyzed mass public support and been a key factor in the transformation of the political arena” (p. 39). Indeed through their different forms of grassroots peace activism women succeeded in sensitizing the public and shifting its opinion around violence and militarism, mobilizing people around peace and accountability and uniting them across the dividing lines. They also succeeded in negotiating and mediating conflicts at the community levels, reminding governments about the disappeared, working on soldiers’ rehabilitation, democratic development and peace education. Moreover, they succeeded in telling their own stories, promoting human rights and documenting violations, promoting women’s socioeconomic empowerment and their inclusion in peace processes. Finally they were able to push for peace talks and even force the negotiators to sign peace agreements.

#### **2.4.2 Women at Peace Tables**

This section will provide facts about women participation in peace talks. It will also presents the benefits of having women at the table and how they influence peace accords and how does that reflect on women and gender issues, while providing examples from different peace processes.

To start with, “formal peace negotiations aim at achieving a settlement between the protagonists in a conflict, which are usually Governments, political parties, opposition groups, armies, warlords or militias” (UN, 2002, p.61). Although, according to the UN women report (2010) “Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence” women participated since 1992 in more than 30 formal peace negotiations as negotiators of the terms, signatories, leading mediators and witnesses. However, when thinking about peacemakers, many people have images of high profile political male figures such as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan or George Mitchell as the main person behind the peace accords in Northern Ireland in 1998. Only few are familiar with female peacemaker figures such as Hanan Ashwari of Palestine who has been a leading spokeswoman for the peace process in the Middle East or Monica McWilliams of Northern Ireland who founded the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) (Mazurana & McKay, 2001).

As a matter of fact, the international community acknowledged the importance of having women at the table. For instance, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, when 189 countries demanded women’s full and equal participation in social, cultural, civil, economic and political life. Afterwards, the UN Security Council recognized in Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, including 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), and 1960 (2010), the significance of increasing women’s participation in conflict resolution and peace building, especially at decision-making levels (Kaufman & Williams, 2010; O’Reilly et al., 2015; UN Women, 2010).

Consequently, in spite of women constituting half of the population, and in spite of continuous calls over the last two decades to increase women’s participation

in decision making in peace and security, progress has been slow. In fact, between 1992 and 2011, women made up just two percent of mediators, four percent of participants, four percent of signatories, 2.4 percent of chief moderator, 3.7 percent witnesses and nine percent of negotiators in formal peace talks (O'Reilly, 2015; UN Women, 2010). Indeed, McKay (2004) states that “instead of being “at the table” where they belong, women are typically not involved as participants within formal peace-building initiatives” (p. 167). She further argues that even though women work a lot at the grassroots level to rally for peace, the majority of them go unnoticed during formal processes. Two cases are the example one is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there were no women on the negotiation teams, the other is Colombia, where the woman who was at the peace table resigned as a result of harassment by the fellow negotiators, the paramilitaries and the press (UN, 2002). Kaufman and Williams (2010) further argue that given the fact that women are not found in high-level decision-making position among warring parties, it was easy to exclude them from the peace talks.

Another reason to the lack of women participation is attributed to the adopted participants' selection process. O'Reilly et al. (2015) discuss the different type of selection procedures which are open-access participation, nominations as in Afghanistan; invitation as in Colombia; elections as in Northern Ireland and Guatemala and public announcement of positions within main implementation commissions. They argue that in terms of inclusivity the most successful procedures are the transparent ones executed by constituents in combination with quotas. For instance, in Guatemala, parts of civil society such as trade unions, minority groups, religious community, women's groups among others, elected their own representatives (O'Reilly et al., 2015; UN, 2002). O'Reilly et al. (2015) further argue that in case the process is not based on

election, women's groups face higher requirements for participation, as a result their credibility and qualifications are most often questioned.

Nonetheless, having women at the peace table does not always translate into a successful contribution to or a positive influence on a peace process. Paffenholz et al, (2015) explain that:

“The research shows that it is important to understand the difference between mere presence of women and their influence as included actors. This can range from passive (as many male participants in peace processes also are) to highly active modes (chairing processes, facilitating, advising etc.). Both forms are important substantively and symbolically. However, ultimately the ability to input substantively and to influence decision-making are central ingredients for meaningful participation.” (p.4)

This might be the result of two factors: First is the ‘quality’ of the women involved and the extent to which they are prepared. Second is women's lack of decision making authority during negotiations as most often a small group of male leaders end up making all the decisions (Paffenholz et al, 2015; O'Reilly et al., 2015). This was validated in El Salvador where 30 per cent of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation (FMLN) negotiators were women yet they failed to include gender equality in the peace agreements (Kaufman & Williams, 2010; UN, 2002)

However, when some women unfortunately fail to reach the peace table or do not have an impact others influence the negotiations, succeed to secure a seat and include some of their recommendations in the peace accords. It has become common today that women experience war in a different way than men especially the politicians and combatants. As a result, some women do their best in pushing for the formal peace

negotiations such as in Liberia. Sewell (2007) claims that Liberian women were the reason behind the attendance of warlords and Charles Taylor of the negotiations.

As was previously stated, female presence at the peace table influence the negotiations and an example is from Sri Lanka. When talks were failing after representatives of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) refused to communicate with any of the Sri Lankan government members and the Norwegian negotiators. Visaka Dharmadasa (the founder of Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and the Association of War-Affected Women) was asked by LTTE to transport messages to the government (O'Reilly, 2015). Liberian experience was also similar when the parties refused to sign the ceasefire agreement, the women blocked the door and everybody was locked in until the agreement was signed (Sewell, 2007; UN Women, 2010).

Another example is female participants in Northern Ireland, although at the beginning of the negotiations they faced hostility from their male counterparts, yet eventually they developed a reputation for building trust, engaging all sides, and promoting dialogue in otherwise unfriendly settings (O'Reilly, 2015). Former U.S. Senator George Mitchell acknowledged women's role in reaching an agreement in Northern Ireland when he stated that

“the emergence of women as a political force was a significant factor in achieving the agreement. Women were among the first to express their weariness of the conflict... The two women that made it to the [negotiating] table had a tough time at first. They were treated quite rudely by some of the male politicians... Through their own perseverance and talent, by the end of the process they were valued contributors. When the agreement included the creation of a new Northern Ireland Assembly, women got elected there too.

Overall, in achieving the level of stability now enjoyed, women's involvement at all levels was a very important factor" (Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002, p. 79).

Furthermore, new qualitative and quantitative research based on 40 peace processes in 35 countries demonstrates that over the last three decades when women were able to participate in and efficiently influence a peace process, an agreement was almost always reached. It also shows that there are much higher rates that it will be implemented and there's 35 percent chance that peace is more likely to last at least 15 years (O'Reilly, 2015). One of the reasons behind the higher possibility to implement the agreement is the fact that according to research on average women are more likely to be trusted by other citizens as she is considered a member of the society (Anderlini, 2007; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Additionally, research shows that even if women are representing conflicting parties and they tend to support their party's line, when they actually have had the chance to influence peace processes in other ways they have often managed to widen the set of negotiated issues to include development, human rights and security (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Finally women according to France Fortune (personal communication October 18, 2016), consultant to the Economic Community of West Africa states (ECOWAS), understand more fully the idea that it's a long term process and there's a need to work hard at everyday all the time.

According to some scholars when women are at the peace table, the nature of the negotiations changes because women raise different priorities and bring with them the needs and concerns of their communities (Kaufman & Williams, 2010; Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002; O'Reilly, 2015). For example the cross-sectarian Women's Coalition in Northern Ireland, formed out of Catholic and Protestant women, made sure to include in the Good Friday Agreement clauses related victims' rights, women's

political participation, reconciliation reintegration of political prisoners, mixed housing and integrated education (Anderlini, 2000;Anderlini, 2007; Kaufman & Williams, 2010; O'Reilly, 2015; Paffenholz et al, 2015; UN, 2002). Moreover, in the political transition in Afghanistan, women advocated for the rights of the disabled and supported the Uzbek minority's struggles to gain official recognition for their language (O'Reilly, 2015). Anderlini (2007) also adds one major issue that women achieve when they are at the table, which is the humanization of the conflict and giving voice to the invisible victims. She explains how women in Northern Ireland and Liberia stressed on the personal consequences of the armed conflicts they were telling the stories of abuse and violence in details so their voices would be heard.

O'Reilly et al. (2015) state that “peace agreements increasingly go beyond outlining cease-fires and dividing territory to incorporate elements that lay the foundations for peace and shape the structures of society—from constitution drafting to reforming institutions and creating frameworks for transition processes” (p. 3). Ruby Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016), a part time professor at the University of Ottawa and a consultant on development issues, Dagher states that “If we recognize that women are active in setting values inside their homes as men are active in setting values inside their homes, then we need to include women in the peace process as much as we can include men in the peace process”. Similarly, McKay (2004) and O'Reilly (2015) argue that women's inclusion in formal peace process is pivotal to address and prioritize development, human rights and above all gender, women and girls' issues closely related to peace and the root causes of the conflict. Which aligns with the idea that a main goal of women's peace-building is to highlight the oppression, marginalization and vulnerability of women and to start with a peace-building agenda that considers women as key actors (Kaufman & Williams, 2010; McKay, 2004; UN,

2002). Sarah Boukhary, (personal communication, October 21, 2016) Crisis Response Program Associate at WILPF, agrees that among the most valuable reasons why women should be at the peace table is the need to address women's needs and issues. She explains how at different levels from peace processes, it's mostly men gathering around the table discussing what they consider important and usually it varies from arms or army related issues and economic issues while they often overlook civilians' needs, let alone women's needs in specific. She adds women's issues need to be imbedded in any discussion or decisions or resolutions at any point of peace processes. For example, women's involvement in the peace talks in Guatemala, which ended the 36-year civil war, resulted in the establishment of the National Women's Forum and the Office for the Defense of Indigenous Women, as well as regulations against sexual harassment (O'Reilly, 2015; UN 2002). Noma (2007) describes the role played by Luz Méndez - the only woman at the negotiating table for a time – who advocated for and managed to include provisions related to gender in the peace agreements. Another story of women who participated in the formal peace negotiations was Zahra Ugas Farah who contributed, in 2000, to the Somali Peace and National Reconciliation Conference as an active member of civil society. Farah was part of the women's pressure group that advocated for the acknowledgment of women's rights at the negotiating table. Later during the second peace conference in 2002, she chaired the Leaders Committee, formed of only male group leaders from different clans (Noma, 2007). In fact, Zahra was part of the Sixth Clan Movement founded in 2000 by Asha Hagi Elmi. Elmi had played a significant role in peacebuilding in Somalia. She first established in 1992 the Save Somali Women and Children and later the Sixth Clan Movement as women's political network that advocated women participation at the peace table. The movement secured 12 percent quota for women in Transitional

Federation Parliament and 30 percent in councils, commissions and committees, They are considered to have achieved helping in the establishment of the Ministry for Gender and Family Affairs (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2015).

Nonetheless, only seven percent of accords signed between 1990 and 2010 mentioned gender equality or women's rights (O'Reilly, 2015).

Finally, sometimes women fail to reach the peace table as negotiator yet they manage to include some of their issues in the agreements. This was the case of Burundi where women were blocked from being at the peace table by men and ended being observers during the peace negotiation (Anderlini, 2007; UN, 2002). Nevertheless, they managed to unite across ethnic, class and political divides and advance common recommendations that were incorporated in the Burundi Peace Agreement (UN, 2002).

In summary women's experience at the peace table differ from a context to another due to several factors. This thesis will base on these provided experiences to map the factors that allowed women to be at the peace table, influence the negotiation process and secure an inclusion of gender terminology among other basic human and development issues in the peace accords.

## **2.5 Women's Peace Contribution in Post-Conflict Periods**

This section will first analyze the situation of women in the aftermath of a civil conflict, followed by a discussion about the impact of women on building and maintaining peace during the post-conflict period. It will then present a definition of the peace process after a ceasefire and provide detailed examples of the experiences of women in post-conflict peace activism from Burundi, El Salvador, Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia), Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia and Sri Lanka. One of the main sources consulted for these examples is Krishna Kumar's (2001) *Women and*

*Civil War: Impact, Organizations, and Action*, which provides evidence on the influence of armed civil conflicts on the roles and responsibilities of women in various societies. It includes a collection of reports by different authors analyzing several case studies and tries to answer questions related to the work of women's organizations in post-conflict situations.

The post-conflict period is very critical for women. It is clear by now that violence against women escalates during conflicts, when discrimination, abuse and rape go unpunished, and therefore there is a risk that they become an "accepted norm" that continues and may even intensify in the post-conflict period, when chaos and frustration often prevail (Pillay, 2001; Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002; UN, 2002). Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) provide an example from East Timor, which witnessed mass rape of women in 1999, as a result of pro-Indonesian guerrillas expressing their fury before fleeing to West Timor. Economic hardship is another effect, in addition to insecurity, that is often particularly challenging for women. McKay (2004) uses Afghanistan as an example to make the argument that women are unable to find jobs and thus to generate income to support their families in some post-conflict situations.

Nevertheless, studies have shown that across Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, there have been impressive increases in the number of women in parliament in post conflict countries, compared to neighboring countries that have not witnessed a conflict, irrespective whether or not women's demands were met in peace accords and newly adopted constitutions (O'Reilly, 2015). O'Reilly notes that "in Africa, women in post-conflict countries have almost doubled their rates of legislative representation compared to countries not in conflict—reaching 27 percent of members of parliament in post-conflict settings, compared to 13 percent in settings without conflict, according to a 2012 study" (p. 8). Another opportunity for women in the post-conflict period is

provided by Peacekeeping Operations, which have been granted broader mandates in recent years to include the delivery of humanitarian aid, assisting in the demobilization and reintegration of former fighters, facilitating the implementation of peace agreements, organizing and supervising elections, training and reforming local police forces, and monitoring human rights violations. As the scope of work of these operations broadens, more civilians are recruited - including human rights experts, civilian police officers, electoral specialists and observers, mine action experts (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). Women and youth specifically benefit from what is called “peacekeeping economies”, either by working in the services sector or by actually finding jobs within the peacekeeping mission as support staff (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). Locals are often excluded from professional positions within peacekeeping missions, with Afghanistan providing the notable exception to this practice: “the ‘light footprint’ strategy of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has given increased recognition to the role of national professional staff in a UN peace operation. Such arrangements offer the opportunity not only to build, and build on, national capacities, but also allow women to play a more active role in rebuilding their nation”(Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002, p. 63).

In summary, women face several challenges during post-conflict period, yet are also provided certain opportunities to have a greater impact in their societies. Indeed, women have a key role to play during this period to build and sustain peace as well as to rebuild their countries. The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies’ Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding in Geneva states that “all case studies show that most attention of the international community goes into the negotiation phase. However, many processes fail, or lose the substantial gains of inclusive negotiations, during implementation” (Paffenholz, 2015). Thus,

even if women are excluded from peace talks, their roles in post-conflict reconstruction, reconciliation, rehabilitation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes are critical (Anderlini, 2000; Paffenholz, 2015).

### **2.5.1 Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

According to Women Peace and Security (UN, 2002), reconstruction includes political, civil and judicial reconstruction, the creation or reconstruction of civil society, the creation of an electoral system which guarantees free and fair elections, the reorganization of military and police institutions, economic reconstruction, social reconstruction which takes into consideration the reconstruction of damaged social sectors, including healthcare, education and social service institutions, and involves a long-term process of social healing and reintegration. The same report (UN, 2002) also notes that truth and reconciliation means creating opportunities for the public to document and recognize violations and people's grief.

Fuest (2008) explains how the role of the women's movement and various women's organizations shifted after the peace agreement was reached in Liberia in 2003. They moved to demand legislative reform in order to achieve economic empowerment, political participation and gender equality. Similarly, in the case of El Salvador, Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue that women played a major role in the country's reconstruction, motivated by their struggles, especially in exile. El Salvador witnessed an armed civil conflict from 1979 until 1992, when a peace agreement was reached. After the signature of the peace accords in El Salvador, many of the women's organizations were openly feminist organizations challenging sexism in political life, specifically the "Dignas"<sup>1</sup>. Overall, women's organizations were able to increase their influence through the long-term coalitions they built (Cosgrove et al., 2001). One of

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<sup>1</sup>A group called "Women for Dignity and Life" (*Mujerespor la Dignidad y la Vida*) or known as the Dignas

those coalitions was *Mujeres 94*, a coalition of more than forty women's groups that was active during the 1994 elections. They formed a joint platform, bringing together representatives of all political parties, and campaigned around issues such as land rights, legal discrimination, human rights, gender based violence and reproductive health (Cosgrove et al., 2001; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). In fact, many of the women's organizations focused on increasing women's political participation and reforming the legislative system. Their demands mainly consisted of calling for housing, electricity, education, healthcare, and an end to violence against women (Cosgrove et al., 2001). Furthermore, according to Rehnand Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) one of the main priorities in the immediate post-conflict period should be the monitoring of human rights violations, in order to enforce the highest possible standards of law. However, national judicial systems have often failed women in the post-conflict period. When investigations happen at the national level, they rarely address violations against women. When they actually do, they lack structures and ability to perform forensic investigations. As a result, most often legal systems discriminate against women. They diminish the violence women go through, indulge in sexual intimation and disgrace them. This is why women's groups in Croatia and Kosovo, with the support of UNIFEM, worked with the judiciary to make judges and lawyers aware about gender issues.

