
The Role of Women in Peace Building

Abstract

The role of women in peacekeeping and security was recognized by the resolution of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). After the execution of the resolution, around 20 years ago, more than four hundred peace treaties were signed. Since then one might think that there is a lot going on about women and their role within the social process. It may therefore be important to understand whether the execution of the resolution has created a greater agreement for women between peace agreements and to determine whether women are limited in the roles they have been assigned within the peace agreements. The agenda of this thesis is a comparative case study that explores situations in which the role of women in peacebuilding was widely discussed.

Introduction

UNSC introduced and implemented a new resolution called UNSC Resolution 1325 focusing on women, peace and security, in the year 2000. There were four basic pillars of decision: **participation, protection, prevention and peacebuilding and renewal**. The movement was followed after realizing that women were largely excluded from the peace process after the conflict. This is intended to highlight the important role women play in preventing and resolving peace, both in negotiation and in creating peace (UN Women, 2016). In the pursuit of peace and security, the new decision-making process was the first of its kind for women and their role. It aimed to promote women's participation in the peacebuilding process as they were equal to men. The suspension of Resolution 1325 was one of them in the sense that the UNSC for the first time set its sights on women in the war and portrayed women as peacekeepers and negotiators instead of victims only (Tryggestad, 2009). The solution describes the popularity of women's role in peace building and the impact that armed conflict has on them.

Although women are appointed to the terms of the peace treaties, there is little understanding of what women do, in building peace separately from the position they have been assigned to peace treaties. The problem is that their roles in peace have been limited. Since women are restricted in this regard research will focus on whether women are limited, by their roles, in the peaceful work they do.

Objective

The research's objective is to identify and explore the roles assigned to women in peace agreements and the peace building process. The aim of the thesis is to compare these tasks to the work the women actually put in when working along peacebuilding to see if they follow the normative roles expected for them in their society. This is to compare women and their stands in various conflicts to see if there are any characteristics that can be identified concerning women in peace building. The research will find if women are victims of war or if they are agents of change in peacebuilding processes, to see if the execution of the resolution 1325 has had an impact on how women are

perceived in peace agreements and if this follows the line with what was agreed to in the resolution and if these peace agreements reflect on the work women are involved in.

Methodology

The research paper will be a study with a comparative methodology. The thesis will use an abductive approach to give one possible answer to the research questions through the lens of the chosen theoretical framework. The paper will conduct various case study research with some cases, to compare the roles women are assigned to in peace agreements to the roles they take on in the peace process.

Somalia

- **Peace Agreement in Somalia**

The issue in Somalia is present in the country for many years, beginning with a civil war in the 1980s. In the years that followed, the Somali state folded thanks to internal factors and external factors. The internal factors, where the state was contradicted by the kinship system, and external factors such as the impact of the cold war and colonialism and the affected the development of the conflict. Somalia experienced a war between the clans in the society in the early 1990s, where more than twenty five people were brutally killed and around one million fled the country. Afterward, from 1992 to 1996, the country experienced two civil wars. After the change of the millennia, several efforts were made to bring peace in the country with both mediation and peace processes. However, this failed and from 2006 to 2008, the situation became ruinous where the humanitarian situation was the worst since the 1990s (Bradbury & Healy, 2010).

The peace treaty that was established in Somalia, known as ‘Protocol Establishing the Somali National Constituent Assembly’ and signed in 2012 is one of the agreements in this research that mention women’s role in detail. The peace agreement in Somalia highlights about women and their inclusiveness in the political sphere in the fallout of the conflict.

- **Peace March by women in Somalia**

In Somalia, male and elders have historically advocated for peace, since they could mediate for peace and in the formal peace talks, women, however, are often not included all together in these processes due to patriarchy (UN Women, n.d.). Despite this, women are usually capable of influencing in ways of engaging in the peace processes, because of their affiliation to multiple clans.

Women (in some Somali families) are more powerful than others, especially if they are related to the elder, wealthy or from a respected family. These women often influence and pressure men, especially elders in the family, to participate in peacemaking. There are many examples of what Somali women participate in building peace, for example their colleagues; Human Rights, Disarmament, Peace and Security and Political Representation (Jama, 2010).

In a 2014 study conducted by Joyce Gichuru in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, the researcher asked a group of women questions that considered their role in peacebuilding. For example, questions like these; if they have the training and how to get involved, with the help of

organizations or if there is a culture of peace in the communities in which they live, they are asked. Gichuru saw that that women of Somali played an important role in establishing peace where the main focus was social. These roles, among other things, demolished illegal testing centers controlled by various armed groups and formed groups that included women and youth who worked for peace and security in their communities. A major role women played was to mobilize rival factions to start a reconciliation process, both local and national.

