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Acronyms

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AFELL	Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDPD	Doha Document for Peace in Darfur
DPA	Darfur Peace Agreement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
FAS	Facilitation and Mediation Support
FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy
FNL	National Forces of Liberation
FRODEBU	Front for Democracy in Burundi
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
KNDR	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia

NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NSWF	New Sudan Women's Federation
NSWA	New Sudan Women's Association
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
R-ARCSS	Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
RSV	Relative Strength per Variable
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement
SWVP	Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace
SWN	Sudanese Women's Union
UFDR	Union of Democratic Forces for Unity
UHSA	United Holy Salvation Army
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WANEP	West African Network for Peace Development
WIPNET	Women in the Peacebuilding Network

Abstract

Even though there has been burgeoning literature on women's participation in peacebuilding since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, more studies are needed to determine the extent of women's substantive inclusion in peace processes.

This study examines how women are included in peace processes in ways that allow them to make a substantive contribution. The study also analyses African conflicts in which women were involved as mediators or in any other substantive way, capturing their participation broadly within the peace processes. A purposive sample of illustrative cases from the continent is selected between 2001, when the UNSCR 1325 was adopted, and 2022, when the study ends. These case studies encompass the following regions: Central, West, the Horn of Africa, North East and East Africa and include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC,) Central African Republic (CAR,) Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, and Burundi.

The research evaluates women's substantive participation in peace processes using the following criteria: representation, recognition, incorporation, a clear women's agenda, access, advocacy, and support.

The study demonstrates that while including women and engaging in peace processes is critical to ensuring gender equality and sustainable peace, inclusion alone does not always guarantee significant participation. The study interrogates the concepts of inclusion, substantive versus descriptive participation, and formal and informal tracks involving women in peace processes.

Keywords: women, participation, inclusion, substantive, descriptive, mediation, Track II, presence.

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Chapter 1: Research Overview

1.1 Introduction

This study examines how women are included in peace processes in ways that allow them to make a substantive contribution. While including women and engaging in peace processes is critical to ensure gender equality and sustainable peace, inclusion alone does not always guarantee substantive participation. Substantive participation implies women's active, meaningful and impactful involvement in peace processes. It also speaks to the impact of women's participation on peace outcomes, such as the quality of peace, the peace agreement and the sustainability of the peace. On the other hand, descriptive participation implies women's presence on account of gender and mere numbers without meaningful involvement in peace processes.

The study examines women's participation in peace processes from 2001 to 2022, as this period aligns with the establishment of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, a seminal United Nations policy document on including women in peace processes. The study analyses African conflicts in which women were involved as mediators or in any other substantive way, capturing their participation broadly within the peace processes. A purposive sample of illustrative case studies spanning the abovementioned period is analysed.

The study evaluates various factors, such as the extent of women's substantive involvement in peace processes, evidence of women's meaningful participation in peace processes, and the reported impact of women's inclusion and representation[1] in peace processes derived from Pitkin. These factors relate directly to assessing how women influence decision-making in peace processes. Specifically, the study is interested in mediation and peacemaking within the peace process.

[1] Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, in her seminal book "The Concept of Representation" (1967), delves into the multifaceted nature of representation, presenting it through four distinct lenses: formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive representation. Pitkin argues that representation is inherently complex and multifaceted, asserting that no single view can fully encapsulate its essence. She emphasises that genuine representation respects the autonomy of both the representatives and those they represent, ensuring that the interests and voices of the represented are authentically reflected in the decisions and actions of their representatives (Dovi: 2015).

The Council on Foreign Relations (C.F.R., 2020: np) notes that despite overwhelming evidence demonstrating that women's involvement in peacebuilding and mediation contributes to lasting peace beyond just the silencing of guns, women have been excluded or relegated to secondary roles. According to the C.F.R. (2020), between 1992 and 2019, women constituted, on average, just 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories in significant peace processes worldwide. While there has been some progress in women's participation, approximately seven of every ten peace processes still need to incorporate women as mediators or signatories. The latter statistics reveal the limited presence of women in leadership roles as negotiators, guarantors, or witnesses (C.F.R., 2020). In support of the above, Hendricks (2021:68) notes that despite women protesting, organising themselves into networks, and receiving training, this has yet to translate into equitable levels of participation.

In examining how women are included in peace processes and determining if such inclusion is descriptive or substantive, this study explores the extent to which the inclusion of women results in substantive participation rather than just meeting a quota without decision-making power. As a secondary objective, the research investigates whether women's substantive or descriptive participation leads to different outcomes regarding the quality of peace, peace agreements, or peace sustainability.

1.2 Research Problem

As the world grapples with numerous global conflicts[2] and coups d'etats[3], issues of conflict resolution and peacebuilding are at the forefront of global concerns. Yet, there is a noticeable absence of women representatives around the negotiation tables and fora where the discourse on peacebuilding takes place.

Isike (2009: VI-VII) and Hendricks (2020: 70) highlight the worldwide marginalisation and scarcity of women in various spheres of public decision-making, noting that Africa is no exception to this pattern. The scholars posit that women across the continent face formal exclusion from peace processes despite their significant contribution

[2] For example, Russia/Ukraine, Israel/ Palestine war
[3] For example, Burkina Faso; Mali; Gabon; Niger; Sudan

during and after conflicts, underlining their vulnerability to the aftermath of the conflict. Isike (2009) and Hendricks (2020) emphasise the effectiveness of peacebuilding when women, working in collaboration with men, are actively involved compared to situations with limited or no women's participation. Despite the peace processes, scholars have yet to focus on the outcome of peacebuilding initiatives wherein women played prominent roles. The problem is that women are often included in peace processes to meet requisite quotas rather than substantively. In practice, this problem undermines the quantity and quality of women's contributory roles in peacebuilding initiatives.