Women do not cross dividing lines only to resolve ongoing conflict, they also cross them in the aftermath of conflict to build peace and rebuild their countries. For example, in Burundi, Tutsi women showed solidarity to Hutu women in camps and helped them return to their areas, start agriculture activities and rebuild their communities (Sideris, 2001). The same happened in post-genocide Rwanda, which currently has one of highest percentages of women in parliament, and women are using

their new leadership positions to carry on with their peacebuilding efforts (Conaway & Sen, 2005). According to Conaway and Sen (2005) women parliamentarians established a convention called the “Forum of Women Parliamentarians”, which is composed of both Tutsis and Hutus. They manage to work on examining proposed laws from a gender viewpoint, introducing amendments to biased statutes, training women on legal issues and working on gendering the constitution in collaboration with civil society.

### **2.5.2 Economic Recovery**

Moreover, women can also contribute to the revitalization of the economy. For instance, during the post-conflict period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, local women’s organizations provided women with microcredit, which had a considerable positive impact on the lives of many women and their families. These organizations also provided psychosocial support and vocational training that contributed to the ability of women who received microcredit to make the most of it. Through these income-generation projects, organizations also had an impact on the economy more broadly. Other organizations, such as the one founded by Gordona Vidovic, focused on the political empowerment of women in more rural areas, providing legal aid, increased political awareness and parliament monitoring, aiming to bridge the gap between NGOs and political parties (Walsh, 2001).

### **2.5.3 Reconciliation**

With regard to reconciliation, O’Reilly (2015) argues that when war ends, women’s social and political involvement can lead to a more resilient peace by decreasing the probability of relapse into another conflict and promoting a more comprehensive approach to post-conflict reconstruction. A particularly strong example is that of the Liberian Women’s Initiative (LWI), initiated after the first Liberian civil

war, which was able to build the capacities of women in election monitoring and voter mobilization and to mobilize women to vote actively (Anderlini, 2000). McKay (2004) stresses the importance of the role that women play during the post-conflict period while noting that it is too often left unrecognized. Similarly, Warnock & Bexley (1995) argue that women are vital to the recovery process of their families and the community at large. Development organizations are increasingly also noting the important role played by women, which is why they are looking for innovative ways to diminish the impact of conflicts on women, and help them overcome loss and trauma so that they can support in the rebuilding of their communities. Sideris (2001) argues that such trauma is largely caused by the collapse of social order, activities and bodies that provide people with a sense of belonging. Baldwin and Newbury (2001) argue that war and genocide in Rwanda crushed the dense social connections that rural and urban women had relied upon before the conflict.

In other words, as stated by one of the members of the Association of Rwandan widows (AVEGA), "we've always faced uncertainty, but had to carry on with our lives and care for Rwanda's children. Otherwise, what would happen to the next generation? But widows of the genocide in Rwanda are discriminated against and blamed for the HIV epidemic. With little help from the government or local authorities, we have little choice but to rebuild our nation and try to heal the wounds ourselves" (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002, p. 77). The Association of Rwandan widows (AVEGA), created when widowed women gathered under a tree in Kigali, is a self-help organization that offers its members social and psychological support as well as health services (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002).

According to Mazurana and McKay (2001), women's grassroots organizations generally play a key role in reconciliation, specifically by bringing together previous

opponents to make peace, learn how to change perceptions about each other and coexist in peace. For instance, women in Rwanda played a leading role in the rebuilding of their society; O'Reilly (2015) provides the example of Aloisea Inyumba, the country's first Minister of Family, Gender, and Social Affairs, who contributed to the building of Rwanda by directing "the burial of 800,000 dead after the genocide, the resettlement of refugees, and a national adoption campaign that reduced the number of genocide orphans in Rwanda from 500,000 to 4,000. She led Rwanda's Unity and Reconciliation Commission, where she used national public dialogues to promote reconciliation between Hutus and Tutsis. She was also responsible for the implementation of the *gacaca*, a trailblazing participatory justice mechanism to address war crimes. Inyumba served as senator until 2011 and played a significant role in strengthening women's voices in local government throughout Rwanda" (p. 10).

Women in Burundi also played a leading role in the efforts to promote reconciliation. Ninety women from ten different provinces founded a network called "Let's Reconcile", which organized conflict resolution workshops, trust-building activities and dialogues among women from different ethnic groups (Conaway & Sen, 2005). Similarly, in Rwanda, the *Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe* – a collective of national women's organizations – launched a campaign for peace that consisted of four pillars: promoting socio-economic empowerment, encouraging a culture of peace, combating gender discrimination and reinforcing their internal institutional capacity of Pro-Femmes. In order to achieve their objectives, they implemented several programs providing microcredit, health services and legal advocacy or programs aiming at promoting girls' education, women's empowerment, fostering peace and conflict resolution (Baldwin & Newbury, 2001).

Several organizations also rely on more innovative tools to facilitate people's acknowledgment of their grievances and reconcile with the past. Women's efforts in Burundi attracted the interest of the international NGO Search for Common Ground, which supported the setting up of the Women's Peace Center, which organizes trainings and dialogues on conflict resolution and reconciliation for community leaders. It also operates a broadcasting program about women and for women that shares the exceptional stories and experiences of women (Conaway & Sen, 2005). In Bosnia, several women's groups realized that the wounds caused by the civil conflict were very deep and would require considerable time to heal, and decided to set up radio talk shows to communicate reconciliation and conflict resolution skills (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). In Somalia, where over 85 per cent of the people listen to the BBC, radio literacy programs were developed and transmitted all over Somalia (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002).

#### **2.5.4 Accountability**

A further key dimension of reconciliation is that of accountability, which is about more than simply punishing the perpetrators of crimes against women. Accountability means founding the rule of law and a fair political and social order. Failing to achieve this, there can be no permanent peace. Impunity deteriorates the base of societies coming out from armed conflict by legalizing violence and disparity. It prolongs instability and inequality and puts women under the threat of new conflict (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). In fact, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue that war crimes against women have only recently been adequately recognized by the international community, namely by including them under the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and The *International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)*. According to Anderlini (2007),

women's rights activists had had a huge impact on shaping the ICTY and including experts with experience in gender-based violence in its structures. Similarly, grassroots women's organizations played a major role in highlighting women's experience during the genocide, most specifically the usage of rape as a weapon, in the proceedings of the ICTR. As a consequence, Anderlini reports, "in 1998, the ICTR, under the presidency of a female South African judge, Navanetham Pillay, set a new international precedent not only by defining rape as a crime against humanity and an instrument of genocide, but also making the first conviction on these grounds in the case of a former mayor, Jean-Oaul Akayesu" (p. 160).

#### **2.5.5 Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)**

Finally, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) are considered fundamental in the aftermath of a civil conflict. Disarmament consists of collecting, controlling, safe storing and disposal of all armaments and ammunition after the ceasefire of both combatants and civilians. It also involves the transference of ex-combatants from all warring factions, including government forces or civil defense militias, to military camps and discharge centers. Women Peace and Security (UN, 2002) identifies demobilization as "the process by which armed forces (Government and/or opposition or factional forces) either downsize or completely disband, as part of a broader transformation from war to peace" (p. 131) and reintegration as "assistance measures provided to former combatants that would increase the potential for their economic and social reintegration into society" (p. 134). McKay (2004) argues that women are ignored during disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes, as they are not considered to have been combatants and therefore are not eligible to take part in such programmes. However they contribute to DDR as Anderlini (2007) argues that countless civilians in communities across conflict-affected countries

play a supporting role in the reintegration and rehabilitation of former fighters. During the immediate post-conflict period (prior to the 2005 elections) women's efforts in Liberia were reinforced by programs initiated by multilateral agencies around disarmament, demobilization, reconstruction, rehabilitation and civic education (Fuest, 2008). Indeed, Anderlini (2007) highlights the experience of women peace activists who entered encampments, engaged with combatants, then collected and destroyed AK-47s. In fact, at the beginning the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ignored the role of women in DDR, citing their lack of the experience as a main reason. However, when the formal process collapsed, UNMIL turned to women for support. In Somalia, women played a noticeable role in starting and supporting pre-disarmament in Mogadishu. They also contributed to the improvement of security situation in Kismayo and Mogadishu when they convinced paramilitary leaders in to pull apart checkpoints (Anderlini, 2007).

Incidentally, certain women peace activists such as Visaka Dharmadasa in Sri Lanka brought different perspectives about fighters and the DDR process. She argued that demobilization should start before disarmament so that former soldiers and fighters don't feel disempowered and stripped of their identity (Anderlini, 2007).

To conclude, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue that "post-conflict reconstruction as per peace accords must do more than focus on ending warfare". The building of the country should include the review of the main societal rules and regulations in order to acknowledge women's contributions, to ensure gender equality and to protect women. Indeed women are trying to contribute in order to create a solid foundation based on the rule of law to increase the probability of instability and avoid falling back into conflict. Women are trying to heal the wounds in the societies and to fill the gaps between different communities. Moreover, Women put efforts to construct

their country and recover their economy as well as ensure accountability. Finally women are contributing to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants to guarantee more stable and coherent post-conflict societies.

## **2.6 Mapping the Factors**

This section will identify and analyze the factors that have had an impact on women's contributions to peace during and after armed civil conflict, on the basis of the examples provided in previous sections as well as an analysis of relevant literature, international resolutions, treaties and agreements. The section will be divided into two parts; the first identifying the factors impacting women's contributions at the grassroots level both during conflict and in the post-conflict period, and the second identifying the factors impacting women's participation in formal peace negotiations.

### **2.6.1 Grassroots Activism during the Conflict and in the Post-Conflict Period**

Based on the analysis of the examples listed in previous section pertaining to women's contribution to peace at the grassroots level both during and after conflict, several influencing factors have been identified. These can be grouped into six main categories: social and cultural factors; personal factors; safety and security factors; networking factors; international support factors, and; media factors.

#### **2.6.1.1 Social and Cultural Factors**

The first category of factors relates to cultural norms and social rules that influence women's participation in the public sphere – sometimes encouraging women's contributions and at other times discouraging them. As Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue, cultural norms often teach women to present themselves as helpless and weak, while social rules bind their ability to take action so they eventually become passive recipients. Indeed, one of the factors that allowed women to play a greater role

in mediation in the case of Liberia was the historical social construction and the status of women in many communities in Liberian society. As Fuest (2008) states, “female power in local public realms has, therefore, been a traditional feature in Liberia,” (p. 122). She further argues that this was the result of what Moran called “the dual sex political system”, whereby women consider that men cannot represent them since the productive activities between the sexes are vastly separated. This does not mean that Liberian society is not a patriarchal one. Yet, at the onset of the war, women were represented in public offices and positions of power, and the number of professional and educated women was high (Fuest, 2008). Historically, women in for example the southeast of Liberia were familiar with collective female action. As Fuest (2008) notes, “all over Liberia there are seasonal work cooperatives, for which the Kpelle term *kíúú* has become a generic designation in Liberian English. Women’s associations have long been a traditional feature of urban social life and women’s savings and marketing cooperatives have been recorded since the middle of the twentieth century”(p. 124).

One of the more salient similarities between most of countries that have experienced civil conflict is an entrenched patriarchal system, which has hindered women from holding decision-making positions at the onset of civil war. According to Paffenholz et al (2015), experts confirm that patriarchy is not only the main obstacle to gender equality and to women’s participation at all decision-making levels, but it is also a major factor in disrupting and obstructing inclusive and sustainable peace processes.

Social and cultural norms also have an impact on gender relations, which women take advantage of in order to work for peace. According to a study by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, entitled “*Women, peace and security*” (2002), in some countries, such as Colombia, Guatemala, Liberia, Rwanda and Sri

Lanka, women were able to take advantage of the prevailing gender norms and call for an end to the conflict by relying on their moral authority as mothers, wives and daughters. Social and cultural structures are also decisive for the kind of community access women have.

One of the main social and cultural factors is women's empowerment. Peace researcher Elise Boulding argues that sustainable peace building requires the empowerment of ordinary people, because peacebuilding needs to have its roots in local peace concerns and culture. She also stresses how governments do not invent peace processes; in fact the local people do (Mazurana & McKay, 2001). O'Reilly (2015) notes that "there is overwhelming quantitative evidence that women's empowerment and gender equality are associated with peace and stability in society. In particular, when women influence decisions about war and peace and take the lead against extremism in their communities, it is more likely crises will be resolved without recourse to violence" (p. 2). Karl (1995) states that, "empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision making power and control, and to transformative action" (p.14).

Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue that empowering women means easing the burden of their domestic chores so that they have more time available, as well as supporting the social environments through which they can act: "in the aftermath of war, too, women's potential for positive activity seems limited more by social convention and the grinding necessities of daily survival than by any lack of will or ideas. Yet it is at these times, when all creativity and commitment are needed for the task of rebuilding and recovery, that the benefits to the whole community of empowering women should be particularly clear" (p. 22). They further state that "psychological support and understanding for women who have suffered the trauma of

war—and particularly experiences such as rape which may lead to them being devalued in their own culture—could enable them to regain confidence and self-respect, without which they can hardly carry on their normal lives or support others. Where women have become the family breadwinner, empowering them could mean giving them training, tools, capital and credit. It might also include working with communities to break down prejudice against women alone and gain greater acceptance for those women now operating outside their traditional economic and social roles. These are the needs most often and articulately voiced, and one area in which many development agencies and women's organizations are seeing a role for themselves” (p. 22-23).

Karl (1995) argues that women leverage groups, movements and NGOs in order to empower them to further contribute at different levels of society to overall social change. Similarly, O'Reilly (2015) argues that in the post-conflict period, where state institutions have been demolished or when women are left out of the political scene, women's empowerment still impacts the accomplishment of peacebuilding results. To put it in another way, when women are empowered and have a voice, meaning that they enjoy a reasonably high social status, they can have a direct positive influence on the post-conflict reconstruction, since they provoke wider communal participation. Indeed, an analysis of the effectiveness of UN peace building missions in Liberia indicated that in areas where women enjoyed a higher status, UN peace operations were considerably more effective.

To conclude the key factor identified here are women's status within the social system at the onset of the conflict and degree of women's empowerment.

#### 2.6.1.2 Personal Factors

The second category of factors relates to the personal experiences of women during the conflict, including the pain and the struggle they go through and the violence they witness in repressive systems during armed conflict. This is what Susan Hyatt refers to as “Accidental Activism”, which is activism not based on a pre-existing ideological belief but rather resulting from an experience of instant social injustice. Women’s activism in several conflicts was established out of the war and based on need (Kaufman & Williams, 2010). Anderlini (2007) argues that although the context of the conflict and the situation of women vary from one country to another, their motives and experiences are remarkably similar. Women who become peace activists are often those who have seen their family members disappear, be raped or killed. S. Boukhary, (personal communication, October 21, 2016) agrees that killing, destruction and death of civilians make the momentum that will make women seek out peacebuilding initiatives. She states “they do not want themselves or their families or their surroundings in general to be threatened or in danger. And the change of everyday life, the change of momentum makes you want to take initiatives like that because you do not want to feel that your community or your country in general is being destroyed. So I think it’s this kind of threat and human rights violations, or the death threats in many different ways is the key factor in making women go towards initiatives like that.” The personal experience and the pain of these women is a driving factor in them deciding to take part in or start a peace initiative either to end the violence and protect the rest of the family or to seek answers related to the past. One of the most remarkable examples is that of Visaka Dharmadasa from Sri Lanka, whose son disappeared and as a result she became an acclaimed peace activist during the conflict and in the post conflict-period.

Another dimension of the personal factor is women's ability to reach out to the "other" and be able to cross dividing lines. Women consider the shared pain and struggle for their rights as a unifying factor with women from other groups. Anderlini (2007) argues that women in Bosnia felt like looking in a mirror when meeting with Serbian women – what they saw was the image of a woman suffering in violent societies dominated by men. In Northern Ireland, women reached out to each other because they had common concerns such as equal pay and child care. The experience of gender-based violence can also be a mutual distress that women mobilize around. In her article about the role of Liberian women in building peace, Sewell (2007) argues that the extensive physical and sexual cruelty women suffered from is a factor that drove the movement forward. According to several sources, 70% of women and girls were victims of sexual violence during the Liberian war. Suffering provided women with the will and the confidence to challenge men's superiority, and to deal with the war (Fuest, 2008). This is in line with the work of Warnock and Bexley (1995) who emphasize the fact that the cruelty and unpleasantness of the Liberian conflict definitely caused massive suffering to women. Yet they remind us that it also led to changes in their views and expectations about their society. They compared the situation with the pre-war situation and argued that this provided them with a determination to participate in the political life and contribute to the economy. As a result, Liberian women experienced a certain shift in their roles, moving further into the public sphere by taking on what were considered male tasks, such as building or clearing farms. They wanted to ensure the survival of their communities and families, which is why they crossed dividing lines and negotiated with local community leaders. F. fortune (personal communication October 18, 2016) states that "in Liberia one of the things they were able to do is to come together across political party lines, the

women of Liberia had a level of solidarity around the peace process.” Warnock and Bexley (1995) also provide an example from El Salvador, where women were driven by their struggle in exile to contribute heavily to the reconstruction of their country and maintaining peace during the post-conflict period. Finally, the personal factor can also be economic interest, as in the case of Neela Marikkar from Sri Lanka. As a businesswoman, she was motivated to launch a peace campaign in order to halt the further deterioration of her investments.

Eventually, the key factor identified here are the experience of personal violation during the conflict and the shared injustice across dividing lines.

#### 2.6.1.3 Safety and Security Factors

The third category of factors relates to women’s safety and security. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue that in conflict situations, activists and civil society organizations face considerable pressure and threats to their security. Indeed, many have been murdered and many more tortured and kidnapped. They further state that “women are particularly vulnerable, first because they are subject to sexual attacks in addition to the other dangers, and second because they are often seen as stepping outside their traditional role – which can lend cultural justification to the idea that they need to be ‘taught a lesson.’ Without adequate protection, women are frequently compelled to abandon activism.” Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue that a safe and secure environment allows activists and organizations to express their views, implement activities and inspire more women to become active and build peace. McKay (2004) claims that Afghan women considered security as the basis for reconstructing the country and as the major obstacle to their full participation in society. She believes that the precondition for women to be able to regain public spaces is for them to be safe from violence. In their struggle to prevent and decrease direct

and indirect violence against women, Afghan woman activists themselves were at considerably risk.