One of the reasons that women are not considered recruits and therefore are not part of the armed groups. Instead Somali women focus on promoting the eradication of harmful cultural practices, namely female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, the act of consent.

The Somali Women Development Center (SWDC), an organization is located in many places. One of their programs (2011-2012) passed through the first phase in which women from five different regions participated in strengthening peace and security among the neighbors in their districts. More than 500 women in five different districts have worked to organize events and report incidents to the police in order to restore basic law (SWDC, 2016).

Yemen

- **Peace work in Yemen**

Following a new constitution in 1990 the country was hit by political instability. The new constitution comes after the unification of Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Officially, the country would be governed by a multi-party-political system in which all citizens of Yemen were guaranteed the right to vote. In fact, the country was ruled by Ali Abdullah al-Saleh, the decision-maker. The General People's Congress (GPC), Al-Saleh was also the country's president for twelve years before being convened in 1990 in gaining power.

In Yemen, the 'Agreement on the Execution of the Revolutionary Process in Yemen in Accordance with the Beginning of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)' was signed in 2011. The peace treaty speaks volumes about women within the politics of the country, The Peace Agreement, states that there are some concerns about where to start developing women's role although it is not clear how these legal mechanisms will be planned or implemented. Women are therefore considered in the peace treaties, however, how their roles will be fulfilled is not specified in any way.

- **Peace Work in Yemen**

By the time the Arab spring arrived in Yemen in 2011, Yemeni women were on the verge of revolution, where they joined a non-violent protest and demanded a better future for them. When the conflict escalated, some women became involved in wars or smuggled weapons. However, many women decided to help the soldiers by providing them with food and water, caring for the wounded and the paramedics. Women have later helped to participate in humanitarian assistance, to create internally displaced persons (IDPs) maps, providing assistance with drug trafficking and food. They also demanded that civilians and hostages be released, negotiating the release of detainees held on all sides. In addition, women have worked to reintegrate child soldiers into the community (Anderlini, Jarhum, Allam & Cowick, 2017, Saferworld, n.d.).

Because of the cultural role of Yemen, women are seen as people who do not have the skills or ability to engage in the peace process. In 2016, only a few Yemeni women were allowed to participate in the formal peace talks. Participating women were instructed to participate in informal discussions only and this had little effect and coincided with the larger discussions held. Although the national peace process does not include women in the right way, when it comes to the work of building peace and mediation in the area, women are very involved and have a significant impact on society.

UN Women, working in Yemen for women's participation in humanitarian and political empowerment activities in 2015 gathered Yemeni women in Cyprus to discuss their vision for their country (UN Women, 2017). Unfortunately, women are still neglected in formal legal work and rarely receive any reasonable right to participate in the peace process (Anderlini, Jarhum, Allam & Cowick, 2017).

In Yemen, during and after the conflict, women have helped organize humanitarian aid, mapping of IDPs and war-affected families. In addition women have helped to organize relief efforts in high-risk areas. The relief efforts made by women have not been easy, as there has been opposition to their support in the face of threats and restrictions by certain groups seeking to reduce women's participation in the public.

Conclusion

The study found that although many scholars and the United Nations have adopted the 1325 resolution emphasizing the importance of including women in peace treaties and their role in building peace, this is far from the truth. However, this does not include the fact that women, although often treated as such, should or should not be considered victims. As highlighted in the selected courses, women are sometimes referred to in peace agreements and their role in society. However, women perform many of the functions and the work they do does not simply follow the normal gender roles of women. They have the ability to communicate with women in other nations because of the family ties that exist between nations as a result of marriage. In situations where women are restricted from gender roles in their society to participate in peacebuilding they use these gender roles as a means of affecting men.

The findings also showed that of the UN 1325 resolution took place approx.. 20 years back, it did not improve the women participation in peace talks or increase the perception of women. Instead, the peace agreements in Central America that were signed prior to the adoption of the resolution were more inclined to address women and their roles than the peace agreements signed a few years ago in Africa.

This study therefore shows that women are not limited to the roles they are assigned to build peace and that they follow normal gender roles in the work they do. This study contributed to understanding the areas in which women participate, in the peacebuilding process and why the role of women could not be used and should be used in peace agreements. This as they are actively transforming society after the conflict. Recognizing also that women are not only victims but also agents, it is important to include their agency in peace agreements as it will enable women to work peacefully continuously and make other changes. Through a policy that requires at least women to participate in the peace process, or to have women's groups discuss the role of women and how they

can participate in the reconciliation and peacebuilding process, a post-conflict women's agency can be used to a great extent.

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