Even though there has been burgeoning literature on women's participation in peacebuilding since the adoption of UNSCR 1325[4], more studies are needed to determine the extent of women's substantive inclusion in peace processes. Thus, this study seeks to determine how women have been included extensively in peace processes and the attendant outcomes of such inclusions or participation.

1.3 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

This research explores the extant literature on women's participation in peace processes, focusing on mediation. Firstly, it examines how women are included in peace processes and whether such inclusion is substantive. The secondary aim is to leverage scholarly publications and policy documents to determine whether women's substantive or descriptive participation leads to different outcomes.

Further objectives of the study include:

i) To examine evidence in the literature of women's substantive participation in peacemaking.
ii) To determine the circumstances under which women's participation in peace processes becomes descriptive or substantive.
iii) To assess the reported impact of women's inclusion in peace processes.

[4] According to Ellerby (2016:3), the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000), widely acknowledged for its continuing importance and agenda-setting power, outlines how to better include women and address women's concerns in resolving conflict. It was passed after the activist efforts of civil society organisations and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) pushed for the global need to recognise and challenge women's exclusion from peace processes.

The overall question of the research is: How are women included in peace processes, and is such inclusion substantive?

This question shall be addressed through the following sub-questions:

i) Is the participation of women in peace processes more descriptive or substantive?
ii) Is there evidence of the substantive participation of women in peace-making?
iii) What circumstances determine whether the participation is substantive?
iv) What is the reported impact of the inclusion of women on the outcomes of a peace process?

1.4 Scope, limitations and significance of the study

This study is a desktop analysis of existing literature on the participation of women in peace processes and their contributions to sustainable peace in conflict zones. It does not involve direct empirical research in hazardous conflict zones under study.

Cheong et al. (2023) note that conducting ethnography or first-hand interviews is not always possible for various reasons, such as the safety of interviewees and researchers. This further supports the use of desktop descriptive case studies. Cheong et al. (2023) also note that, depending on the research question, more extensive geographical and geopolitical coverage might be required, but there often needs to be more resources, budget, or time for first-hand data collection. The researcher conducted desktop research to encompass a wide range of information and eliminate the need to travel to different countries for data collection.

This research provides the framework for analysing information regarding women's participation in peace processes and determining its nature (whether substantive or merely descriptive). It intends to contribute to the enhancement of women's substantive participation and contribute to the work of women, mediators and institutions responsible for peace processes to ensure that women’s involvement is meaningful from the start, during and end of the implementation of a peace process.

Cheong et al. (2023) highlight that the reliance on desktop analysis while offering a broad review of existing literature, introduces several potential limitations. Firstly, the lack of direct data means that the study may miss nuanced insights and direct experiences from participants in peace processes, which first-hand interviews or ethnographic research typically provide. Secondly, the reliance on secondary sources makes the findings dependent on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of existing literature, potentially introducing biases or gaps in information. Thirdly, limited access to primary data from specific conflict zones might lead to an unequal representation of different contexts and experiences, impacting the study's findings. Lastly, resource constraints potentially restrict the depth of analysis and the range of case studies reviewed. Despite these limitations, the desktop analysis approach allows for a comprehensive review of existing knowledge and furnishes valuable insights into women's roles and contributions to peace processes. By focusing on a wide range of sources, the study still provides a meaningful evaluation of the subject.

1.5 Structure of the Study

Chapter One introduces the research topic and examines the issue of the participation of women in peace processes, as supported by statistics revealing the limited presence of women in leadership roles as negotiators. The aims, objectives, and research questions are outlined together with the research ethics, followed by a literature review.

In Chapter Two, the study highlights the literature consulted to analyse how women have been included in the peace process and whether such inclusion has been substantive or descriptive. Further engagement with these concepts is addressed in chapter three, under the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework is introduced in Chapter Three. This chapter examines the theories underpinning the study, such as Hanna Pitkin’s descriptive versus substantive participation theory and UNSCR 1325 and its provisions. It also examines the theories of inclusion and presence in peace processes, which are assessed mainly through qualitative methods.

In Chapter Four, dealing with methodology, the researcher describes the approach and tools employed to test the validity of the views and assertions expounded by various scholars in the literature on women's inclusion in peace processes. Through qualitative analysis, the researcher further evaluates women's presence and participation and their roles, responsibilities, and decision-making powers in peace processes across the African continent.

Chapter Five presents and analyses case studies of instances where women participated in peace processes in four regions of the African continent. The research uses the criteria described in the preceding chapter on methodology to assess how women's participation in formal processes was substantive and to consider where women have meaningfully participated under Track II[5] processes.

Chapter Six analyses the study's findings based on the criteria to determine whether women's participation in peace processes is substantive or descriptive. It will also summarise the research study, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

[5] Christien (2020) describes Track II as the variety of non-governmental and unofficial forms of conflict resolution activities between the representatives of adversarial groups that aim to de-escalate conflict, improve communication, foster understanding among the parties, and generate fresh ideas for application in the official peace processes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study engages with literature on women's inclusion and participation in peace processes. The chapter further examines whether their participation is descriptive or substantive and the differences between the two concepts. The literature review considers the criteria used in the scholarship to assess women's substantive participation in peace processes. To corroborate the research findings, a careful examination of the literature for criteria used in the scholarship to assess women's participation in peace processes is necessary.

The chapter also engages the literature to critically address the issue of women as mediators and their role, including within the Track II sphere, which is an area where women have reportedly been substantively involved in addition to their involvement in formal processes under Track 1. The chapter critically explores how women can contribute substantively to peace processes other than merely being at the negotiating table. Throughout, this literature review seeks to address the question of whether inclusion equals substance in assessing women's participation in peace processes.