Overall, the key factor identified here is the level of prevailing security in the country and mainly the level violence directed toward activists in general and women activists in particular.

#### 2.6.1.4 Networking Factors

When women manage to overcome social, cultural and security obstacles and find the inner motive and will to become peace activists, a fourth category of factors determining the success of their initiatives are the level of networking they are able to engage in. Jordan (2003) argues that networks and alliances that provide a space for exchanging of ideas and sharing good practices are key features in almost all of the peace projects she studied in her research. This echoes the findings of Mazurana and Mckay (2001), who argue that women's groups and organizations at the grassroots level often work through alliances and networks, which provide them with a forum to be inspired, gain energy, plan and strategize to push for peace. Indeed, Sewell (2007) argues that the high level of cooperation among different Liberian women's organizations was one of the main factors contributing to their success. Women supported each other and in 1998 formed the Women's NGO Secretariat as an umbrella organization. They also collaborated at a regional level with women in Sierra Leone and Guinea through MARWOPNET. For instance, "Women in Black", created in Israel in 1988, has expanded around the world, forming an international network of women with a mutual perception of peace and demilitarization. The support from the network provides a sense of solidarity for its members in several countries where they live under conflicts or confront aggressive regimes (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). Also, networks and coalitions help during the post-conflict period. Networks such as

“Let’s reconcile” in Burundi and “Pro-femmes” in Rwanda played a major role in improving women’s contribution to reconstruction and reconciliation in their countries.

In conclusion, the key factor identified here is the access to networks of women’s organizations at the national, regional and international level.

#### 2.6.1.5 International Support

A fifth category of factors is international support. As Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) argue, some activists and organizations consider messages of support and international solidarity as priceless. Indeed, scholars have been studying the impact and role of international NGOs and UN agencies on women and peacebuilding. Ellis and van Kessel (2009) argue that women who received extensive peace-building training by international NGOs started the peace movement in Liberia during the second Liberian civil war. Fuest (2008) discusses in her article “This Is the Time to get in Front”: Changing Roles and Opportunities for Women in Liberia, the fact that studies have disregarded the role of international peacebuilding agencies in empowering and building the capacities of local NGOs and initiatives through programs, trainings or by funding their participation in international conferences. There is evidence to show that these initiatives played a positive role in influencing the role of women in peacebuilding in Liberia. Indeed, Liberian women activists received solidarity, social spaces as well as emotional, technical and financial support from the international community – especially international NGOs, peace building agencies and churches (Fuest, 2008; Sewell, 2007). Fuest (2009) argues that “the international community provided women’s organizations with financial resources and conducted training workshops, which helped not only to fund the work of the women but also to increase their capacity” (p. 17). Furthermore, agencies such as UNIFEM and UNDP,

among others, transferred notions of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment to Liberia.

Actually, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) affirm that one of the main factors that has a significant influence on women's contribution to peace during conflict, transitional periods and in the post-conflict period, is the availability of resources. They argue that women groups and organizations need funds, even minimal funds, to maximize their efforts and enhance their effectiveness. During their assessment, Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) were told that limited resources such as a phone, a computer or some books can make a huge difference in the work women's organizations do in times of conflict. Similarly, F. fortune (personal communication October 18, 2016) argues that organizing women and developing a movement of women, needs investment she states "to lobby within a peace process, it needs investment, because you need to be able to sustain your tension, you need to be able to mobilize your interest group, you need to mobilize communities, you need the media, all of this it costs money and I think what the NGOs can do is bringing investments into those movements"

Consequently, international support continues even after a ceasefire and help women to play a greater role in reconstruction and reconciliation during the post-conflict period. For example UNIFEM played a major role also in supporting women in Croatia during the post-conflict period to restructure their judicial system. Another example of international support during post-conflict period can be found in Burundi, where the INGO Search for Common Ground established a women's radio program for reconciliation. International agencies and missions can also provide women with economic opportunities, such as UNAMA did in Afghanistan, which help them in overcoming economic hardship and allow them to more effectively contribute to peace.

Hence, the key factor identified here is the level of international support in terms of moral support, capacity building and material support.

#### 2.6.1.6 Exposure to Other Women's Experience

Within this category, media play a major role in inspiring women and being a tool for change in several conflicts. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) identify the media as having a formidable power in the context of conflict. They further explain how people, groups and institutions that control the media – TV, internet, radio, newspapers, and film among others– have a reach and can have an influence on the viewers/listeners/readers and even control them. According to them, the media can be an interpreter or a moderator of a conflict, just by deleting facts that do not fit the standards of airtime or print space. Warnock and Bexley (1995) demonstrate how in Liberia women were inspired by the experiences of other women shown on TV. As one woman stated: “in Liberia, women cannot come out and say "I was raped", or "My husband batters me". It's taboo. But in developed countries, women can go on television and they can go to court. They can sue, and it becomes a big story. So we would like to look at other people's experiences and see how they moved from where we are now to get to where they are, and see what we can borrow from that experience that will benefit us [in the framework of] our culture and way of life” (p. 271). In other words, in Burundi, the women's movement was motivated by the experiences of neighboring Rwanda and in Liberia women during the second Liberian civil war drew on the experiences of the first Liberian civil war.

To conclude, the key factor identified here is the exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflict.

#### **2.6.2 Women's Participation in Formal Peace Processes**

While many of the factors contributing to the success of women's peace initiatives in the post-conflict period remain the same as the factors contributing to their success during the conflict, the official peace negotiations or peace process present a unique case that warrants its own analysis and the identification of the factors specific to that case. The involvement of women in the formal peace process is of particular importance, since the signed peace accord, the constitution that usually follows the peace accords as well as the accountability mechanisms built into the peace accords and the constitution will, to a great extent, define the public role women will be able to play in the post-conflict period (O'Reilly, 2015). Furthermore, O'Reilly (2015) argues when the peace agreement and the new constitution are gender sensitive and include gender equality in their clauses, women's participation in parliament and decision-making positions increases, which in turn gives more opportunities for women to contribute to the rebuilding of their country, as the cases of Rwanda and Liberia demonstrate. Similarly, external accountability mechanisms, such the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and former Yugoslavia (ICTY), can also be designed in a manner that provides a clear role for women, for example in bringing perpetrators to justice, as witnesses, or as advocates for the establishment of such tribunals.

Based on the analysis of the examples of cases pertaining to women's inclusion at the peace table studied, a number of technical, political and contextual factors influencing the ability of women to contribute to formal peace processes can be identified. These have been grouped into 6 categories: UN Resolutions and International Agreements; the Selection Process; International Support; the Mediators and Negotiators; Women's Political Mobilization; Women's Political Experience and Will.

### 2.6.2.1 UN Resolutions and International Agreements

The first category of factors relates to the international resolutions, agreements and platforms that guarantee gender equality and encourage the increased participation of women in conflict resolution and political decision-making present at the time of the peace process. Many of the resolutions and agreements present today make a strong case in favor of including women in peace processes and give political legitimacy to women's history in peace activism. They also present a guideline for women's activism in peace building. Conaway and Sen (2005) argue that since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and consequent resolutions, awareness about the importance of women's inclusion in peace and rebuilding processes has grown considerably. Anderlini (2000) argues that activists and women leaders draw on these agreements to advocate for their participation in formal peace processes. In order to ensure the adequate participation of women in peace processes, UNSCR 1325 (2000) calls for the increased participation of women in politics, conflict resolution and peace processes and ensuring the representation of women at all levels of decision-making. The resolution indicates that during the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements, it is important to involve women and adopt a gender perspective. UNSCR 1325 also emphasizes the need to protect women and girls support local women's peace initiatives and native processes for conflict resolution.

Noma (2007) finds that women activists often use the language of international conventions and UN resolutions, such as UNSCR 1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to justify the inclusion of women in peace processes with considerable success. Women activists

from around the world, such as Zahra Ugas Farah<sup>2</sup> and Luz Méndez<sup>3</sup>, consider the Beijing NGO Forum as a defining moment in their activism, where they observed the importance and power of women working together (Noma, 2007; Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002 ). The Platform for Action (PFA), adopted in Beijing on September 15, 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women, with the consent of 181 nations, offers a specific plan for peacebuilding actions that many international women's coalitions and networks use as a reference (Mazurana & Mckay, 2001).

To conclude, the key factor identified here is the existence of International Resolutions and treaties promoting women inclusion in formal peace processes.

#### 2.6.2.2 Selection Process

A second category of factors relates to the selection process of participants at the peace table. According to O'Reilly et al. (2015) ensuring women's meaningful inclusion in peace talks across contexts and irrespective of the used models and mechanisms requires a credible selection process. One of the best selection processes adopted so far, according to O'Reilly et al.(2015) was the one adopted in Guatemala which was based on the election of the participants. O'Reilly et al. (2015) states "The most successful selection processes, in terms of inclusive outcomes, are transparent processes carried out by constituents in conjunction with quotas. In Guatemala, different sectors of civil society elected their own sector-specific representatives, from trade unions, minority groups, women's groups, and others" (p. 28).

Third factor is the quota system. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf, (2002) highlight the role of quotas in ensuring women's participation in peace negotiations: they

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<sup>2</sup>Zahra Ugas Farah participated in the Somali peace talks.

<sup>3</sup>Luz Méndez is the Vice President of the Executive Board to Unión Nacional de Mujeres Guatemaltecas. She was the only female member in the Guatemalan peace talks and was able to contribute to exceptional commitments for gender equality in the peace accords.

provide a formal mechanism for the inclusion of women and have proven to be successful, for example in the case of Somalia, as noted by O'Reilly et al (2015).

To conclude, the key factors identified here are the selection process and an inclusion of a quota for women in the formal peace negotiations.

#### 2.6.2.3 International Support

International support is the third category of factors influencing the inclusion of women in the formal peace process. Women struggle considerably to gain access to the negotiation table and have to lobby for their inclusion – support from the international community, through international NGOs and UN agencies, is critical (Anderlini, 2000). Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) report that women were able to have a seat at the peace table when they received the appropriate support from the international community. Indeed, F. fortune (personal communication October 18, 2016) states “well it very often doesn’t happen from the state level, that usually has to be an external factor that makes room for “others groups” And the way I see is that the women is just one of the “others groups”. Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002) also indicate that international organizations such as International Alert, Search for Common Ground and the US Institute for Peace (USIP), among many others, have provided training for women to improve their leadership and negotiation skills, thus ensuring that they are better prepared to play an active role in the negotiations. For example in Burundi, international organizations and agencies played the role of facilitators by bringing together groups of women to strategize and share knowledge and leadership skills. UNIFEM was one of the agencies that adopted this approach when, in July 2000, they organized, in collaboration with the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Foundation, the “All-Party Burundi Women’s Peace Conference” in Tanzania where the peace talks were taking place (Rehn & Johnson-Sirleaf, 2002). As a result, women

were able to indirectly influence the agreement and made their contribution for the future. Moreover, O'Reilly et al. (2015) consider that creating the settings to allow women's voices to be heard is one of the main factors that influence women's inclusion. They argue that capacity-building programs and support structures allow women to increase their impact and value before, during, and after a peace process. They report that in cases where women were provided with expert support, for example in conflict transformation and resolution, in designing awareness-raising campaigns or in drafting recommendations to the peace accords, they were able to make a more effective contribution (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

In conclusion, the key factors identified here are the level of international support for women's inclusion in formal negotiations and the level of international support in terms of capacity building of women.

#### 2.6.2.4 Mediators and Negotiators

A fourth category of factors relates to the experience, background and personal traits of the peace mediators, who can sometimes influence the inclusion of women, and the other peace negotiators involved in the process themselves.

Kaufman and Williams (2010) argue that one of the factors that has an impact on women's inclusion is the level of gender awareness among senior staff within the international community and the offices of the mediators of peace talks. According to Paffenholz et al. (2015), research has shown that mediators can play a major role in promoting the inclusion of women during peace talks. They add that this should be supported by lobbying from women's rights organizations and the international community. In fact, O'Reilly et al. (2015) argue that when mediators are open to women's participation, it has usually resulted in women being included, such as in the case of Nelson Mandela in Burundi. They further state "by maintaining gender as one

of a number of criteria for group specific participation, mediators have been able to enhance women's participation at different stages in the process in Colombia" (p. 28). Another example of the mediator's influential role can be found in Northern Ireland, where Senator George Mitchell was able to ensure women's inclusion by suggesting that participation is based on elections (Anderlini, 2007).

Unsurprisingly, the willingness of the other participants at the negotiating table is also a key factor influencing the inclusion of women. According to Paffenholz et al. (2015), research has shown that one of the key obstacles or negative factors that challenge the presence of women at the peace table are the representatives of the parties to the conflict, who rarely push for the inclusion of women and instead prefer to promote the inclusion of actors they consider to be beneficial to their own position, who rarely are women. For example, during the peace process in Colombia, one of the negotiators actually harassed a female participant to the extent that she eventually resigned.

Altogether, the key factors identified here are the attitude and level of gender awareness of mediators and the attitude and behavior of other negotiators at the peace table.

#### 2.6.2.5 Women's Political Mobilization

The fifth category of factors relate to women's political mobilization. The study entitled "Women, Peace and Security", submitted to The Secretary-General of the UN in 2002, suggests that "opportunities for the involvement of women in formal peace negotiations and their capacity for effective participation are often dependent on their political mobilization prior to the peace process itself, as evidenced by the examples of Guatemala, Israel and Palestine, where women and adolescent girls were mobilized politically before the start of the formal peace process" (UN, 2002).

Indeed, O'Reilly et al. (2015) argue that based on the Broadening Participation project, the inclusion of women was generally initiated and achieved via determined lobbying by women's organizations, and how this was easier in contexts where there were strong women's coalitions working on peace and human rights. In Northern Ireland, for example, women were able to unite across divides and form the Women's Coalition that earned two seats at the peace table. The example of Somalia is similar, in that women organized themselves as the "Sixth Clan" and were thus able to participate in the peace talks. Paffenholz (2015) and O'Reilly et al. (2015) argue that normative pressure is the key behind women's inclusion; whereas the inclusion of civil society was mostly initiated by the main parties to the conflict, women required a massive push by themselves or by international supporters or mediators to overcome the barriers to their inclusion.

According to Mazurana and Proctor (2013), research has shown that the capacity of women's groups to build influential coalitions is instrumental for mobilizing support for their inclusion in formal peace processes. In certain cases this included working with existing strong civil society movements as well as building relationships with male negotiators or advisors. Moreover, building successful coalitions requires reaching out across religious and class divides in order to widen the support base.

Thus, the key factor identified here is the level of women's political mobilization prior to the conflict and the ability of women to lobby for their inclusion.

#### 2.6.2.6 Women's Political Experience and Will

The sixth category of factors identified relates to the degree of women's political participation prior to the conflict as well as their political will and

determination to be included. Women in Liberia, Burundi, El Salvador, Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland, for example, were actively involved in the political struggle that preceded the conflict and were able to influence the negotiations and the peace process either by being at the peace table or through being active observers and consultants (Anderlini, 2000; Paffenholz, 2015; Vickers, 1993). On the other hand, the lack of political experience and the exclusion of women from political decision-making prior to the conflict also has a demonstrable impact on the lack of women's participation in formal peace processes (Anderlini, 2000)

Political will is closely related to political experience, but can play a role above and beyond experience. Arguably the most important factor in securing the participation of women in the peace talks in Liberia, for example, was the fact that Liberian women did not wait to be invited to the peace tables and instead the representatives of numerous women's organizations started attending peace talks at their own expense when the negotiations started in Accra, Ghana, on 4 June, 2003 (Sewell, 2007).

Therefore, the key factors identified here are level of women's experience in politics and level of women's eagerness in taking part in formal peace negotiations.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has he identified a number of factors that have an impact on women's inclusion at the grassroots level. These are: women's status within the social system at the onset of the conflict, degree of women's empowerment, experience of personal violation during the conflict, shared injustice across dividing lines, level of prevailing security in the country and mainly the level of violence directed toward activists in general and women activists in particular, access to networks of women's organizations at the national, regional and international level, level of international

support in terms of moral support, capacity building and material support, exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflict. These factors are grouped in six categories: social and cultural, personal, safety and security, networking, international support and finally exposure to other women's experience

As for the factors that have an impact on women's inclusion at peace tables, they are the existence of International Resolutions and treaties promoting women inclusion in formal peace processes, the selection process, the inclusion of a quota for women in the formal peace negotiations, the level of international support for women's inclusion in formal negotiations, the level of international support in terms of capacity building of women, the attitude and level of gender awareness of mediators, the attitude and behavior of other negotiators at the peace table, the level of women's political mobilization prior to the conflict, the ability of women to lobby for their inclusion, the level of women's experience in politics and finally the level of women's eagerness in taking part in formal peace negotiations. These factors are also grouped in six categories which are UN Resolutions and International Agreements, Selection Process., International Support, Mediators and Negotiators, Women's Political Mobilization and Women's Political Experience and Will.

These factors will allow better understanding of the case of Lebanon pertaining to women's contribution to peace. The following two chapters will compare these factors to the Lebanese case.

# Chapter 3

## Women and Peace in Lebanon during the Civil War

This chapter starts with a brief historical overview of the Lebanese civil war, followed by a discussion about the role played by women during and in the war. The following section then provides an overview of peacebuilding activism in Lebanon during the war and the peace process. The third section of the chapter analyzes women's peacebuilding activism at the grassroots level during the war as well as their inclusion in the peace process. Finally, the chapter compares the experiences of women peacebuilders in Lebanon against the factors mapped in the previous chapter, which have been identified as relevant to influencing the extent to which women have been able to push for peace at the grassroots level and in formal negotiations, in order to compare to the extent to which those factors were present in the Lebanese context and whether there are possible additional factors that can help explain the degree of influence women were able to have in the peacebuilding process.

### 3.1 Lebanese Civil War

#### 3.1.1 Pre-War Period

The country's modern history has been characterized by consecutive periods of peaceful coexistence followed by clashes, instability and civil conflicts. Before the 1975 civil war, Lebanon suffered from civil conflicts and clashes in 1845, 1860, and 1958 (Haugbølle, 2012; Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999).

The emergence of modern-day Lebanon can be traced to the Ottoman Empire, when the region of Mount Lebanon enjoyed a status of autonomy. The Lebanese

Republic within its present borders was formed under the French mandate in 1920, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the First World War. The newly formed country brought together more than 15 different confessions, which were not necessarily familiar with each other and had different aspirations. The Lebanese nationalists – mostly Christians – had different views about the state borders than the Arab nationalists, who believed in Lebanon as part of an Arabic Islamic entity. The French awarded the Lebanese Christians – the Maronites specifically – with more powers and key positions in the country (Nauphal, 1997; Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

Lebanon gained independence from the French in 1943 and the National Pact was adopted as a power sharing system among the different confessional groups, based on the 1932 consensus, which slightly favored the Christians (Nauphal, 1997; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). In 1958, there was a serious crisis when the president of Lebanon tried to again privilege Christians was supported by the US against the Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser and the Soviet Bloc. The Muslim community in Lebanon largely considered the president's action of signing on to the Baghdad Pact as too close political cooperation with the US, provoking the Muslim population. The conflict turned hot for a few months and was only resolved by the end of President's Chamoun's term and the creation of a national reconciliation government formed by Prime Minister Rachid Karami (Nauphal, 1997; Warnock & Bexley, 1995; Zahar, 2012).

In socioeconomic terms, Lebanon did fairly well in the 1950s and early 1960s, after which social tensions grew for several reasons. One main reason was changing demographics, in particular in terms of a growing Shi'a community (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). Another reason was the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948, 1967 and 1970, and their increasing militarization after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

These two main factors, combined with weak institutions, socio-economic factors such as distribution of wealth and unequal access to resources and education, and regional and international interventions, especially Syrian and Israeli, eventually led to a new outbreak of conflict among the different Lebanese factions (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012; Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

### **3.1.2 The Civil War**

The Civil War broke out in 1975, and while Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue that 80% of the Lebanese were not actively involved, everyone was physically, economically or emotionally influenced.

Picard and Ramsbotham (2012) debate that the war was durable, complex, made up of entrenched and coinciding local and regional conflicts, and involved various internal and external actors. They also argue that it was characterized by a high number of civilian casualties; most of these were victims of snipers, bombs and rockets. Moreover, According to Zahar (2012), between six hundred and eight hundred thousand people were displaced during the fifteen years of civil war, due to seeking safety or being forced by militias.

There is no general agreement on the causes of the war, and as Nauphal (1997) states: “Many scholars from various disciplines have reflected on this major crisis (1975-90), but they differ in their analysis of the causes of the war and whether these were primarily exogenous or endogenous” (p. 7). Indeed external interventions were a cause of the war; as Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue, the war was backed and aggravated by foreign powers, in particular Syria, the United States and Israel. In fact, Lebanon was used as a substitute arena by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), headed by Yasser Arafat, while Syria and Israel had expansionist desires towards the country (Nauphal, 1997; Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). Moreover, in

addition to these external factors, there were many internal cultural, socio-economic and political factors. Firstly, many of the Lebanese questioned the legitimacy of the state; secondly, the country suffered from a lack of national unity as some considered it Arab while others Mediterranean; thirdly, there was a lack of equal access to resources, capital and education; and, finally, a weak governance system further weakened by strong sectarian and religious loyalties (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999).

The war went through several stages and alliances were continuously shifting between political and religious groups (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Nevertheless, the military and political parties to the conflict can be divided into two main blocs. The first block is commonly known as the “National Movement”, which believed in Lebanon as an Arab country and sympathized with the Palestinian armed presence, and was headed by Kamal Jumblatt. It included anti-confessional militias and parties, such as the Communist Party (founded in 1924) and its military wing, the “Popular Guard” (created in 1970), the Socialist Progressive Party (PSP) (founded in 1949 by Kamal Jumblatt), the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) (founded in 1932 by Antoun Saadeh), the Nasserist Party (founded in 1975) and its military wing the “Murabitun”, and the Baath party. The second bloc is commonly known as the “Lebanese Front” and was more nationalist, fearing the rising power of the Palestinians. The “Lebanese Front” was headed by Camille Chamoun and included Christian militias and parties such as the Phalangists (Kataeb) (founded in 1963 by Pierre Gemayel), the Lebanese Forces (founded by Bachir Gemayel in 1976), the National Liberal Party (founded in 1958 by Camille Chamoun), the National Bloc (founded in 1943 by Emile Edde), Al Marada (founded in 1967 by Suleiman Frangieh), El Tanzim, the Guardians of the Cedars and the Maronite Monastic Orders (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999). During the later stages of the war, Shiite parties such as

“Amal”, created by Imam Moussa Sadr, and Hezbollah, formed by Iranian Pasdaran (guardians of the Revolution), also played a crucial role (Nauphal, 1997).

There were several phases of the war, the first phase was known as the Two-Year War (1975-1976). During this phase, the Lebanese Front was trying to preserve the status quo against a more progressive National Movement, which was supported by the Palestinians. In April 1976, the Syrian Army interfered at the request of President Suleiman Frangieh and his allies (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). In September same year, Elias Sarkis was elected president and one month later Saudi Arabia called for a six member Arab summit (Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon and the PLO) in Riyadh. The summit established a thirty thousand strong Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) (80% were Syrians) and led to the formation of a new cabinet by Salim El Hoss (Shehadeh, 1999). Shehadeh (1999) further argues that the Riyadh Summit ended fighting without actually addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. By the end of this war, a demarcation line known as the "Green Line" divided Beirut into Christian East and Muslim West (Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

The second phase, or what is called the 1978 War, was a result of the deterioration of the alliance between Syria and the Lebanese Front. In this phase, Frangieh left the Lebanese Front and became an ally of Syria, which resulted in the massacre of his family in June that year. Also that same year witnessed the Israeli invasion of the south under the “Litani Operation” (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Nauphal (1997) claims that the Security Council directly ordered Israel to withdraw and created the United Nations Interim Forces for South Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 1979, the "free State of Lebanon" was formed in southern Lebanon, when Israel handed the authority to Major Saad Haddad, a dissident from the

Lebanese Army. The year 1979 also witnessed battles in Zahle between the Syrian Army and the Lebanese Front (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999). Moreover, according to Shehadeh (1999), this phase witnessed an attack launched by the Phalangists against the National Liberal Party in order to unite all Christian militias under the name of the Lebanese Forces.

The third phase of the war was the Israeli Invasion. Israel launched the operation “Peace of Galilee” on June 6, 1982, and Israeli troops were able to reach Beirut within a week. The blockade of Beirut lasted for nine weeks and by the third of July; Israel was besieging West Beirut with heavy shelling. The siege was ended by what was called Plan Habib<sup>4</sup>, which consisted of ending the siege and evacuating the PLO, including its leader Yasser Arafat, from Lebanon (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Later, in August 1982, Bachir Gemayel was elected president, only to be assassinated three weeks later in an explosion in the Achrafieh district of East Beirut. A week later, his brother Amin was appointed president. In 1983, Israel withdrew to Southern of Lebanon as a result of the signing of the US sponsored agreement between Israel and Lebanon. Israeli troops were replaced by a multinational force (MNF) consisting of US, French, British and Italian troops (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999).

The fourth phase known as the “Mountain War” followed the withdrawal of the Israeli army in 1983, and was fought between the Lebanese Forces and Lebanese Army on the one side and the forces of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and their allies on the other in Mount Lebanon. This war featured huge massacres and the displacement of much of the Christian population from the area (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999, Zahar, 2012). According to Shehadeh (1999), in 1984 the

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<sup>4</sup>The peace plan was negotiated by Philip Charles Habib, an American diplomat of Lebanese descent. He was the special envoy of the Reagan administration to the Middle East.

administration of Amin Gemayel was facing a multitude of challenges as a result of the collapse of the Army's authority. She further argues that following the withdrawal of US marines from Lebanon after several bomb attacks against their barracks and was Amal, then led by Nabih Berri, fighting for primacy in West Beirut, Amin Gemayel was forced to seek the help of Syria. As a result, a peace settlement was negotiated in 1985 in Damascus between Amal (represented by Nabih Berri), the Lebanese Forces (represented by Elie Hobeika) and the Progressive Socialist Party (represented by Walid Jumblatt). While the Tripartite Agreement was signed on December 28, 1985, Hobeika's subsequent ouster from the Lebanese Forces by Samir Geagea, resulted in the agreement never coming into effect (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999). Earlier in 1985, the Amal movement had attacked Palestinian camps during what is known as the War of the Camps, which lasted until 1988 (Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

The fifth and final phase is known as the "War of Liberation", which occurred at the end of Gemayel's presidency. On September 22, 1988, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, Michel Aoun, was appointed head of the interim government by Gemayel, after a parliament deadlock to elect a president. Meanwhile, Salim el Hoss refused to accept Amine Gemayel's decree that dismissed him, which resulted in two cabinets: one headed by El Hoss in West Beirut and the other headed by Aoun in East Beirut. On March 14, 1989, Aoun launched military campaigns against the Lebanese Forces and the Syrian presence in Lebanon. In October that year, the Taif Accord, which Aoun rejected, was signed in Saudi Arabia. In the beginning of November, 1989, Rene Mouawad was elected president, only to be assassinated 17 days later. The next day, his successor, Elias Hrawi, was elected president, and he immediately replaced Aoun with Emile Lahoud as Commander-in-Chief of the army. In 1990, battles continued

between Amal and Hezbollah in the suburbs of Beirut, and Aoun and the Lebanese Forces in Christian areas. The hostilities ended when, first, the Syrian Army bombarded the presidential palace – pushing Aoun on October 13, 1990, to seek refuge and political asylum in the French Embassy – and, second, a ceasefire was reached between Amal and Hezbollah, arranged by Iran and Syria (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999; Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

## **3.2 Women and Civil War**

### **3.2.1 Women’s involvement in the Civil War**

Women in Lebanon influenced the fifteen years of civil war as much as the war influenced them. Dr. Fahima Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016), Professor in Sociology at the Lebanese University and the president of the “Committee to Follow up on Women’s Issues”, refuses to consider women as victims of the Lebanese civil war. Warnock and Bexley (1995) argue that a great number of Lebanese women were in favor of the war, as they considered it a legitimate resistance against their existence and in defense of home and community. As a matter of fact, Shehadeh (1999) argues that women were involved at all levels of the war, and although they didn't start or end the war, they took part in the war by being combatants or by mobilizing the men in their families – sons, husbands, brothers and fathers – to fight in the war. She further affirms that women were involved in both Muslim and Christian militias, even though sometimes they were designated with traditional female duties rather than combat duty. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) agrees that women were highly active in the civil war by being on the frontlines and fighting alongside men, by working in the offices of militias, and by protecting the neighborhoods and regions where they were living. She further argues that some women were indirectly involved in the war by convincing or pushing men in their

families to get involved for the sake of honor and access to resources. According to Nauphal (1997), around three thousand women from different backgrounds received military training during the war and approximately three hundred were directly taking part in combat (with the majority of female combatants found in the Christian militias). However, Shehadeh (1999) describes their participation as defensive, because they showed mercy more often than men, sought to diminish violence, and considered their participation as temporary.

While women were involved in the war, Shehadeh (1999) argues they did not have a major impact on the course of the war or on reaching the peace agreement. In *The Effects of War on Women in Lebanon*, Julinda Abu Nasr (1992) claims that: “Women had no say over when the war started, neither in the decision making processes, nor in the efforts to achieve reconciliation. Their roles were those of the recipients of the consequences and the outcomes of the war on the one hand, and the makers and manufacturers of the laws of survival on the other hand” (p.16). It resonates with Warnock and Bexley (1995), who argue that Lebanon's patriarchal society didn't allow women to play a big part in the politics that caused war.

Indeed, F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) and Ms. Joumana, Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), a feminist activist and the Director of Lebanon Branch of the Arab Institute for Human Rights, both explain how women fought during the war, yet were never able to reach leadership and decision-making positions. Charafeddine tells how Jocelyne Khoueiry led a group of around five hundred female combatants from the Phalangist party in the battles of down town Beirut, but yet was never involved in decision-making. Merhi also tells how women from the left fought because they were seeking democratic change and how they thought that fighting would help them secure their rights, yet none of the

fighters reached leadership positions. Merhi adds her personal experience and her involvement with a political party in the areas of civic engagement, civil defense, aid and nursing – areas she describes as humanitarian work – which failed to help her secure invitations to party conferences, a fact she argues reflects a broader practice of exclusion of and discrimination against women in political parties.

### **3.2.2 The Impact of the Lebanese Civil War on Women**

Regardless of the level of women's involvement in the civil war, the war had a huge impact on the life of Lebanese women. Shehadeh (1999) argues that women in Lebanon played several roles during the war. Mona Takieddine Amyuni describes these roles as follows: "Lebanese women took upon themselves domestic, economic, and social responsibilities when men fought, went away or simply died" (p. 90). Abu Nasr (1992) argues that the role of women in Lebanese society shifted during the war, in particular, women moved from the private to the public sphere, as they had to leave their homes and find jobs while their husbands were fighting or had disappeared or been killed. Nauphal (1997) states that "the war has opened new avenues for women by redefining their role and increasing their involvement in public life" (p. 31). As men constituted the majority of the casualties of war, women were usually left behind and had for the first time to provide for their families in very challenging conditions although they often lacked experience and skills (Nauphal, 1997; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Moreover, in her thesis "*Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation In Beirut 1990*" published in Al Raida IX (1991), Chekaibe R. claims that it became challenging for families to survive on men's salaries due to various economic and social changes. She argues that "the war also introduced additional socio-economic changes such as inflation and demographic changes such as displacement. All of these variables seem to act as a force driving women into the labor market and into the

economic mainstream” (p. 3). The economic crisis that started in 1985 increased women’s involvement in both formal and informal sectors due to the inability or unavailability of men, and for various reasons – such as unemployment, emigration, fighting, casualty, disability or injury – to become household providers, despite the fact that they were not in decision-making positions in the labor force (Nauphal, 1997; Shehadeh, 1999).

In short, as Nauphal (1997) states, “women were not passive victims of conflict and their active contribution to the survival of their families and groups remains largely unacknowledged. Women's survival strategies in this context included selling assets such as gold and land which jeopardized their long-term financial security, transforming their domestic skills into marketable ones, and in the worst cases, resorting to socially unacceptable jobs such as prostitution. Women have also taken on tasks usually carried out by men. Their new responsibilities put additional burdens on them as their workload in the domestic arena was not alleviated accordingly. The heavier burdens are shouldered by women heads of households especially in rural areas which were more affected by displacement” (p. viii).

Moreover, according to various statistical data sets, the number of women enrolled in schools and universities increased. Nauphal (1997), states that: “the educational structure of the population in 1994-1996 compared to the pre-war period indicates an increase of the enrolment of girls in schools”. Schulze (1998) describes how the number of enrolled females in public education also increased.

It can be said, then, that women were under considerable pressure, as they had to cope with the increased responsibility of keeping the family together, protecting the children, stressing due to a heavier workload and being subject to wage discrimination, which effectively made women the single largest vulnerable group in Lebanon

(Nauphal, 1997). According to a 1994 study done by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the average salaries of women amounted to only half of the average salaries of men working similar jobs; for example in the agricultural sector, the average daily wage of a woman was 6,000 Lebanese pounds while that of man was 12,000 LBP (Nauphal, 1997). Nauphal further argues that in the absence of men, women had to tolerate increased social pressure due to their inability to find suitable husbands and accomplish social role expectations. For instance, Ms. Wadad Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016), spokesperson of the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared, described her experience of the disappearance of her husband, by highlighting that she had to go out and look for her husband while also taking care of her two children and trying her best to provide them with security and a moderate environment that would discourage them from growing up to become fighters and take revenge for the disappearance of their father.

Another key impact of the war on women was increased prostitution, as poverty pushed women to turn to prostitution as a survival strategy (Nauphal, 1997). Nauphal (1997) argues that: “a new phenomenon has been the emergence of prostitution of married women as a means of increasing income, often with the complicity of their husbands. However, these observations are based on few interviews and cannot be generalized in the absence of wider surveys” (p. 46).

Besides the fact that women suffered in terms of social pressure and adequate nutrition, education, and health care, women were also victims of increased domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape. Although accurate data is not available yet according to Nauphal (1997), it is assumed that the war increased in particular the vulnerability of women belonging to certain groups. She argues that the normalization of violence during the war played a major role in increasing domestic violence rates. Moreover,

she indicates that women who lost their husbands, women who became breadwinners in their families and women who had to leave their houses become targets of male aggression, including rape and sexual abuse. F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argues that this was further compounded by the patriarchal society of the time, which linked the honor of men to their ability to protect the sexual organs of their women, meaning that different groups used rape as a tool for revenge and humiliating the enemy.

In conclusion, the key impact of the war on women are increased participation in labor force, increased role as sole providers of families, increased threat of sexual violence. In other words, women were under a lot of socio-economic pressure so they became less supportive of militias and political parties that they have supported throughout the war. As R. Dagher stated: “you do see also near the end of the war that women were getting tired of the war and tired of the consequences especially when their men either being killed or maimed and the responsibilities started falling on their shoulders...you see a little bit of a retraction from the activeness that were involved in whether directly or indirectly.”