2.2 The Context and Problem of Women's Participation in Peace Processes

One of the major global challenges of our times is the compelling quest for peace and security. With increasing tension and contention within and among nations, countries and the international community are more preoccupied with conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding issues.

While women are equally and perhaps disproportionately affected in conflict situations, little attention is given to their particular concerns and little account is taken of their potential contributions to peace processes. Authors such as Masitoh (2020:72) propose that women are consistently portrayed as victims in conflicts and civil wars. Before the rise of gender equality advocacy, Masitoh (2020:73) observes that women were routinely underestimated, and their contributions to peace processes were overlooked. Speake (2013:1) and Masitoh (2020:71) contend that perceiving women

as victims undermines their strength and rationalises their exclusion from influential positions and roles. Seranathna (2015:87) suggests that changing the discourse from women as victims to women as stakeholders in the process of 'sustaining peace and security, requires an agenda encompassing all the nuances and complexities of including women from the global to local level and from design through implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, using gender-relevant indicators'.

To support the concerns above, Hendricks (2020:84) observed that few African women have served as mediators in African conflict, and those who have, tended to come from international governmental institutions (United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity (OAU)/ African Union (AU)), hold high governmental positions or represent women's peacebuilding organisations. Among the 20 mediation efforts identified in Africa, only six African women (30%) were involved in facilitation, mediation or witness roles, and none of them were former heads of state or government. Mediators in African conflicts are predominantly male, often current or former heads of state.

Despite their pivotal roles, however, according to Paffenholz and Ross (2015:58), women encounter limited opportunities for participation in formal peace processes and often struggle for political participation.

It is noteworthy that, in reaction to these concerns, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in its landmark Resolution 1325 of 31 October 2000 on Women, Peace and Security, provided the first legal framework for the women's peace and security agenda.

2.3 United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1325 and its application

The UNSC Resolution 1325 is a touchstone in assessing the integration of women's concerns and contributions to global efforts towards conflict resolution and peace processes. The key components and recommendations of the resolution are vast and varied, covering the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict peace negotiations; the protection of women and girls in refugee settings; disarmament; demobilisation and reintegration; women's political participation;

incorporation of gender perspectives into peacemaking operations; training; and gender balancing in the UN. Broadly, the resolution stands on four pillars: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. However, this study is primarily focused on participation in peace processes.

Despite the existence of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which aims to increase women's participation in peace processes, achieving meaningful inclusion remains challenging. Gillooly (2023:561) contends that the language used by governments and organisations often amounts to mere rhetoric, failing to align with women's lived experiences in post-conflict contexts. This disparity highlights the need for effective measures to address gender concerns long after conflicts end.

Gillooly (2023:562) argues that national and international elites have inadequately addressed gender concerns during wartime, transition, and post-conflict periods. This deficiency has prompted organisations to incorporate gender considerations into their missions. She analyses the global norms related to gender and highlights the Colombian model's inclusive approach through its Subcommittees on Gender and Ethnic Affairs. The Colombian negotiations provided an ideal context for studying women's mobilisation and challenges. Instead of accepting claims of gender inclusion at face value, Gillooly (2023:563) focuses on women's actual roles and mobilisation in peace negotiations. She notes that peace processes are gendered from the outset, influencing how war is conducted. She observes more references to women in peace frameworks following Resolution 1325, especially when the UN is involved as a third party.

Karam and El-Bushra emphasise the importance of broad-based inclusion of women in peacebuilding, not just as negotiators but as active participants at all levels (Karam & El-Bushra, 2021: 75). They argue in favour of understanding the cultural and social contexts in which women operate, suggesting that one-size-fits-all approaches are ineffective (Karam & El-Bushra, 2021: 80). Highlighting the significance of grassroots women's movements, they stress that local women's experiences and solutions should be integrated into peace processes (Karam & El-Bushra, 2021: 85). Unlike Gillooly's focus on the international and elite levels, Karam and El-Bushra stress the importance of translating international policies into local practices that are culturally sensitive and context-specific (Karam & El-Bushra, 2021: 90).

Gillooly's work sheds light on the shortcomings at the international and elite levels, emphasising the need for genuine implementation of gender considerations in peace processes. In contrast, Karam and El-Bushra advocate for a more inclusive, grassroots approach, emphasising the importance of local context and the involvement of women at all levels of peacebuilding. Both perspectives highlight the ongoing challenges and the need for more effective strategies to ensure women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

Daley (2007:337) noted that the Burundi women's movement also benefited from a new policy framework supported by Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which stresses the importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security.

Referencing Bell and O'Rourke (2010), Gillooly (2023) suggests that women's interests are frequently perceived as competing with the broader goals of the process. Consequently, even when women are physically present at the negotiating table, they might hesitate to raise women's issues for fear of being labelled as extremist or radical. The UNSCR 1325 identifies four ways to ensure women feel substantively included in peace processes: representation, incorporation, protection, and recognition.

To complement the above, Ellerby (2016:138) further identifies three essential requirements for meeting the inclusion threshold: a clear women's agenda or a distinct women's plan, entry or access to the peace process, and advocacy. From the literature review, the researcher noted that the two sets of criteria had yet to be used together to assess women's substantive participation in peace processes. The researcher has added a further criterion, 'support', to the above criteria to strengthen the research on substantive participation, as will be discussed further in the methodology section.