Finally, just like everybody else in the country women suffered too much from the increased responsibilities, from death, from destruction and realized that “this is it”, which might have been a factor to some of them to call for the end of war. Such as J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) who explained that after so many rounds of conflicts she realized that the struggle should be a nonviolent struggle, and the democratic struggle is the one that leads to change. She became assured that you cannot achieve democratic change through militarization, army, war, force or oppression. Yet on the other side the increased responsibilities might have been a

counter fact as it kept women busy all the time and it didn't allow them to be involved in peace building initiatives.

### **3.3 Peacebuilding and Peace Process in Lebanon**

Lebanon had a relatively developed civil society already prior to the Lebanese civil war, mainly in the form of labor unions, associations and organizations as well as charities. In his essay "*Arab Women and Work: The Interrelation Between Orientalism and Historiography*", Abissab (2009) discusses the work of labor unions and explains in particular how industrial women were involved in protests against famine and colonization, but also how women organized charities and welfare activities. Moreover, in her report entitled "*Women's Movements and Feminism in Lebanon*", Bitar (2016) argues that women were civically active before the foundation of the Republic of Lebanon. She further explains how a council of women's organizations was founded, in 1920, and how women were active in calling for their rights in addition to campaigning for national issues.

With the outbreak of the war, several civil organizations and groups were established and some of the old organizations continued to be active, although some of them changed their level of intervention, focus and approach. In the report "*Reconciliation, Reform and Resilience Positive Peace for Lebanon*", AbiYaghi (2012) explains how the civil war suffocated much of the country's civil society activism, transforming many organizations into groups and organizations focusing on humanitarian and relief work. AbiYaghi further argues that an estimated nineteen humanitarian associations were founded during the war, in order to deal with the consequences of the war. Warnock & Bexley (1995) agree with this assessment and further argue that women were active in non-governmental organizations that emerged to replace the state in providing services such as education, medical, relief and welfare.

Similarly Nauphal (1997) states that:“One of the features of the Lebanese war was the role played by NGOs who took over the collapsed governmental services... Local NGOs received funding mainly from international NGOs or governments in order to implement relief and emergency programmes” (p. 72).

Although this might be true, AbiYaghi (2012) recognizes that several campaigns and movements were also founded that called for the end of the war. She claims that 114 collective actions of civil resistance were organized to condemn the civil war; the examples that she provides are primarily campaigns formed to call for the Kidnapped and the Disappeared and the labor union, which remained active throughout the war and called for civil, political, social, and economic rights for people –and as a consequence was seen by the people as the major representative of social opposition and popular movements (Nauphal, 1997). Nauphal (1997) argues that the work of the labor unions in recognizing social interests could be considered as a form of peacebuilding work, as it cut across sectarian divides and brought together people from different geographical, religious, political and social background around national issues such as employment and living conditions.

Kabbara (2012) states that: “Lebanon’s anti-war movement started as soon as the Lebanese civil war began” (p. 32). He provides several examples of peace actions and initiatives started by persons with disabilities in the early 1980s under Disabled (DPOs), which were active in anti-war actions and defended all persons with disabilities, across sectarian divisions; the hunger strike of Imam Moussa Sadr to end the violence; followed by the formation of the organizations, ‘The Gathering for a United Lebanon’ in 1977, by a number of intellectuals who called for the dismantling of the militias. Another well-known example is the 1984 initiative to organize a gathering on 6 May along the demarcation lines in the vicinity of the National Museum,

which the militias didn't allow due to heavy bombardment (Kabbara, 2012; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Indeed Picard and Ramsbotham (2012) argue that Lebanese leaders tried to look after their own interests by obstructing every peacebuilding action and reform initiative. Despite the efforts of political leaders, people continued to fight against the war, and in 1985, peace activists founded the non-violent movement. Its first initiative was a blood donation campaign to promote solidarity among all Lebanese, which was subsequently sabotaged by militias. Peace activists remained persistent, however, and both DPOs and the non-violent movement came together later in 1985 to organize marches on the Lebanese Independence Day, 22 November, only to have it also disrupted by militias (Kabbara, 2012). Two years later, in October 1987, the PDOs organized another march over three days across the country, describing it as "a civil challenge to the militia order"; several civil society organizations joined them and it turned out to be a successful protest (Kabarra, 2012; Warnock & Bexley, 1995). This encouraged other organizations to start protesting as well, and for example the teachers' unions organized a strike and the national trade union planned the biggest anti-war gathering, which brought together some three hundred thousand people (Kabbara, 2012). Marie Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), a professor at the Lebanese University and an activist, recalled this latter gathering, and argued that it had a very important impact, as it brought together thousands of people from East and West Beirut as well as different regions of Lebanon. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) also recalled various peace actions – from sit-ins organized by the Red Cross with the mothers of detainees and disappeared every Thursday at 11 am, to the mass protest organized by the unions – and the impact they had on the country. She further recalled an occasion when people from East and West Beirut came together over sand barricades separating them to kiss and hug people they

didn't know and who were only united by their identity as Lebanese. Such activities continued from 1987 until 1989, most actively organized by the PDOs (Kabbara, 2012).

To conclude, some believes that these initiatives were able to challenge the state such as J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) who argues that these peace activities and the pressure done by the civil society accelerated the process that led to the settlement. On the other side, although these initiatives did have an impact yet it wasn't powerful and direct. As Laure Moghaizel stated: "Non-violence is not very well understood as a strategy for action. It is not just pacifism. We held two information seminars, but you see how much we were against the current, we couldn't find a place to hold them. Nobody wanted to host a seminar on nonviolence, for fear of being attacked." (Warnock & Bexley, 1995; p. 727). To put it in another way, the peace initiatives didn't have enough influence to bring about cease-fires or to pressure different parties to come around the table to negotiate peace. This is due to the complexity of the war, the extensive power of the ruling families and militias, and the heavy regional and international interventions. As Picard and Ramsbotham (2012) state: "The Lebanese situation is often presented as an inextricable conundrum at the mercy of external influences" (p. 7).

### **3.4 Taif Peace Accord**

The formal peace process in Lebanon started in September 1983, when Lebanese government and opposition attended a national reconciliation conference sponsored by Syria and Saudi Arabia in Geneva. The Geneva meeting failed to produce any results, as did a second conference sponsored by the same countries in Lausanne (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

The peace negotiation process continued in the form of the negotiation and signature of the Tripartite Agreement between Berri, Jumblatt and Hobeika in 1985, which also failed to achieve what it stipulated when Hobeika was ousted by Geagea from the Lebanese Forces (Shehadeh, 1997; Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012).

In 1989, an Arab Summit established the Higher Tripartite Committee to recommend a solution to the Lebanese issue. The committee worked on a document that was later used as a basis for the peace talks in Taif, Saudi Arabia. Finally, on 30 September 1989, the Taif Peace Accord was adopted by Lebanese parliamentarians, with a regional and international support (Karam, 2012; Nauphal, 1997).

Karam (2012) explains how members of the 1972 parliament negotiated, developed and signed the Taif agreement in 1989. The parliament had been initially elected in 1972 and its term had been renewed due to the postponement of elections as a result of the war. Nonetheless, Karam (2012) argues that there was a kind of unity around this parliament as the only legitimate institution in the country.

Nauphal (1997) argues that the Taif agreement consists of four sections: general principles and reforms, including political and other reforms; sovereignty of the Lebanese State over its entire territory; Liberation of Lebanon from the Israeli occupation, and; Syrian Lebanese relations. It confirms the self-determination, sovereignty, and independence of Lebanon. Karam (2012) believes that the agreement consists of two main parts; the first part which was adopted as the preamble to the Constitution and is divided into three sections related to internal reforms including socio-economic, administrative, legislative, security and political reforms, national identity, power-sharing, sovereignty, territorial integrity and public, and; the second part which was integrated into different articles of the Constitution and addresses

external relations concerning the Arab/Israeli conflict and the relations between Lebanon and Syria.

According to Nauphal (1997) the agreement aimed at addressing internal and external aspects of the Lebanese crisis. She states that: “It presented a comprehensive approach to political, constitutional and social reform and dealt with the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national unity” (p. 17). Picard and Ramsbotham (2012), on the other hand, consider it as a ceasefire with enthusiastic – but empty – promises. They argue that it was a ‘national deal’ to assign power amongst a traditional oligarchy, which refrains from working towards political inclusion or representation. Karam (2012) supports this view and adds that the agreement “reconfirmed power sharing among religious communities that had been in force in Lebanon since the adoption of the Constitution of 1926” (p. 36). Picard and Ramsbotham (2012) further insist that it was mainly an agreement to delegate the power over establishing Lebanon’s new political order to Syria.

Finally, Karam (2012) believes that there were three main weaknesses in the Taif Agreement. First, the text was intentionally vague, thereby allowing different interpretations of key matters such as de-confessionalization, decentralization and Lebanese-Syrian relations. Second, the content challenged the core idea of Lebanon’s power sharing procedure and the notion of political participation by laying the first stone for the establishment of the Troika. Third, implementing the Taif has been largely directed by the need to stop the bloodshed and ensure power sharing between warlords, instead of guaranteeing an effective mechanism for peaceful and sustainable reconciliation and state reconstruction.

### **3.5 Women and the Formal Peace Process**

According to J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), the Taif agreement was signed with no female representation and no demands for women's rights. Although they gained their right to vote in 1951, women were poorly represented in decision-making positions during the war. None of the leaders of the warring factions were women and women were first elected as deputies only in 1992 – even then mainly on the basis of their familial relations, (ESCWA, 1995; Nauphal 1997). In her report “*Post-war Lebanon: Women and other war-affected groups*”, Nauphal (1997) argues that although women's participation in labor unions and political parties increased to some extent during the war, they were nevertheless absent from the policy and decision-making level. Noting that notions of gender equality were introduced in 1945 in the UN charter and the first conference on women was held in Mexico in 1975, issues related to women's political empowerment had only been recently introduced to the international scene and specifically to the Arab world and Lebanon. As a matter of fact, and as F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued, women were weakened by the end of the war and did not participate in any of the peace talks, including Geneva, Lausanne and Taif. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016), stated that “in the formal process, from my research and my understanding, there was an extremely limited, if not non-existent, role for women. There were some women representatives who had some discussions with those negotiating the peace, but according to what I have been able to find out, these conversations were not taken into consideration in actually shaping the official peace process. So from the formal perspective, I think women were not necessarily that involved directly in it”. As a matter of fact, the Taif Accord lacked reference to women's rights although the text recognizes all citizens as equal (Nauphal, 1997).

On the whole women were not engaged in formal peacemaking. They were excluded from pre-negotiations and they were not present at the peace table itself.

### **3.6 Women and Informal Peacebuilding**

There's no doubt that prior to the war, women's organizations were mainly charities for medical aid and other social services, rather than feminist organizations or movements able to influence and make a change at the political level. Again, the Lebanese Council of Women, formed in the 1950s, had failed to advocate for women's freedom, equality, and the right to be heard in matters of national concern (Shehadeh, 1999; Schulze, 1998). Yet women were able to make some contributions to peacebuilding; as R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) states "I think that regarding the informal process, women contributed", and highlighting that while in quantitative terms women's contribution may have been negligible, it nevertheless had an impact (M. Debs, personal communication, October 25, 2016).

In reality the number of women's organizations and associations increased during the war, yet their interventions were localized and focused on the immediate needs of the population. It is perhaps the very fact that much of women's activism was initiated by upper-middle or upper-class women that has perpetuated the assessment that civil society did not play a role in women's education on peacebuilding and political empowerment (Nauphal, 1997). The fact that different civil society organizations focusing on women's issues and human rights lacked coordination may also be attributed to the fact that the women's organizations were not ready to embrace radical feminist discourse that could have enabled them to challenge the dominance of the strong religious institutions of Lebanon (Kabbara, 2012). Reflecting on the absence of a women's movement to empower them, women mistook passive roles as active roles in creating peace. For example some of the women thought that by simply staying

in Lebanon and not being involved in the war, they were bringing about peace, as Miriam Cooke (1996) argues in *Women and the War Story*, describing Lebanese women as “‘Humanist Nationalists’ who were more loyal to Lebanon than to men”. She further argues that other women romanticized peace activism, and were convinced that by crossing on foot through demarcation lines, located next to the National Museum, they were playing a role in reunifying Lebanon (Valentine, 2007). In addition, several Lebanese female writers also fought for peace in their own way: as Afshar (2003) states: “Authors such as Jean Said Makdisi, Etel Adnan, and Emily Nasrallah have created a 'narrative of peace politics'; they write out of war and about war, but most of all they write against war. Using the traditional craft of storytelling and their traditional roles as keepers of memories, these women use the power of words to create a different understanding” (p.186).

Nevertheless, some women did participate actively in peace actions throughout the fifteen years of civil war. Valentine (2007) states that women in Lebanon were active in non-violent peace movements: they organized peace-marches, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and petitions and participated in numerous international conferences to try to end the violence. Actually, one of the founders of the Non-Violent movement – which led several activities during the war, such as collecting signatures and organizing sit-ins and non-violent marches across the country – was Laure Moghaizel (LaTeef; 1997). Moreover, Moghaizel was one of the most prominent women calling for the end to violence, and was responsible for organizing a number of activities in Beirut, such as the collection of signatures on a “Peace Charter: We the Lebanese proclaim peace among ourselves” (Warnock & Bexley, 1995).

As a matter of fact, and as stated by Laure Moghaizel in “Arms to fight, arms to protect” (Warnock & Bexley, 1995),

“at the beginning of the war, all the actions against the war were taken by women. But I didn't want women to be doing things in isolation, so as not to marginalize women even more. Peace is for everybody. So it was a women's movement, but we were always calling on men as well. Above all we insisted on including all religions; nothing was done without representatives from all the confessions.” (p. 270).

For instance, The National Lebanese Council of Women destroyed some barricades in 1975. Later on, the first popular initiative against the war was launched in May 1984 by Iman Khalifeh, a female university student, who invited all the Lebanese who opposed the war, the violence and the militias to come together next to the demarcation lines in the National Museum area on May 6 to commemorate Martyrs day (Kabbara, 2012).

Many women were known peace activists, in addition to Laure Moghaizel, J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), recalled Linda Matar and Wadad Chakhtoura, and explained how these brave women challenged the militias by going earlier to the protests, sleeping on the ground instead of withdrawing to avoid snipers. She further argues that women were active even if they didn't reach political positions. She insists that women played a major role in healing the wounds and in strengthening people's resistance.

Both M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), and J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), explain how women took the lead on local issues, especially during the Israeli invasion. Debs recalled how young female students volunteered to build shelters in the south, while in June 1982 and later in 1987 a number of women took to the streets next to the American embassy, demanding an end to the US support to Israel. She also recalled how she was involved in organizing

meetings, gatherings and petitions and tried to raise people's awareness about the fact that a sectarian war will lead to a division of the country, countless deaths and no meaningful result. Merhi described how committees were formed on every street in Beirut during the Israeli invasion, and how "women would go down the street and sweep, clean, collect the garbage, they organized neighborhoods' matters and people's issues in shelters". She further argues women's efforts during the war were essential for maintaining the people's resilience.

In addition to protesting and being community leaders, some women's organizations were focusing on cultural, social and intellectual activities and were able to network with external organizations. M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), recalled how she was involved in organizing various cultural activities to get people inside shelters out of their shells and the fear they were living in. They also organized cultural activities such as a weekly "Nidaa al Mar'a" (Women's Call), page dedicated to women in the "Al-Nidaa" newspaper, which addressed political, cultural, and social issues and to which the public could send letters and receive responses. Debs also explained how she was involved in organizing resistance activities specifically for women during the Israeli invasion; her organization was able to contact foreign patriotic and progressive women's organizations that supported Lebanon and Lebanese women in overcoming war and reaching peace.

Another prominent example of women's contribution to peacebuilding was the experience of the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared. W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016), shared her pride regarding the committee's achievements not only for their cause but also in planting the seeds of peace; she explained how, despite facing enormous sectarian and religious division, corruption, theft, and lack of political will, they were nevertheless able to make

progress, because the injustices experienced by people reached across sectarian and religious lines and therefore also brought people together across those same lines, enabling the Committee to come together and outlast the war. Halawani considers it a miracle that they were able as Christians and Muslims from different sects, ideological backgrounds, geographical areas, and economic classes to stick together during and after the war in face of the sectarian system and the challenges it posed.

In terms of the work of International Organizations on peacebuilding and political empowerment for women in Lebanon during the civil war, F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued that there were no International Organizations supporting women before or during the war. In contrast, M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), argued that International Organizations worked during the war, providing the example of Oxfam as an organization that worked on peace issues in general and provided assistance to local organizations, youth and student unions. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), argued that International Organizations focused on relief and services and not on women's empowerment and capacity building. She further added that the international community was present after the Israeli invasion in 1982, and recalled that UNIFEM (currently known as UN Women) focused its work on vocational rehabilitation while UNICEF in turn focused on vocational and handicraft training. However, she further argued that such trainings were not sustainable since it was not accompanied with social and rights-based empowerment.

The interviews conducted as part of the research for this thesis seem to support the findings of Rehn and Johnson-Sirleaf (2002), namely that Lebanese women did contribute to peace through activism to end hostilities by being civic activists, community leaders, and the first to speak out against the war and violence. This

contribution to the informal peace process has not been sufficiently acknowledged despite the fact that women managed to sensitize at least a part of the Lebanese public about violence and injustice and to raise their awareness regarding the impact of the war on society. In spite all of their efforts, women did not succeed in generating mass public support for their activism or secure a prominent role in the formal peace process that would have perhaps enabled them to bring about political change.