Given the above theoretical underpinnings, this study will engage the literature to establish how much women's participation, inclusion and presence amount to 'substance'. Through qualitative analysis, the research will evaluate women's roles, responsibilities and decision-making powers in various contexts. The selection will be made through the sampling of case studies from four regions of the African continent (Central, West, the Horn, East, and North East Africa), and the criteria mentioned

above will be applied with further elaboration in the methodology section. The research will respond to the question as to the extent to which the inclusion of women results in substantive participation instead of merely being a quota without any decision-making powers.

A critical dimension of women's inclusion and potential impact on peace processes concerns their role as mediators. Existing frameworks that assess substantive representation often overlook the contributions of women in Track II diplomacy. Women's participation in these informal diplomatic efforts is substantive yet not adequately emphasised (Christien: 2020; Tannous: 2024). Addressing these limitations and recognising the significance of women's roles in mediation is essential for achieving genuine gender inclusion in peace processes.

2.4 Women in Mediation and Track II Diplomacy for Women in Peace Processes

Women play a crucial role in mediation as participants and in mediation processes, including Track II. Women's involvement in mediation can bring diverse perspectives and approaches to conflict resolution. Women have played significant roles in peace-building and conflict resolution at the local, national and international levels.

According to Burgess & Burgess (2010:5), in the realm of conflict resolution, "Track II" peacemaking has become increasingly prevalent, complementing "Track I" efforts in various ways throughout the peace process. Track II practitioners facilitate dialogue, relationship-building, joint civic projects, and developing new political solutions across conflict lines. The authors agree that these efforts are particularly valuable in preparing the ground for Track I initiatives and garnering broad support for agreements reached by the parties. Additionally, Track II can be effective when conducted simultaneously with Track I efforts.

The United Nations, through its Security Council Resolution 1325, and the African Union, through its various initiatives, have been at the forefront of promoting women's participation in peace processes, as their participation has been shown to lead to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Kreutz and Cardenasa (2024:3), quoting the UN Secretary General's report (2012), define mediation as "a process whereby a third

party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop a mutually acceptable agreement".

In support of the idea of the importance of women in peace processes, Pelham (2020:4), Page, Whitman and Anderson (2009:29-48), and Fritz (2020:70) concur on the importance of women's active roles as signatories, mediators or members of the mediating teams in peace processes. They argue that such involvement enhances the credibility of peace agreements, fosters a non-competitive negotiation approach, increases the chances of reaching an agreement and facilitates addressing essential issues crucial for long-lasting peace, broadening the peace process's agenda. Pelham's research underscores the potential positive impact of women in peace processes, including higher agreement rates, improved sustainability of peace, coalition building for advocacy, and women's unique ability to address critical issues vital for long-lasting peace, thereby broadening the peace process agenda.

Fritz (2020:72) highlights that since 2013, the UN Department of Political Affairs, in partnership with the governments of Norway and Finland, has been hosting high-level seminars on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Processes. These seminars aim to bolster women's meaningful participation and foster inclusive gender-sensitive mediation skills at international, regional, and national levels.

One of the goals pursued in the research is to examine the extent to which women are supported for their participation to be deemed substantive and have an impact. In agreement with Fritz's assertion, observing that women's effectiveness in peace negotiations hinges on adequate support, Hendricks (2020:75) points out the significance of UNSCR 2242 (2015), which urges parties supporting peace processes to facilitate women's substantive participation in negotiating delegations and to offer financial and technical aid to women engaged in peace efforts. The assistance includes training in mediation, advocacy and the technical aspects of negotiations, which, according to Hendricks, has seen thousands of African women trained in short courses by organisations such as the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), Fem-Wise, and the South African Department of International Relations and Co-operation.

To underscore the importance of exposure and to ensure that women's representation in particular key positions can lead to their appointment as critical stakeholders in peace processes leading to their substantive participation, Aggestam and Svensson (2018:156) found a strong correlation between the number of women acting as foreign ministers and mediators, suggesting that the "higher the rank, the higher the possibility of being appointed as a mediator".

To emphasise the significance of women's political roles in peace processes, Aggestam and Svensson (2018:156) found that their numbers are considerably higher in Africa. This indicates that traditional cultural authority may serve as an additional power source for women to emerge as peace mediators. However, whether this implies that women receive tremendous respect and recognition in traditional African contexts remains to be examined. Aggestam and Svensson (2020:158) assert that mediators in Track 1[6] Diplomacy acts in a formal state capacity as high-ranking ministers, diplomats, or representatives of an international organisation. The above explains why more women, such as ministers and diplomats, should be appointed to high-ranking positions, as they are more likely to be taken seriously as mediators. By stressing this potential, confidence can be instilled in the parties about the significant contribution women in high-ranking positions can make to peace processes.

The above narrative demonstrates the value of including women as mediators and what needs to be done to prepare them for their roles. For the world to experience higher participation of women in peace processes, particularly in track 1, it is necessary first to appoint them to substantive positions and support their success in those roles. Nevertheless, it is crucial also to recognise and acknowledge that there

[6] Christien (2020:1) explains that while Track I diplomacy involves official governmental peace processes, Track II encompasses a range of nongovernmental and unofficial conflict resolution efforts. These activities include representatives of opposing groups and aim to de-escalate conflicts, enhance communication and understanding, and generate new ideas for official peace processes. Track II efforts can directly or indirectly support and complement Track I negotiations, including groups otherwise excluded from the formal negotiations. Such initiatives may involve intergroup dialogues, training, interactive conflict resolution or problem-solving workshops, and public peace education.
In another example, Hottinger (2005:56) observed that Track I actors, including government officials, representatives of intergovernmental organisations, and third-party governments, are commonly and routinely engaged with armed groups during peace processes. Over the past two decades, Track II actors, comprising non-governmental and unofficial groups and individuals, have also played various roles in relation to armed groups and peacemaking.

are other substantive processes women have been involved in that have greatly influenced the course of peace processes, and these must not be ignored.

Seranathna (2015:92-97) observes that peace processes occurring in formal settings may not fully acknowledge or encompass the conflict-resolution and peacebuilding efforts happening at the grassroots community level, potentially influencing the development of such processes at the national and supranational levels. While this has not been widely acknowledged and celebrated, women have made noticeable and course-changing contributions through informal processes through Track II diplomacy (Christien 2020:3). Track II is important as it is an area where women have demonstrated significant interest and skill in managing conflicts and where they have had much participation and success. Ignoring their role in informal processes, especially in this study, would leave out considerable evidence of their substantive participation in peace processes.

Noting from the explanation earlier, Christien (2020) confirms that Track II is the variety of non-governmental and unofficial forms of conflict resolution activities between the representatives of adversarial groups that aim at de-escalating conflict, improving communication, fostering understanding among the parties, and generating fresh ideas for application in the official peace processes. The author cites, as examples, the cases of Liberia and Afghanistan, which demonstrated the success of Track II initiatives, where women's involvement legitimised the formal peace process and conveyed expertise and vital information to local communities and Track I negotiators (Christien 2020:3).

O'Reilly et al. (2015:13) support the above assertion by Christien (2020) and Seranathna (2015) and observe that women's involvement could manifest in various ways extending beyond mere representation at the negotiating table. They also recognised that these diverse forms of participation are not mutually exclusive. The point is that when women are represented in a formal or informal peace process, their representation and contribution could be substantive and should not be ignored. O'Reilly et al. (2015:13) further emphasise that these modes of participation can be implemented concurrently or at different phases of the process, depending on the context. These frameworks can be utilised and customised to enhance women's

participation while extending it to include other marginalised groups whose involvement could bolster conflict resolution and establish enduring peace. The authors have identified seven inclusion models.[7], whose detailed examination does not fall within the ambit of the present study.

Hendricks (2020:95) built upon O'Reilly et al. (2015) and Christien's (2020) theories regarding the significance of women and diverse participation[8] by pointing out the drawbacks of instrumentalist arguments. Hendricks (2020:96) contends that these arguments link women's involvement in official peace processes with the durability and effectiveness of peace. However, this focus on mediation overlooks women's broader roles and capabilities. Hendricks further suggests that those monitoring women's engagement in peace and security must also consider their presence in alternative mediation channels, as all these are integral to peacebuilding. This broader perspective is crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of women's contributions to peace processes, enlightening us to the fact that women's roles extend far beyond traditional mediation.

Ellerby (2016) also cites as an example one of the five DRC Commissions during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) for resolving conflicts: the Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Commission, which Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf headed. Heading a commission can allow one to lead the discussion and provide direction for the conflicting parties.

Hendricks (2020:95) concludes that women should redirect their efforts toward fortifying the peace infrastructure they initially established and assume equally significant roles in shaping it. In these scenarios, Hendricks asserts that women have agency over their involvement and can leverage these mechanisms to impact the dynamics and results of Track 1 processes.

Initiatives by organisations such as the United Nations and the African Union and numerous high-level seminars underscore the importance of promoting women's participation in peace-building efforts (UN Women, 2021). However, taking stock of the impediments to women's participation is equally vital, including inadequate

[7] These are 1) Direct participation at the negotiation table; 2) Observer status; 3) Consultations; 4) Inclusive commissions; 5) Problem-solving workshops; 6) Public decision-making; and 7) Mass action (Hendricks:2020)

preparedness and support for the unique challenges in conflict resolution and peace-building.

2.5 Obstacles to Women's Participation in Peace Processes

While this study does not primarily focus on challenges to women's inclusion in peace processes, a cursory overview of some of the obstacles to their inclusion will help elucidate the nature of women's participation in peace processes. Several authors have endeavoured to identify and isolate these obstacles, which range from gender perceptions, prejudices and patriarchal practices to preparedness and proficiency challenges that must be overcome for women to be meaningfully and substantively included in peace processes.

In this regard, Adebajo (2021:639-652) asserts that despite some achievements, women continue to face obstacles to meaningful engagement in peace processes. These challenges encompass limited experience navigating official negotiation spaces, patriarchal attitudes, insufficient representation in decision-making roles and the ineffective implementation of UNSCR 1325, all while their transformative contributions still need to be acknowledged.

Various other scholars have written extensively on the obstacles to women's participation in peace processes and related issues (Speake 2013; Masitoh 2020; Hudson 2016; Adebajo 2021; Seranathna 2015), such as strengthening women's capacity in peace processes (Hendricks 2020; Murithi & Ives 2007; Fritz 2020; Turner 2020, Desmidt, Apiko, and Sævarsson 2017; Aggestam and Svensson 2018; as well as their inclusion in informal or Track II processes (Christien 2020, Masitoh 2020, and Busran-Lao 2014). Some authors contend that these obstacles against women's inclusion are progressively being overcome with the growing clamour for women's participation in peace processes.

In conclusion, the arguments in this thesis engage with how best to include women in peace processes and highlight the factors determining whether women's participation in peace processes is substantive. The literature on this topic suggests that women's participation in peace processes can be meaningful, impactful, and transformative while also acknowledging the many challenges and obstacles in the path towards their meaningful participation in peace processes.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have examined women's involvement in peace processes, as well as study aims, objectives and questions that will require a response and in particular, ways and mechanisms through which women are included in peace processes. The chapters further interrogated the context and problem of women's participation in peace processes, existing frameworks that assess substantive representation, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1325 and its application, the often-overlooked contribution of women in Track II diplomacy and lastly obstacles to women's participation in peace processes.