### **3.7 Comparing the Lebanese Case to the mapped factors**

#### **3.7.1 Grassroots Activism during the Conflict**

Women in Lebanon were able to mobilize across dividing lines, call for an end to violence and demand accountability through demonstrations, protests and petitions. They used innovative tools such as the media to try to build peace and make women's voices heard. They also managed to keep reminding the government about the disappeared. Despite these successes, there are several reasons that prohibited women from playing a more active role in ending the civil war.

This section will address these challenges through the six main categories of factors identified in Chapter 2: social and cultural, personal, safety and security, networking, international support, and media factors. These factors were determined to have had an impact on women's inclusion at the grassroots level in comparative cases in different parts of the world and will be used to analyze the role women played in the Lebanese case, in order to determine whether or not the same factors apply.

##### **3.7.1.1 Social and Cultural Factors**

The first category of factors relates to cultural norms and social rules, such as the degree of women's empowerment that ultimately influence the degree of women's participation in the public sphere. M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), argued that the customs, traditions and religious and sectarian values prevalent

in Lebanon at the time effectively rendered women “second degree” citizens, which also marginalized them from political processes in particular. She explained that there were no prominent women in political parties or the parliament. This has been further confirmed by scholars such as Shehadeh (1999), who argue that at the onset of the war, Lebanon was a patriarchal society with no women in positions of power such as the government, parliament or political party leadership. Nauphal (1997) further argues that social rules did not even allow women to be part of the unions.

In fact, the participation of women in the public sphere was to a large extent shaped by the interests of patriarchal political parties; as F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued, women contributed to war more than to peace mainly because men and political parties forced them to: warring groups needed women in support roles such as nurses, the management of food supplies and arms transfer. Charafeddine further raised the question how could women participate in peacebuilding if they weren’t even able to participate in the management of their own households. Nauphal (1997) agrees with this interpretation and argues that women often become isolated during wars and as a result become less visible and less able to express their needs. Cultural norms limit the access of women to resources and politics and pose several restrictions on their behavior in the public sphere.

The concept of martyrdom also played an important role in Lebanese culture, and contributed to the role women played in indirectly encouraging violence; Lebanese women were proud when their sons died for their cause, in particular among the Shiite community, where women actually encouraged their sons to take part in the resistance against Israeli occupation (Shehadeh, 1999). F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) recalled how warring parties would give special respect to “the mothers of martyrs” among women, thereby trying to encourage women

to push their sons to join militias. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) provided a slightly different point of view of the same phenomenon by explaining how many women who encouraged their husbands, brothers, or sons to take up arms did so out of a sense of honor.

Despite the considerable restrictions posed to women's public participation by societal rules and cultural norms, women were not completely marginalized and the argument could be made that several women were in fact motivated by the adversities they faced. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), recalled how girls would often stand at the front during demonstrations, directly facing the security forces, and how they were more fearless than men in challenging the prevailing authorities. Having said that, one of the reasons behind this courage could be that the same social structures that marginalized women, also provided them with a certain degree of security, since "There is still in this oriental society a concept of honor, which protects women a little.", as Laure Moghaizel put it (Warnock & Bexley; 1995, p.270). W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016), argued that the Lebanese patriarchal society placed women at a lesser risk of physical attack in the public sphere and recalled how the members of the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared were subject to all types of abuse but were never arrested or shot at.

Overall, however, at the onset and during the war, Lebanese women were not sufficiently empowered to be able to play an influential role in ending violence and creating peace. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) argued that during the civil war, the women's movement did not have a rights-based approach and was not actively calling for equality between men and women. She explained that the movement failed to politically empower women largely because it separated the feminist struggle for equal rights from the national struggle. In other words, women's

interests became secondary to the general public interest, resulting in a highly politicized, fragmented and paralyzed movement. Merhi considered this to be perhaps the greatest mistake of the women's movement since by choosing to focus on the national struggle over the feminist struggle, they failed to gain recognition as an influential political pressure group capable of building peace. S. Boukhary (personal communication, October 21, 2016) noted that "because unfortunately in our region, in our culture, women are not usually involved in issues like that, and when you are not knowledgeable enough you tend to make assumptions or prejudgments or just hear things and not think critically about them and act in a very inconsistent manner." As a result, as Shehadeh(1999) also argues, Lebanese women failed to recognize their disadvantaged position in society and to develop a feminist consciousness, instead seeking refuge in their sects and becoming more dependent on men, rather than engaging in anti-war efforts.

The lack of women's empowerment was not limited to the political level. The new responsibilities that women took on during the war as providers for their families, due to the provisional or permanent failure of men to fulfill that role, placed an additional burden on women and put them at a disadvantage, since they had to keep fulfilling the traditional roles of women as well. As Nauphal (1997) argues: "The migratory trend which has characterized the war period, has created labor shortages in various sectors but it has increased women's involvement and responsibilities, mainly in the agricultural sector where their work is not protected by any legislation. The development of the service sector (teaching, health, welfare) has direct implications for women's participation, since this is where it has increased most; women represent 80 per cent of those employed in these sectors" (Nauphal, 1997; p. 38).

To conclude, “The main obstacle identified by the informants for the participation of women in unions was time. With the traditional division of labor women are overloaded with work and receive no help whatsoever from the husband” (Nauphal; 1997, p. 58). The additional responsibilities women had to take on as a result of the war meant that they had little time or energy to engage in peacebuilding activities.

### 3.7.1.2 Personal Factors

Lebanese women suffered considerably during the civil war, as do all women living through civil and ethnic armed conflict. According to the World Health Organization (2005), *Women and War in Lebanon*, Shehadeh (1999), and *BPFA Section E* (1995), women and girls are affected the most in armed conflicts when conflicting parties use systematic rape as a war tactic. In Lebanon, women suffered physically and emotionally, losing family members and being forced to leave their houses, villages and communities. In her report, Nauphal (1997) notes how, first, the breakdown of structures, including the state, led to an increase in prostitution among married women and young girls and, second, how women were subject to sexual abuse inside and outside their homes. Having said that, there is limited data regarding the number of women in Lebanon who were abused and tortured during the war, compared to the data available for other countries.

In addition to them being abused, women had to see their family members get injured, killed, kidnapped or disappear. Wadad Halawani recalled how

“[My husband] was kidnapped in 1982. Two men came to the door they showed us official cards, and said the enquiry had to do with a car accident. [I was surprised.] Every day a hundred people were butchered or shot -at this moment, this was important? But Adnan said, "Don't worry." The five minutes after

which they said he would return became I don't know how many days [before] I comprehended what had happened. I began to check up with the authorities immediately, [but] all my efforts came to nothing. They said, "Poor Wadad, many have complained before you." But... I wanted to know who these others were." (in Warnock & Bexley, 1995; p. 256).

As a result Halawani used the radio to reach out to other families of the kidnapped, which eventually led to the formation of the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared (Warnock & Bexley, 1995). Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) argued that women, just like all other people, had to bear the effects of war on top of their personal and familial losses. This suffering created a powerful incentive for women to challenge the war. Halawani explained how women such as herself challenged the state of emergency in 1982 and demonstrated. She further argued that in their daily lives women, through their social roles, worked subconsciously for peace: "Let's assume my husband was a fighter, what would I have done to not allow my sons to be fighters?"

Moreover, Halawani's pain was a driving factor for her to reach out to women from different sects and religions and work together for a unified cause. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) similarly recalled how a group of Lebanese people from East and West Beirut felt that the Lebanese civil war was becoming a national suicide, was destroying the country, and how the actions of armed groups and militias were spiraling out of control and it was no longer clear who was kidnapping or killing whom and for what reason. As a result, this group started to gather near the barricades in central Beirut every Thursday to hold candles, and how the pain of seeing people get killed and the country destroyed allowed them to overcome differences and reach out to each other. It emphasizes what R. Dagher

(personal communication, November 9, 2016) also stated:“I also believe that it had a lot to do with the fatigue of not going anywhere, not just the increased toll, so we’ve done this for this long and yet things are not improving , the leaders are the same, things are not changing for us. I think it was a combination of fatigue and increased responsibilities.”

The experience of personal violation during the civil war and the shared injustice across dividing lines was one of the factors that motivated women to take to the public sphere, protest against violence and call for peace. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) argued that the recognition of the increased responsibilities on women’s shoulders and the increased toll that the war had taken were the main factors that eventually allowed women to contribute to peace.

#### 3.7.1.3 Safety and Security Factors

W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) was one of the few who argued that the lack of security and official government combined with frequent kidnappings were the factors that prevented women activists from playing a more active role in peacebuilding. M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016) noted security checkpoints as a factor that made it more difficult for women to move around and thus be effective activists. It would seem, therefore, that the while violence was not necessarily directed specifically at peace activists or women in general, the security conditions were such that they made it more difficult for women to play a public role. At the same time, Laure Moghaizel recalls her experience of the security situation and how it affected women differently from men by noting that

"I and my husband were kidnapped twice, near the demarcation line, as we were coming out of meetings. We thought our end was approaching, and they said to me, "You get into the car." But I could say to a militia man, "I am from

Beirut, Beirut is for both of us, I am your sister, your mother..." and he would say, "OK." It was because I was a woman that I could have this discussion. I am sure that a man would not have been able to. He couldn't touch me or push me." (in Warnock & Bexley; 1995, p. 12).

#### 3.7.1.4 Networking Factors

Generally speaking, women in Lebanon lacked access to networks of women's organizations at the national, regional and international level. One of the reasons behind this lack of access was the fact that the women's movement in itself was reasonably new and suffered from political divisions, since many of the women involved were also affiliated with political parties (which in turn were the main actors in the civil war as well) (M. Debs, personal communication, October 25, 2016 & J. Merhi, personal communication, October 14, 2016). F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) explained how most of the prominent women's groups existed were actually part of the political parties prior to the 1954 organizations law, which enabled them to become independent organizations.

Moreover, women have always suffered from the absence of a public space where they could communicate their concerns and organize their interests in a politically meaningful manner. As Nauphal (1997) notes "These groupings are important support systems to women while providing an important escape from an environment that puts too many demands on them" (p. viii). The only outreach to regional and international networks was mentioned by M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016) - she recalled her efforts to get in touch with patriotic and progressive women's organizations abroad in order to seek advice on how Lebanese women could try to work for peace.

Although some women managed to overcome social, cultural and security obstacles and become peace activists, their networking was limited at the national, regional and international level, and even the Lebanese Council of Women was divided.

#### 3.7.1.5 International Support

Although women in Lebanon received some solidarity and support from the international community, it was not enough to make a qualitative difference. For example W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) mentioned how the international community tried to help her organization, but was unable to effectively do so due to the complex situation on the ground at the time. She further emphasized that the international support her organization did receive was undermined by the lack of political will for reform and peace at the local level. This echoes F. Charafeddine's (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argument that although resolutions and declarations were passed by international organizations like the United Nations (UN), there was no political will to implement them in Lebanon or among the international community, since enforcement mechanisms were lacking. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) attributed the lack of support to the fact that the role of women in peacemaking was not yet recognized by the international community during the period 1975-1990.

In summary, Lebanese women did not receive significant support from the international community – whether in terms of moral support, capacity building or material support.

#### 3.7.1.6 Exposure to Other Women's Experience

As previously noted, the media can have formidable power in the context of a civil war to raise awareness about the plight of different people in the country. During

the Lebanese civil war, women did not have much access major media, including TV, radio and newspapers. M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016) only recalled one example of how her organization was able to reach out to a newspaper to disseminate ideas related to women and peace. There was also limited experience from civil wars in other Arab countries during that period that women could have identified with.

#### 3.7.1.7 Conclusion

To conclude, almost all the identified factors in Chapter two were relevant when analyzing the Lebanese women's contributions to peace during through the civil war except the exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflicts. Some of the relevant factors had a positive impact and were the reason behind the contribution while others had a negative impact and were the obstruction. The main factor that was behind women's contribution to peacebuilding at the grassroots level was the personal factor. The experience of personal violation and suffering pushed Lebanese women to call for ending the violence and the fighting. On the other hand, social and cultural factors besides networking and international support were influential in determining the capacity of women to be involved in peace activism during the civil war. These three factors did not allow women to contribute to peace. Women were considered as a second degree citizen at the onset of the conflict, they were not empowered, the women's movement was fragmented and they did not have access to platforms that would allow them to coordinate and finally they did not receive enough moral and material support to be active peace agents. The only factor that had dual effect was safety and security, the prevailing security was a reason behind the failure of several peace initiatives yet the level of violence directed toward women activists was very limited due to the women status in the society.

### **3.7.2 Women's Participation in Formal Peace Processes**

According to the review of academic literature as well as the interviews conducted, women were absent from the formal peace process.

Nevertheless, this section will address the following main categories of formal peace processes: UN Resolutions and International Agreements; International Support; the Selection Process; the Mediators and Negotiators; Women's Political Mobilization, and; Women's Political Experience and Will, in an efforts to examine the extent to which women were able to contribute to any of these.

#### **3.7.2.1 UN Resolutions, International Agreements and International Support**

By 1989, not many resolutions, agreements or platforms promoting gender equality and the participation of women in conflict resolution or decision-making had been developed. Lebanese women therefore did not have the support of any specific UN Resolutions to further their cause. They could only draw upon CEDAW, noting that Lebanon ratified it in 1997, and a document released after the Third World Conference on Women to Review and Appraise the Achievement of the UN Decade for Women and an NGO Forum organized by the General Assembly in 1986 on "Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women". While these documents encourage the inclusion of women in general, they do not have any specific provisions regarding the role of women in peacebuilding.

Moreover, women did not receive any international support for their inclusion in the Taif peace negotiations and no one opposed the fact that women were not represented: "The National Accord Document, or the Taif Agreement as it came to be known, constituted the outcome of a process of reconciliation among the Lebanese,

with the effective support of the Syrians, the Arabs, and the international community. In a statement following a summit meeting in Malta, the USA and the USSR expressed the international community's support for the Agreement. In addition, the United Nations Security Council Declaration on October 31, 1989 supported the agreement and the Lebanese authority resulting from it” (Krayem; 1997, p. 7). To conclude, it can be argued that women did not receive any international support for their inclusion in the formal peace negotiations.

#### 3.7.2.2 Selection Process

The process adopted to select participants at the peace table excluded all other groups than the warring parties and Lebanese parliamentarians. F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued that because women were not considered as “first degree” citizens, they were not considered important to include in the peace negotiation either. In fact, the Lebanese parliamentarians who adopted the Taif Peace Accord in 1989 were primarily elected in 1972, when there were no women in the parliament (Karam, 2012).

It is also important to consider that the Higher Tripartite Committee that worked on the document used later as a basis for the peace talks was formed by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan of Morocco, and President Chadli Ben Jedid of Algeria (Krayem, 1997), and that the peace talks were mediated by Saudi Arabia and took place in Saudi Arabia –an Arabic Wahabi Islamic state that diminishes women and their role in public life.

Finally, there was no interest from the Lebanese participants at the negotiating table to advocate for the inclusion of women.

It can be said, therefore, that the selection process of the participants, the absence of a quota for women, the role of Saudi Arabia as the mediator and the lack of

interest by Lebanese participants to advocate for the inclusion of women all resulted in the absence of women for the formal peace negotiations.

### 3.7.2.3 Women's Political Mobilization and Women's Political Experience and Will

As noted before, the majority of women in Lebanon was not politically empowered and was not able to form a unified, strong women's movement to advocate for their participation in the formal peace negotiations. Lebanese women also lacked political experience; according to a study prepared by Laure Moghaizel in 1987 and published in *Al Raida* Vol. IX No 50 in August 1990, "Only one of the parties has a service of a feminine nature; few, if any, women hold posts at the decision-making level; the presence of women is mostly symbolic; the internal regulations and policies of the parties do not discriminate against women; none of the parties have nominated a woman as candidate to represent it in the executive or legislative power; the activities performed by women have a subordinate, secondary or partial character. They act merely at executive posts, secretarial jobs, medical care, social assistants and attendants." (p. 3). Moreover, it is obvious that women lacked the political will to challenge the organizers of the peace talks and insist on being involved in the Taif peace negotiations.

### 3.7.2.4 Conclusion

To conclude, all the identified factors in Chapter two had an impact on women's inclusion at peace tables. To start with the adopted selection process, and the mediators and negotiators were not inclusive and lacked gender sensitivity and awareness as a result women were not involved in the formal peace negotiation. Moreover, women did not receive international support for them to be equipped for the formal process neither support for them to be included in the negotiations. Adding to that many of the resolutions or agreements referred to in Chapter two were not in place

yet at this time, thus women did not have an instrument to rely on and advocate for their inclusion. Finally due to the social structure and the lack of empowerment, women themselves were not politically mobilized and lacked political experience and will that would have allowed them to reach Taif and be included in the negotiation and have a say in the agreement. All these factors combined hampered women's access to the peace table.

# Chapter 4

## Women and Peace during Post Conflict Period (1990-1995)

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the post-war context and the overall situation of women during the period from 1990 until 1995. In 1995 the Beijing Conference on women, equality, development and peace took place. This conference had had a huge impact on women as well as the organizations working on gender and women issues in Lebanon, thus the focus on the period prior to 1995. The chapter then examines women's efforts in the period and their contributions, including their peacebuilding activism at the grassroots level. Finally, the chapter compares the Lebanese case to the mapped factors identified in Chapter Two.

### 4.1 Overview (1990-1995) - Post-War Context and Women in this Period

August 26, 1991, is one of the foundations of the political framework during this period, as it covered all political and wartime crimes prior to March 28, 1991 and, together with the Taif Accord, provided immunity to former warlords and allowed them to restore the sectarian power sharing system that predated the civil war. As a result, political leaders competed among each other to promote their own sectarian constituencies. (Karam, 2012; Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). Nauphal (1997) argues that "the reinforcement of confessionalism as a result of the war has serious consequences on the well-being and position of women" (p. 63). In fact, the first parliamentary elections after the civil war were held in 1992. In these elections, only three women ran for office and were elected due to their familial relations: a powerful

brother in the cases of Maha Khoury and Bahya Hariri; and an assassinated husband in the case of Nayla Moawad (Ghurayyib, 1992; Khatib 2008). Overall, during this period the level of women's participation in politics and the level of women's control and influence in the decision-making process were very low (Nauphal, 1997). Moghaizel noted that "as women, it's all very well to say we are outside power" (Warnock & Bexley, 1995; p. 273). In fact, R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) argued that based on her research, the women who were politically active or had positions in government or public service, did not represent so-called women's issues or actively promote a women's perspective to peace. In her opinion, these women had very little impact on the development of policies, if any, and were not able to promote a gender or women's perspective. So in qualitative terms women were excluded from power-sharing, and even those who were in positions of power were not able to influence decision-making in any meaningful way.

Moreover, the Syrian patronage that continued throughout this period, privileged sectarian business leaders and allowed them to protect their economic interests through inter-sectarian deals (Picard & Ramsbotham 2012; Karam, 2012). In fact, Karam (2012) argues that there were two types of political leaders in the post-Taif Lebanon: the warlords of demilitarized militias and a second, new, elite consisting of businessmen and entrepreneurs such as Rafiq Al-Hariri. Al-Hariri was appointed Prime Minister in October 1992, which had a direct impact on the reconstruction and reform process, as Hariri's main concern was the rehabilitation of the economy through the adoption of a neo-liberal model, at the expense of reforming the education system, health care, social development and urban planning (Karam, 2012; Nauphal, 1997).

In brief, the sectarian deals, the policies that created the allotment state and the heavy involvement of the Syrian regime led to a stalemate in the anticipated reforms

of public administration, the implementation of the rule of law, as well as neglect for the rehabilitation of key infrastructure and a corrupted public administration (Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012; Karam 2012). Once again, women suffered the greatest negative consequences from these post-war economic policies. Nauphal (1997) explains how the economic policies together with the strategy of the World Bank marginalized women, who were disproportionately represented among the poorest population and were not able to benefit from the policies of liberalization and privatization, in addition to having to increasingly provide for their families as the skilled male labor force migrated in search of better employment opportunities. Women ended up having to work both at home and outside the home, under hard conditions and without access to credit (Nauphal, 1997).

The combination of political stagnation and neo-liberal economic policies led to a socio-economic crisis and resistance by the civil society. One of the groups leading protests against government policies was The General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL), a trans-sectarian social and political power that was able in 1992 to force Omar Karami's cabinet to resign through strikes and demonstrations condemning inflation and high living costs. Yet sectarian leadership ultimately proved to be more powerful, managed to infiltrate the Confederation and manipulated it until it was neutralized (AbiYaghi, 2012).

Finally, in post-war Lebanon, the government did not differentiate between the experiences of men and women during the war and failed to acknowledge gender relations when setting its new policies. This was further compounded by limited state investment in social sectors, and led to the marginalization of women, especially widows, displaced and women heads of household (Nauphal, 1997). In fact, Nauphal (1997) also notes that UN Agencies, through their own programs, were solely

responsible for the inclusion of gender in any policies developed during the resettlement process.

To summarize, women during this period were excluded and faced discriminations at political, economic and social level. The sectarian system, the neo-liberal economy and the lack of gender sensitivity in the government's approaches put women under a lot of pressures and left them disempowered and unable to highly influence the post-war peace processes.

## **4.2 The Post-War Efforts and the Role of Women in it**

### **4.2.1 Reconstruction**

Picard and Ramsbotham (2012) argue that following the end of the war, Lebanon witnessed achievements in reconstruction especially in downtown Beirut. In fact, a five year plan from 1991 until 1996 was set and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) was assigned the role of coordinating between different ministries and mobilizing foreign finances (Nauphal, 1997). Moreover, Lebanon received International support from UNICEF for the rebuilding and rehabilitating of the country's infrastructure, including Water and Sanitation (Nauphal, 1997). In general, civil society was excluded from the reconstruction process as donors preferred to channel grants through government agencies. At the same time, there was an absence of communication between the Government and civil society organizations, which in turn lead to the marginalization of such organizations from the reconstruction process. Nauphal (1997) provides an example:

“As noted in the USAID report (1995: p.72), the National Reconstruction Programme designed by the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) has not provided NGOs with a role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. Considering the damage caused by the war, and

the needs of the population, the sidelining of the NGO sector is regrettable. State intervention in the social sector has been dramatically reduced and was non-existent during the war. Now, with structural adjustment policies and considering that the reconstruction process is marginalizing further war-affected groups, it is likely that the need for non-governmental organizations will grow. Costs are rising, cuts in the social sector have been made, subsidies will be removed and safety nets affected.”

#### **4.2.2 Disarmament Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (DDR)**

In terms of disarmament, after a political decision taken on March 28, 1991, all the Lebanese militias were disarmed, with the exception of Hezbollah, as their arms were legitimized due to their ‘resistance’ role against Israel (De Clerck, 2012; Nauphal, 1997; Picard & Ramsbotham, 2012). The South Lebanon Army (SLA) was the only militia that was excluded from the amnesty law and refused to be integrated in the Lebanese army (De Clerck, 2012). Having said that, not everyone abided by the rules, As De Clerck (2012) argues, some of the militias sold their arms outside Lebanon, buried heavy weapons in isolated areas in the mountains, and some even kept using light and medium weapons to train prospective fighters.

Many of the former militia fighters were included in the Lebanese army or the internal security forces. In fact, on May 5, 1991 the Lebanese government proposed to ‘rehabilitate’ 20,000 Christian and Muslim militia combatants by enrolling them in administrative and military state institutions. A month later, Law No. 88 was passed, allowing the integration of 5,000 Muslim and 1,000 Christian fighters into the army and internal security forces. Moreover, around 2,000 ex-combatants became part of the civil administration (De Clerck, 2012).

As for the reintegration of the combatants, according to a report by *Institut de recherche en épidémiologie de la pharmacodépendance* (IREP) some of the combatants found it extremely challenging to integrate back into civilian life, and as a result drug abuse was highly reported among them (Nauphal; 1997). Likewise, De Clerck (2012) argues that only a small number of ex-combatants received psychological support and treatment, which is why many turned instead to alcohol, domestic violence, and even illegal and criminal activities, resulting in many being imprisoned or killed. She explains how the state failed to provide adequate rehabilitation for ex-combatants, leaving them to suffer from psychological disorders including paranoia, post-traumatic stress or depression. Finally, De Clerck (2012: p.25) reports how some ex-combatants blamed the war for their suffering, while the majority refused to talk about it, and states that

“They tend to evade responsibility for violence through denial, and the state-sponsored ‘collective amnesia’ certainly helps. Very few concede that their wartime actions were horrific, sedating themselves by adhering to their self-proclaimed innocence. According to the UMAM survey, 57 per cent say they have no regrets at all, and 62 per cent will not apologize for their deeds”.

Nauphal (1997) notes that there is no data available on the reintegration of female combatants during the post-war period. She explains that in some groups, such as the Lebanese Forces, the woman leaders encouraged former female fighters to continue their education, which eventually helped them in the transition period. Little information is available regarding the fate of female combatants, but Nauphal does note that “one female unit of the Lebanese Forces has formed a religiously oriented NGO which focuses on civil education and defends the “Lebanese cause” (Nauphal, 1997, p. 47).

To conclude, militias continued to recruit and train combatants due to a lack of conflict transformation, peace building, reintegration of fighters or what De Clerck (2012) calls 'demobilization of the mind'. In other words, as per Wadad Halawani:

“This is a booby-trapped peace. It's not enough that I see beautiful skyscrapers, and a highway extending from the sea to the Gulf, and bridges and tunnels and cellular phones. In the end if I only rebuild the stone and sand and steel, if I don't rebuild the people first... The reform of people is much more important because eventually they'll be the ones who will fix and rebuild the country. This citizen who is really a citizen will hesitate a hundred times before he breaks a traffic signal or vandalizes a building (in Warnock & Bexley, 1995; p. 262).

#### **4.2.3 Internally Displaced**

After the war, a ministry and a fund, along with subsidiary bodies assisting with resettlement, were established by the government on January 4, 1992 through decree No. 190 to manage the return of all displaced persons (Nauphal, 1997; Kanafani-Zahar, 2012). The ministry received international support from agencies such as the UNDP in the reintegration and socio-economic rehabilitation of the displaced through projects that aimed at promoting employment opportunities for returnees (Nauphal, 1997). Some of the women did contribute to the work done with the displaced, for example M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016) described her experience and the important role she played in conferences organized by the Ministry of Displaced regarding the displaced and the process for their return to their villages. Moreover, W. Abed (personal communication, March 28, 2017), a member of the PSP Women (Progressive Socialist Party) and head of the Institute of Progressive Women (IPW), clarified that women played a role in the social and economic support for displaced people and families by providing them with requested aid.

#### **4.2.4 Reconciliation**

To start with, Lebanon did not witness an official national reconciliation process. Mohammad Sammak states in his interview with Accord 24 (2012) that “political parties reconciled, but the people were left out of the process, and nothing was being done to bring unity and promote a culture of reconciliation” (p. 27). The only official reconciliation was done by the Ministry of the Displaced (MD), when they specified around twenty villages as “villages of reconciliation” in the National Returnee Policy, specifically in Mount Lebanon. Those villages were further specified as belonging to one of two categories of villages to which Christian IDPs returned; the first was mixed Christian and Druze villages that did not witness massacres and the second was mixed villages that witnessed massacres (Kanafani-Zahar, 2012). Kanafani-Zahar (2012) criticizes the way in which the return of IDPs was managed, as it failed to distinguish between attacker and victim.

Other than that, the ruling elite refused to promote public debates as part of a reconciliation process, and as a result Lebanon witnessed what has come to be known as collective amnesia (Haugbølle, 2012). In fact Ahmad Beydoun states that “Lebanon’s civil war did not end with a national narrative that combined war memories. On the contrary, obfuscation and obliteration of what happened was achieved; healing was not. Obfuscation has been the linchpin of the politics of memory in Lebanon” (Accord 24, 2012). Nonetheless, some of the people, especially the intellectuals including artists and activists, reacted to this lack of reconciliation and campaigned for what they called the “public process of memorialization”, which would have consisted of the building of national war monuments and official research centers, decreasing sectarian tributes, and finding the political will to encourage critical discussions about the war (Haugbølle, 2012). Haugbølle (2012) further provides

examples of the memory making process by advocating several types of social activism, community-based and youth-focused projects, debate and collecting cultural production including films, articles, books that highlight the war years and make the connection between commemoration of the war and inter-sectarian reconciliation. Yet he questions the extent to which this process was able to break the silence at the national level. Many organizations had to readjust their goals and objectives, while other advocacy groups focused on non-sectarian issues such as human rights, the environment and women's rights (AbiYaghi, 2012). Haugbølle (2012) agrees that several reconciliation groups were founded and provides an example of the Lebanon Conflict Resolution Network (LCRN) and explains their structure and role as “an association of civil society activists and volunteers interested in acquiring conflict resolution skills. LCRN undertakes small-scale training initiatives in Lebanon and in other Arab countries, familiarizing participants with the basic concepts of conflict resolution and giving them tools to implement these. It has worked with school youth clubs and villages in Mount Lebanon” (p. 16). Not to mention that many of the peace activists engaged in post-war reconciliation built on their experience as participants in the civil society peace movement during the war, adopted a discourse was secular, and as a result largely implemented secular reconciliation or memory restoration projects (Haugbølle, 2012).

Overall, reconciliation was one of the fields where women were most active. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) argued that women subconsciously played the role of peacebuilders by working on conflict resolutions and promoting civil peace even without realizing they were doing so. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) provided examples of some women's groups in universities that would bring people together to talk about how to advance peace and

how to see one another as equal human beings, thereby creating a sense of community among women who wanted to move forward. Recognizing that she was drawing general conclusions on the basis of her own experiences, she further recalled that such activities, bringing together women across sectarian divides, were much more common among women than men. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) considers that while women saw their work as a national struggle, it was in fact a struggle for civil peace. She further argued, however, that the role played by women both during the war and in the immediate post-war period has not been adequately documented and is therefore at risk of being lost from collective memory. R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) provided further evidence of the reconciliatory approach adopted by many women's movements by noting that even "women's groups that had sprang up to help, let's say for example kids suffering from cancer, would help kids suffering from cancer from all religions and not just from their own religion, thereby crossing religious and societal boundaries. They developed a kind of sisterhood through this assistance scheme that they developed, women helping women". Dagher also explained how women were heavily involved in developing informal but inclusive systems and structures in the post-conflict period, bringing together people from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

#### **4.2.5 Kidnapped, Disappeared and Prisoners**

W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016), recalled how the society tried to return to normal after the war and the families of the kidnapped and disappeared were left behind. She explained how people didn't want to listen to the families of the kidnapped and disappeared, wanting instead to get over everything

related to the war. She explained how families first thought that the Taif Agreement would bring back the kidnapped and disappeared, and what a disappointment it was that this did not happen. Halawani considered that peace was formed largely at a cosmetic level; ruling politicians exchanged their militia uniforms for tuxedos and took power.

One of the main key contributions made by women in the post-war period was keeping the cause of the kidnapped and disappeared alive. W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) argued that although people didn't want to listen to the concerns of the families of the kidnapped and missing, she and her colleagues refused to let go and decided to advocate among what she calls friends of the cause by collecting signatures in a notebook. Building on this, they launched the "we have the right to know" campaign, which aimed at highlighting how the Taif Agreement failed to respect their demands. This campaign was successful in achieving the first formal recognition and official investigation committee for the kidnapped and disappeared, even if it was ultimately not equipped with the full range of terms of reference the campaigners had called for. However despite their efforts they were not able to have a powerful impact, J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) explained that the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared, who were all women, was not able to achieve anything after the Taif. She further contrasted this to the successes of the Follow-up Committee for Prisoners and Detainees, which succeeded in securing a quota to employ detainees in government positions, noting that both committees were working and struggling at the same time.

#### **4.2.6 Accountability**

In terms of accountability, women were not able to contribute, because as W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) explained, no one in post-war

Lebanon wanted to hold the other accountable; people simply wanted to overcome the war and go on with their lives as if nothing had happened. The Taif Agreement and the amnesty law served to further promote this approach of continuing with life “over dead bodies and crimes”, as Halawani put it. To give an example, with regard to domestic violence and sexual abuse, Nauphal (1997) states that “the generalization of violence during the war, did not allow a discussion of the experience of women subjected to other forms of violence or sexual abuse. The Government has not taken measures to address the issue of domestic violence or sexual abuse, whether related or unrelated to the war”. In fact the accountability regarding domestic and sexual violence was first addressed only by the National Committee for the Preparation of the Conference of Beijing (Nauphal, 1997).

#### **4.2.7 Women’s Rights**

One of the main contributions women made to the post-period was made through their preparation and attendance of the 1995 Beijing conference, which was the first conference that women prepared for and attended in the name of the Lebanese government. F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) emphasized that the preparation for the conference was equally important as the conference. She explained how the preparation lasted for two years and argued that Aman Chaarani played a key role in the whole preparation process, taking the excellent decision not to rely only on the Lebanese Council of Women for the preparations. Similarly, J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) explained how feminist activity changed since the preparation for Beijing started and conferences were being organized across Lebanon. She recalled how in Beirut alone, nine conferences were organized, each of them focusing on one of the axes of Beijing, and how work on each axis lasted for approximately one whole month. F. Charafeddine

(personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued that until the Beijing Conference, there had been no studies on women's issues, as they were considered to be the same as the issues of society in general; it was considered that the situation of women changes in the same way as the situation of men, possibly due to a Marxist approach to society, adopted by many third world countries. She further explained how all the women and women's organizations involved in the preparatory process insisted on "The Preparatory Committee" being a part of the delegation that was formed by the government to attend Beijing conference. She explained the importance of the preparatory period by highlighting that there was no gender statistics to begin with, and that Fadia Kiwan, Laure Moghaizel and herself had to go to the Civil Service Council to count women one by one. She further emphasizes that Beijing was a turning point for women's organizations in Lebanon, as it pushed them to become more specialized, more supportive, and more productive of knowledge about women and, by so doing, effectively to take better care of women. Similarly, M. Debs (personal communication, October 25, 2016), explained that the deliberations in Beijing were held at two levels – one at the level of governments and the other at the level of NGOs – and that her organization participated in the preparations for Beijing at both levels. While most of her participation was and the level of civil society, they did also participate in meetings at the government level, with other women such as Muna Hrawi, Randa Berri and female representatives of ministries such as the ministry of agriculture and the ministry of social affairs, both of which had women in high positions.

#### **4.2.8 Conclusion**

To summarize, Lebanon witnessed many reforms in the aftermath of the war, but none of them benefited women, which imposed a heavy constraint on the ability of

women to contribute to the reconstruction of the country (Nauphal; 1997). At the same time, it should be emphasized that women received more support from their leaders than men did when being integrated back in their communities. Moreover, Nauphal (1997) notes that, relative to men, internally displaced women benefited more from projects supported by international agencies aiming at the Reintegration and Socio-economic Rehabilitation of the Displaced, such as the 1994 "Aidoun" program by the ministry of displaced and UNDP. The formal peace process in Lebanon included physical reconstruction, DDR and rehabilitation of the internally displaced, but most of the work on reconciliation and the kidnapped and disappeared was done exclusively at the informal level.