This chapter provides the conceptual framework that will inform the perspective and arguments that will be discussed in this dissertation. It examines concepts of women's inclusion, descriptive participation, and substantive participation. It emphasises that inclusion must encompass the entire peace process, which is crucial for ensuring that all societal groups have opportunities to participate and be represented. Additionally, it supports existing academic discourse on the distinctions between descriptive and substantive participation of women throughout the peace process. Contributions from scholars like Hendricks (2020), Siow (2013), Masitoh (2020), Gillooly (2013), Daley (2007), and Ellerby (2013) highlight the complexities surrounding these concepts and their influence on women fulfilling their roles in peace initiatives.

Furthermore, the chapter focuses on women's substantive participation in peacemaking and assesses impact and outcomes. The chapter seeks to understand women's inclusion in peace processes by exploring theories underpinning their participation.

Women's representation is a complex concept that must be understood with all its ramifications. The chapter draws attention to the importance of understanding the full spectrum of a peace process and how this impacts inclusion. The chapter further examines the differences and discrepancies between descriptive and substantive participation concepts regarding the extent of women's participation in the entire spectrum while drawing on Pitkin's (2016) theory of representation. In this chapter, the

research also assesses evidence of the substantive participation of women in peace processes while bringing us to a better understanding of women's inclusion in peace processes. Finally, it will emphasise the importance of women's meaningful involvement at all levels of decision-making.

3.2 The Concept of Inclusion of Women in Peace Processes

Isike (2009:29) and Saunders (2001:483) characterise the peace process as a multifaceted endeavour encompassing peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and preventive diplomacy, collectively contributing to sustainable peace. Isike (2009:29) emphasises distinguishing between these often-confused concepts, arguing that each represents unique stages within the broader peace process[9].

Inclusion must span the complete spectrum of the peace process as it is fundamental in ensuring that all groups within a society are given opportunities to participate and be represented. Gruener and Hald (2015) describe inclusivity as "the scope and method through which the perspectives and requirements of conflicting parties and other stakeholders are included, listened to and incorporated into the peace process". According to Siow (2023:533-539), marginalised groups are more likely to feel that they belong and that their interests are being considered within a more inclusive representational forum.

Scholars of international relations often allude to the fact that the best peace agreements include a broad cross-section of the population (Martin 2005:49-56). This is supported by earlier and more recent studies on women's participation in peace negotiations and operations that emphasise that placing women in crucial positions holds greater significance than simply increasing the number of women involved (Waylen 2014:498). The section below examines the views of various scholars such as Paffenholz and Ross (2015), Desmidt, Murithi and Ives (2007), Turner (2020),

[9] According to Ramsbotham (2016:186-188), peacekeeping involves deploying international armed forces to separate warring factions and increasingly includes civil tasks like monitoring, policing, and supporting humanitarian interventions. Peacemaking refers to efforts to resolve armed conflicts, encouraging the conflicting parties to reach a voluntary agreement. Peacebuilding supports both peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and fostering long-term relationships between conflicting parties. Therefore, women's contributions to peace processes are more commonly seen in peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Seranathna (2015) and Hudson (2016), among others, as it pertains to the importance of substantive inclusion of diverse groups such as women in peace processes.

Westendorf (2018), Zahar and Mechoulan (2017), and Paffenholz and Ross (2015:28) argue that a primary motivation for groups to turn to violence and protest is their desire to challenge their exclusion from social, political or economic power. Extensive research indicates that societies with greater inclusiveness tend to be more stable, harmonious and prosperous. Additionally, the authors cite studies showing that involving additional actors or groups (such as women), civil society, or political parties in negotiation processes alongside the main conflict parties is vital for achieving sustainable transitions from war to peace and political stability.

Paffenholz and Ross (2015:29) emphasise and illustrate a correlation between engaging additional actors beyond the main conflicting parties and the prolonged sustainability of peace agreements. Nonetheless, they caution against conflating mere numerical participation in negotiations with substantive and impactful socio-political inclusion in the subsequent political resolution. Desmidt *et al.* (2017:1), Murithi and Ives (2007:77), and Turner (2020:3) advocate for women's participation in the mediation process and inclusion in all tracks, including facilitation, information sharing, agenda drafting and oversight. They also note the dilemma associated with inclusion. According to Murithi and Ives (2007), including primary and secondary actors is critical to any mediation process. They contend that official mediation processes restrict the number of interlocutors to safeguard the process and expedite proceedings, compromising their legitimacy. Conversely, Indigenous processes[10] are more inclusive but often result in slower agreement. Murithi and Ives (2007:77) conclude that a "hybrid approach, which blends elements from Indigenous and official processes, should be employed to enhance inclusion thresholds while preserving crucial efficiencies."

Murithi and Ives (2007:78) also examine Indigenous processes pertaining to inclusion and conclude that while Indigenous methods involve all stakeholders, including the entire community, official mediation focuses more on the dialogue between armed

[10] Murithi and Ives (2007:78) characterise Indigenous processes as being grounded in local, community-driven practices, typically involving an Elder, a Council of Elders, a Chief, a King, or other traditional leadership structures. These processes are informed by local cultural beliefs, norms, and values, along with conventional concepts of justice and community-based political discussions. This approach is often referred to as "traditional" or community-based dispute resolution and frequently takes place in village squares or beneath the shade of an acacia tree.

resistance groups and top government officials. However, both approaches marginalise women from the mediation process. Murithi and Ives (2007:87) observe that although Indigenous processes embody various progressive principles, certain practices are patriarchal and thus lack gender sensitivity. Consequently, this undermines the involvement of women in mediation and peace-building efforts.

Literature on women's struggle to navigate the official negotiation terrain due to patriarchal beliefs, the ineffective implementation of UNSCR 1325, and the non-recognition of their transformative role are also examined by Adebajo (2021: 639). Seranathna (2015:82) makes a compelling argument about the importance of viewing gender equality as an end in itself rather than a means to achieve other goals. The author stresses that including women in peace and democracy initiatives is fundamentally about justice and gender equality, not just a strategy to achieve different objectives. While arguments have been made supporting women's inclusion in peace processes while examining methods of inclusion, challenges to their inclusion have also been raised.

Authors have raised concerns that negotiators might hesitate to involve other stakeholders in the negotiation process due to apprehension about the potential for diverse viewpoints at the table, which might lead to delays in the negotiations. Additionally, Welz (2014) and Paffenholz & Ross (2015:28) have noted that excuses related to insufficient funding and the potential for protracted negotiations may contribute to the hesitance in including women in the negotiation process.

Murithi and Ives (2007:88) note that a mediator has a crucial role in deciding whether to include or exclude specific individuals, interests, or issues. The authors argue that the decision ultimately depends on their judgement, experience, advice, and analysis, recognising that it could either pave the way for peace or prove detrimental to the process.

According to Hudson (2016:10), achieving real inclusion, rather than just paying lip service, remains a challenge, primarily because civil society at large and women's organisations, more specifically, operate between and across the spaces occupied by security experts (academics) and policymakers. Hudson suggests employing gender "decoloniality" to reassess the relationship between Gender and women, advocating

for a deeper understanding of the differential impact of conflict on men and women and the unique knowledge and experiences that all groups, including gender minorities, bring to the peace table.

Authors such as Seranathna (2015:97) have emphasised the need to confront harmful gender norms, such as masculine hierarchies, which persist within peace negotiation processes. Seranathna (2015:97) rejects the 'just add women' approach advocated for inclusivity in peacebuilding and democracy efforts, arguing that it fails to address the underlying issues regarding women's participation. According to Seranathna, tackling gender disparities within political and institutional structures is essential.

Waylen (2014:494) interrogated the concept of 'presence' in relation to women's involvement in the negotiations in South Africa and Ireland. She demonstrated the importance and limits of 'presence' as both a mobilising idea and a way of incorporating women actors into the processes and the importance of procedures themselves and their development over time (Waylen 2014:516). However, one should be aware that the mere presence of women in peace practices does not equate to substantive participation.

In both cases, Waylen (2014:517) observes that simply being "present" does not guarantee effectiveness for female actors and that they encounter difficulty being heard and making an impact. This is often due to the negotiation style characterised by horse-trading, behind-the-scenes deals, and the hostility of certain negotiators towards their female counterparts. Waylen (2014:517) further notes that possessing the necessary knowledge, skills, and negotiation experience is crucial, particularly in the technocratic South African processes, where technical committees make significant decisions and technical and legal experts play a vital role in shaping institutional design. Waylen concludes that gender activists' comparatively limited resources compared to other actors tend to put them at a disadvantage.

The case analyses on Liberia, South Africa, and Ireland reveal insights into the extent of women's influence in peace processes versus mere representation. In Liberia, women's mass actions, such as the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace,

showcased grassroots involvement leading to genuine impact. In South Africa, Waylen (2014:494) emphasised the importance of women's presence in negotiations but noted that the technocratic and male-dominated nature of the process often limited their influence. Similarly, in Ireland, women's participation in panels was hindered by traditional negotiation styles and male hostility (Waylen, 2014:517).

While Paffenholz and Ross (2015:35) have addressed the factors[11] that influence the substantive inclusion of women in peace processes; these will not be used alongside Ellerby's (2016) criteria, as they will expand the study too broadly. However, these factors amplify various ways to determine whether women are descriptively or substantively included in peace processes. In other words, they elaborate on whether women are meaningfully included or merely reflected in numbers.

Whereas the literature on women's inclusion has been examined, the main focus of the study is to determine the content of such inclusion, more specifically, to assess whether women's participation in peace processes is 'descriptive' or 'substantive'. This task belongs to the sections that follow, starting from the general understanding of women's representation in these critical processes to the specifics of substantive participation by women.

3.3 Understanding Women's Representation in Peace Processes

Several scholars, such as Isike (2009), Gillooly (2023), Daley (2007), Ellerby (2016), and Krause et al. (2018), have described, depicted, and decried the lack of representation of women in peace processes, arguing that their inclusion is imperative and impactful and should be leveraged in the global quest for sustainable peace and security.

[11] Paffenholz and Ross (2015:35) list the factors as follows: **Elite Support**: The endorsement of influential leaders and decision-makers is vital for ensuring women's participation in peace negotiations; **Public Buy-In**: Widespread public support and societal acceptance of women's roles in peace processes can greatly enhance their inclusion; **Regional and International Influence**: Engagement and pressure from regional and international actors are crucial in promoting women's inclusion in peace processes; **Timing**: Involving women early, especially during the pre-negotiation phase, is essential for maintaining their participation throughout the peace process; **Women's Influence**: The actual impact women have on the negotiation process, rather than merely their numerical representation, is critical for the success and implementation of peace agreements.

Literature on women's participation in peace processes emphasises the importance of their meaningful involvement at all levels of decision-making. It recognises that women's participation is not just a matter of fairness or equality but also a crucial factor in the effectiveness and sustainability of peace agreements, placing women at the centre of peace and sustainable peace-building efforts. In support of the above, Isike (2009:80) states that women, as human beings, possess the right to political participation and representation. Isike further argues that recognising these rights would enable women to enter politics, introducing a distinct set of values and approaches more conducive to peace-building.