Moreover, as Anderlini (2000) and Paffenholz (2015) also argue, women's roles in post-conflict reconstruction, accountability, reconciliation, rehabilitation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes are critical. In Lebanon women were excluded from disarmament and demobilization, and were only able to make a small contribution to reintegration, mainly in terms of the internally displaced. At the same time, as previously argued, women in post-conflict countries often make valuable contributions to peace processes at the grassroots levels, which indeed Lebanese women also managed to do through several types of activities and initiatives focusing on reconciliation, awareness-raising, women's empowerment and calling for the rights of the families of the kidnapped and disappeared.

### **4.3 Comparing the Lebanese Case to the mapped factors**

This section will analyze the Lebanese post-war experience from the point of view of the factors that contribute to women's participation— social and cultural, personal, safety and security, networking, international support, and media factors –

identified in Chapter two. It will also assess the extent to which these factors seem to help explain the level of women's participation in peacebuilding efforts in Lebanon between 1990 and 1995.

#### **4.3.1 Social and Cultural Factors**

As defined in Chapter two, social and cultural factors refer to cultural norms and social rules that determine the degree of acceptance of women's participation in the public sphere within society in general and in peacebuilding specifically. Women's involvement in post-war Lebanon remained subject to the same customs, traditions, religious and sectarian values as before, which means that women were still largely considered as "second degree" citizens. As Nauphal (1997) puts it, women were seen as vulnerable and in need of protection, which led to the assistance given to women largely neglecting the strength and ingenuity they could have brought to bear. W. Abed (personal communication, March 28, 2017) similarly argued that women would have needed greater political empowerment in order have been able to play a more active role in the reconstruction and peace process.

#### **4.3.2 Personal Factors**

Personal experiences did influence women's contributions in the post-conflict period. For example, the Committee of the Parents of the Kidnapped and the Disappeared, mainly consisting of women, refused to give up even in the face of lack of interest by the government and lack of support by the general public. Based on her personal experience, W. Halawani (personal communication, October 28, 2016) argued that one of the main drivers of this persistence was the fact that the women involved needed closure in order to be able to build a future and live the present.

#### **4.3.3 Networking Factors**

J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016) described how, in 1992, an initiative was taken to revive the Lebanese Council for Women, and how it started regaining the role it had played before the war as a result. The Lebanese Council for Women provided a good network for Lebanese women, and Merhi argued that it played an essential role in bringing women's issues back on the table, culminating in the 1994 process of preparations for the Beijing Conference. She further argued that the rights-based approach to women's issues started to take shape after the Taif Agreement – up until then, the women's movement was fragmented and weak due to its focus on the national struggle rather than on a feminist struggle. Unfortunately, the women's movement was not able to ultimately develop itself into an influential advocacy group. F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) agreed with this view and explained that the women's movement was focused on meeting the day to day needs of women, such as education and healthcare, but failed to address more strategic needs related to empowerment or political participation.

Finally, Merhi argued that feminism could have the potential to unify the people, since it proved to be able to cross sectarian and religious divides in order to unite people in their strive for peace and democracy. However, women in Lebanon lacked the required coordination, networking and a sufficiently powerful platform to actually be able to rally behind a feminist approach to peacebuilding.

#### **4.3.4 International Support**

Lebanon received considerable international support during the post-war period, but most of this support was channeled through government agencies. Nauphal (1997) further argues that the majority of projects aiming to empower women focused on health, education and socio-economic empowerment through vocational training. In summary, Lebanese women did not receive much moral support, capacity building

or material support for them to be able to play a key role in reconstruction, DDR or effective peacebuilding on a larger scale. In fact R. Dagher (personal communication, November 9, 2016) recalled only one or two projects focusing on women and explained that there several studies written about women, governance and elections, but there were hardly any projects that would have actually focused on promoting women's political empowerment in concrete terms. She further argued that women's empowerment projects were mostly geared towards protection and humanitarian assistance.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

To conclude not all the identified factors in Chapter two were relevant when analyzing the Lebanese women's contributions during the immediate post-conflict period (1990-1995). For example the interviews and the literature review didn't touch on the level of prevailing security in the country and the level of violence directed toward activists in general and women activists in particular as an influential factor on women's mobility and ability to participate in the reconstructing the country and building peace. In other words, security was not a factor that limited women's contribution in the post-conflict peace processes. The same applies to the exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflict.

On the other hand personal, social and cultural factors besides networking and international support were influential in determining the ability of women to participate in the rebuilding of the country and contributing to peace. To start with, the personal factors were a key driver behind women's involvement and contribution during this period. Women had experienced many violations during the conflict and were fed up with discrimination and injustice across dividing lines which allowed them to be ready to fight for their rights and for change in their country. However other

factors did not allow them to reach their objectives. First, the lack of internal, regional and international networking did not allow women to strengthen their positions and to be influential. Second, in terms of the lack of the international support; women were not empowered and supported enough to have the power to change. Finally, the political and social structure besides the economic policies put women under a lot of pressures and limited their contribution at all levels.

The following chapter is the conclusion that will present a summary of the main points and my personal opinion of what is the main factor that has influenced women's contribution throughout the Lebanese civil war and during the immediate post-conflict period from 1990 till 1995.

# Chapter 5

## Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarizes the main findings pertaining to the thesis questions and advances general conclusions based on the findings. It also considers the contributions, strengths and limitations of this thesis, and discusses important directions for future work and further research.

### 5.1 Findings and Conclusions

This thesis sought to answer the questions: What factors inhibited the ability of Lebanese women to play an active role in peace processes? Are women's role(s) in peace processes related to their roles and involvement during the war? Can peacebuilding and political empowerment initiatives encourage women to fight for their right to participate in peacebuilding?

To start, the relationship between women, war and peace is tightly correlated yet very complicated. The oppression of women in a society can be one of the drivers of conflict. After all, when conflicts occur gender is absolutely affected and most of the times exacerbated even in the post-conflict period. As Mazurana and Proctor (2013) argue, "armed conflict is not gender-neutral; in fact it is deeply discriminatory" (p. 10). Women can be victims of war; this thesis showed how women in Lebanon suffered from the emerging additional responsibilities in the private and public sphere, besides death, abuse and destruction. At the same time women across time and place benefit from war as it represents an opportunity for them to change their roles and move into the public sphere. This also applies on Lebanese women during the civil war

when they became more involved in economy, acquired more education, and involved slightly more in the political scene. Moreover, women can contribute to war directly as combatants or indirectly through their traditional roles as mothers, wives and sisters. For example, in Lebanon some women were combatants while many women considered the civil war as a legitimate battle for their existence and encouraged the males in their families to fight. Nevertheless, women can end war through their peace activism, this thesis presented examples of female peace activism in recent history since 1820. In summary, women influence war, like war influence women and as argued throughout the thesis women can be agents of war just like they can be agents of peace which was also the case in Lebanon.

As presented in Chapter Two, the purpose of this thesis was to highlight the importance of women's contribution to peace. This thesis argued that women can be agents of change during conflicts due to the simple reason that throughout history, and as a result of marginalization, they became equipped with peace skills and approaches. In fact, the analysis of the role played by women in civil conflict across the world from Afghanistan, to Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, El Salvador, Former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia), Guatemala, Lebanon, Liberia, Northern Ireland, Occupied Palestinian territories, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sri Lanka proves that women do contribute to peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction. Their contributions to peace processes at both the formal and informal level can take several forms and their levels of impact do vary. Through conflicts, women's contribution at the grassroots level can range from raising awareness and sensitization of the public around violence, to community-based negotiation and mediation to actually forcing peace negotiation and signature of peace agreements. Moreover, during the post-conflict women work on accountability, reconstruction, disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration, kidnapped and disappeared and promotion of human values.

Nine factors were identified to have an impact on women's inclusion at the grassroots level while eleven factors were identified to have an impact on women's inclusion at peace tables and each set of these factors was grouped in six categories. The categories of factors that influence women's peace activism at the grassroots level are social and cultural, personal, safety and security, networking, international support and finally exposure to other women's experience. The categories of factors that influence women's participation in formal peace negotiations are UN Resolutions and International Agreements, Selection Process, International Support, Mediators and Negotiators, Women's Political Mobilization and Women's Political Experience and Will.

These factors can be the force driving women toward a more active peacebuilding role or can be the obstacle limiting women's contribution to peace at the grassroots level or their participation in formal peace talks. This thesis highlighted the importance of women's inclusion at peace tables because studies have shown that women's empowerment and gender equality are connected with peace and stability in society. In fact, when women participate effectively in peace processes, the possibility of peace agreements being reached, trusted and implemented is much higher as argued by Paffenholz et al. (2015). Moreover, when women succeeded in influencing the peace talks, an inclusion of gender terminology among other basic human and development issues in the peace accords were secured.

This thesis demonstrated that women in Lebanon did contribute to the informal peace process at the grassroots level however their activism was not enough to make a

change. In fact, through their community-based civic actions and national peace civic actions, women succeeded in sensitizing part of the Lebanese public about the need to end the civil war. However, women's efforts did not create enough support for them to play a major role in forcing a change in the political scene and ending the conflict.

At the formal level, all the identified factors played a role in Lebanese women's exclusion from the peace negotiations. First the adopted selection process where the participants were only the warlords and the parliamentarians elected in 1972. Second, mediators and negotiators represented the Saudi, Algerian and Moroccan regimes and they were not inclusive. Third, women did not receive enough regional and international support. Fourth, the international resolutions or agreements calling for women's inclusion were not in place yet at that time. Finally, women lacked political experience and will as a result they didn't succeed to mobilize because of the social structure and the lack of empowerment.

At the informal level, the thesis argued that almost all the identified factors in Chapter Two, except the exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflicts, were relevant when analyzing the Lebanese women's experience in informal peacebuilding during the civil war. Some of the relevant factors such as the personal factor, or in other words the experience of personal violation and suffering, was behind women's contribution to peacebuilding. While other factors such as social and cultural factors besides networking and international support were behind the limited impact of women's informal peace activism during the war. Women were not treated as full active citizens, plus they did not have a platform such as a powerful women's movement to mobilize, on top of that they were not supported or empowered enough for them to be active agents of positive change. The only factor that was both an obstacle and a driver was safety and security, as the security situation did not allow

many of the peace activism to be impactful however women’s status within the society secured their safety in several peace initiatives.

When it came to the post-war period from 1990-1995 not all the identified factors proved to be relevant or influential on women’s contribution to peace during the period. While personal factors, social and cultural factors, networking and international support were still relevant and influential on women’s contribution to the peacebuilding, security and safety of women activist and the exposure to relevant experiences of women in other conflict did not have an impact during this period or at least did not form an obstacle. Personal factors such as the level of discrimination and injustice continued to be the driver behind women peace activism. While social and cultural factors besides networking and international support continued to be an obstacle that did not allow women to be active agents of change during the post-conflict period. In other words, as a result of the lack of national, regional and international networking and support women were not fully empowered to be influential and agents of peace.

**Table 1: The factors compared with the Lebanese case**

	Found in Lebanon		Not Found
	Driver	Obstacle	
Factors at the Informal/Grassroots	Social and Cultural	x	
	Personal	x	
	Safety and Security	x	x

Level and Post-Conflict Period	Networking		x	
	International support		x	
	Exposure to other women's experiences			x
Factors at the Formal Level	UN Resolutions and International Agreements		x	
	Selection Process and Quota		x	
	International Support		x	
	Mediators and Negotiators		x	
	Women's Political Mobilization		x	
	Women's Political Experience and Will		x	

The overriding purpose of this thesis was to argue that initiatives, organizations and networks that aim to empower women politically and introduce them to peace building and conflict transformation concepts and skills have a great impact on the ability of local women to play an active role in peace processes. It is true that several influential factors were identified, yet through the analysis of the factors, the level of women's empowerment was proved to be a main driver for the increase of women's participation in public life and in particular the political one and their presence in decision-making bodies. As Paffenholz et al. (2015) argue, inclusive processes require several actions including women's empowerment and capacity building. She states that "technical support packages for women's participation in peace processes should be strengthened and increased" (p. 3). In terms of the Lebanese case, the lack of international support and networking that usually allow women's empowerment was persistent as an obstacle at both formal and informal level as well as during the post-war period. To put it differently, the lack of these initiatives in Lebanon during the war and in the immediate post-war period from 1990-1995 were the result of the absence of regional and international support of women at that time. Thus, Lebanese women, although they contributed to peace, failed to be influential agents of peace by ending the violence in 1989 and directly influencing the peace process. In fact, the negative impact of women's exclusion from the Lebanese peace process and the Taif agreement

can be observed over the last twenty-seven years. Since 1990 Lebanon has witnessed political instability including the war of 1996 and 2006 with Israel, the assassinations that started in 2004 (Rafic Hariri, Samir Kassir, etc...) and the internal fight of May 2008. Adding to the political instability and lack of security, Lebanon has experienced political vacuums, for example the country was without a president for more than two years from May 2014 till October 2016. Moreover, until this day, Lebanon has not properly addressed the issue of the disappeared and women still face discrimination on a political level as they are excluded for decision-making positions and they are subject to legal and social injustice just like many other groups in the community including, for example, people with disabilities. As J. J. Merhi (personal communication, October 14, 2016), describes the situation:

“I believe we could have had a better political presence, I believe we could have had better accessibility to leadership positions inside political parties; I believe we could have had a greater impact as women’s movement...[but] the position of the women’s movement stayed weak. Actually everything is weak not just the women’s movement...”.

## **5.2 Strength, Limitations, and Future Directions**

In terms of limitations, the interviewees were all women, and did not include Lebanese political leaders. The thesis did not go into details of the women’s experience during the war and the immediate post-war period due to the lack of the available data. Further research and surveys is needed on women’s roles and contribution during the war including an exploration of political leaders’ perceptions on the issue. Such studies can be used to understand the implications of the war period on the current status of women in Lebanon and can inform all concerned stakeholders working on women’s movement, women inclusion and gender equality in Lebanon.

In terms of strength, this thesis mapped thirteen civil conflicts across the world to extract the factors that were compared to the Lebanese case in order to identify those that hindered Lebanese women from playing an active role in the peace process and immediate post-conflict recovery. The importance of this thesis is that first it allows a better understanding of current gender dynamics and political instability. How can we expect peace and stability in Lebanon when peace negotiations, the peace agreement process, and the reconstruction of the country excluded a major group of Lebanese citizens—women? Second this thesis aims to emphasize the importance of regional and international support for women in conflicts and aims to influence international actors' interventions in countries such as Syria that shares lot of similarities with Lebanon.

Although Lebanese women have managed since the end of war to improve their status and secure more rights, they are still excluded from decision-making. As F. Charafeddine (personal communication, November 3, 2016) argued, Lebanese women have not been represented in any of the dialogues such as the Doha dialogues in 2008 or the national dialogues organized by Nabih Berri or the recent dialogues for during the presidency vacuum or the ones that preceded the presidency. So how can we change the present if we didn't understand the factors and work on them? Thus, the importance of this thesis: If we want to secure women's inclusion in peacebuilding, we need to include them more in decision-making at all levels and in all sectors.

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# Appendix 1



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

لجنة الاستعراضات

## NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

To: Ms. Yasmin El Masri  
Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouais  
School of Arts and Sciences

APPROVAL ISSUED: 21 September 2016  
EXPIRATION DATE: 21 September 2017  
REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED – Initial

Date: September 21, 2016

RE: IRB #: LAU.SAS.JS1.21/Sep/2016

Protocol Title: Inclusion Of Women In War And Peacebuilding In Lebanon

The above referenced research project has been approved by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This approval is limited to the activities described in the Approved Research Protocol and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. **Enclosed with this letter are the stamped approved documents that must be used.**

### APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS

**LAU RESEARCH POLICIES:** All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. **PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB approval date or after the expiration date.**

**PROTOCOL EXPIRATION:** The LAU IRB approval expiry date is listed above. The IRB Office will send an email at least 45 days prior to protocol approval expiry - Request for Continuing Review - in order to avoid any temporary hold on the initial protocol approval. It is your responsibility to apply for continuing review and receive continuing approval for the duration of the research project. Failure to send Request for Continuation before the expiry date will result in suspension of the approval of this research project on the expiration date.

**MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS:** All protocol modifications must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

**NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT COMPLETION:** A notification of research project closure and a summary of findings must be sent to the IRB office upon completion. Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of notification of project completion.

**IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.**

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at [christine.chalhoub@lau.edu.lb](mailto:christine.chalhoub@lau.edu.lb)

#### BEIRUT CAMPUS

P.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran  
Beirut 1102 2801  
Lebanon  
Tel: +961 1 78 64 56  
+961 3 60 37 03  
Fax: +961 1 86 70 98

#### BYBLOS CAMPUS

P.O. Box: 36  
Byblos  
Lebanon  
Tel: +961 9 54 72 62  
+961 3 79 13 14  
Fax: +961 9 54 62 62

#### NEW YORK OFFICE

475 Riverside Drive  
Suite 1846  
New York, NY 10115  
Tel: +1 212 870 2592  
+1 212 870 2761  
Fax: +1 212 870 2762  
[www.lau.edu.lb](http://www.lau.edu.lb)



The IRB operates in compliance with international guidelines of Good Clinical Practice, the US Federal Regulations (45CFR46) and (21CFR56) of the Food and Drug Administration. LAU IRB Identifier: FWA00014723 and IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1



LA [REDACTED]  
IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1

**DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:**

IRB Initial Protocol Application	Received 14 September 2016
Cover Letter	Received 14 September 2016
Questions for Interview	Received 16 September 2016, amended 20 September 2016
IRB comment regarding participants 20Sep2016	Advisor response 20Sep2016
NIH Training – Jennifer Skulte Ouais	Cert.# 1632906 Dated (11 December 2014)
NIH Training – Yasmin El Masri & CV	Cert.# 2127681 Dated (20 August 2016)