Similarly, scholars like Gillooly (2023), Daley (2007), Ellerby (2016), and Krause et al. (2018), among others, have addressed the complex nature of women's participation in peace processes while also acknowledging the importance of inclusiveness from various dimensions. These scholars have also looked at the phenomenon of networks and how they ensure that women's participation is impactful. They have also noted how multiple governments and organisations have attempted to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 provisions.

Ellerby (2013) shares the concerns of Bell and O'Rourke (2010) that women's presence at the negotiating table only sometimes translates to substantive participation in the peace process. However, Ellerby (2013) also contends that women find meaningful ways to engage in peacebuilding outside traditional peace negotiation frameworks. Citing Krause et al. (2018), Gillooly (2023) points out that studies have shown women's participation in peace negotiations and processes leads to more durable and lasting peace, with peace deals signed by women having higher implementation rates. Nonetheless, women continue to be largely excluded from these processes.

Krause et al. (2018: 985) assert that statistical analysis reveals a strong correlation between peace agreements signed by female delegates and sustained peace. They also discovered that these agreements contain significantly more provisions aimed at political reform and have higher implementation rates (Krause et al., 2018: 1006). The authors argue that the connection between women signatories and women's civil society groups explains the positive impact of women's direct involvement in peace negotiations. They concluded that collaboration and knowledge sharing among

diverse women's groups contribute to improved content and higher implementation rates of peace agreement provisions (Krause et al., 2018: 1007).

Daley (2007: 343-349) notes that women are appointed to leading negotiating positions only after civil society advocates for their inclusion, and even then, they are often regarded as an "essentialist" category.

Gillooly (2023:572) concludes that when women are not included from the outset of peace negotiations, they often find themselves excluded from the processes that they actively worked to initiate. According to Gillooly, this exclusion has significant implications for implementing peacebuilding in post-conflict or transitional contexts.

To achieve a truly inclusive and equitable peacebuilding process, 'it is essential to ensure that a diversity of voices is heard from the beginning of the negotiations' (Gillooly: 2023:573). It is also critical to examine theories that underlie women's participation in peace processes, including those substantiated by various authors below.

3.4 Theories Underpinning Women's Participation in Peace Processes

Of the broad joint theories underpinning women's representation in politics, including peace processes, this study will focus on and explore Hanna Pitkin's theory on descriptive versus substantive representation (Pitkin 2016:155-156, Waylen 2014:496). Griffiths, in Pitkin (2016:155-158), discusses representation according to four categories, "descriptive representation," "symbolic representation," "ascriptive representation," and a kind of representation that he calls "representation of interests". This aligns with Pitkin's four views on representation: formalistic (institutional arrangements, rules and regulations), descriptive (shares similar characteristics as the represented), symbolic ("stand for" the represented, emphasising symbols or symbolisation) and substantive (substantially contributes to the negotiation structure, purpose, decision-making, and agenda-setting) (Kurebwa 2015:51-53).

Pitkin (2016:155), writing in the context of political participation, describes substantive representation as participation where a delegate can substantively contribute to the negotiation structure, purpose, decision-making, and agenda-setting. Pitkin (2016:156) argues that substantive representation is more important than descriptive

representation because it reflects the participant's actual performance and contribution towards the outcomes.

Some scholars have argued that the inclusion and presence of women in peace processes must be scrutinised to ensure that women are effective and influential actors as opposed to passive participants included as a form of gender washing (Hendricks, 2020:72). Other scholars contend that the presence of women in the room, even though they do not always contribute substantively in some cases, changes the dynamic in peace processes (Waylen 2014:517, Pelham 2020:2, Ellerby 2016:136). Illustratively, Pelham (2020:2) highlights the importance of enhancing women's involvement in peace processes in South Sudan, noting that when women are meaningfully included, with their 'presence', perspectives, concerns, and recommendations integrated throughout the process, including the outcomes, it increases the chances of attaining and maintaining peace.

Additionally, while examining seven participation modalities for women inside and outside formal negotiations, Pelham (2020:4) concludes that women's mere presence is insufficient for fostering more inclusive and sustainable peace. For example, Ellerby (2016:137) notes that, though present at the peace table, El-Salvadoran women rebels did not advocate for women's issues during negotiations. Ellerby (2016:137) argues that 'ultimately, women's descriptive representation does matter for women's substantive representation, although women's inclusion is more varied than mere presence requiring active involvement by women and organisational support.

The argument has been made that mere participation by women or just 'adding women' without adequately considering the conflict context does not amount to inclusion, as women within such processes might become silenced, marginalised, or not identify as advocates for women's inclusion (Ellerby 2016:141; Seranathna 2015:81-82). Women's representation is a complex concept, as seen in the section below.

3.5 Descriptive and Substantive Participation of Women in Peace Processes

Scholars writing on this subject notably examine the differences and discrepancies between the two concepts regarding the extent of women's participation in the entire spectrum (stages) of the peace process (Waylen 2014:498). As earlier indicated, descriptive participation implies the presence of women on account of gender and mere numbers without meaningful involvement in peace processes.

Kurebwa (2015:51), on the other hand, states that descriptive representation is when an individual envoy "stands for" the other by sharing similar characteristics with them, such as ethnicity, geographical area, gender, class, occupation, age, and sex.

According to Kurebwa (2015:51-53), substantive representation is a view of engagement that focuses on the actions and policies of the members rather than their characteristics or identity. Substantive representation means that the delegates act in the interest of those they speak for in a manner responsive to them. For example, a substantive representative of women would advocate for policies that benefit women, regardless of the representative's gender. Substantive and descriptive representations are contrasted, with descriptive representations emphasising the similarity or resemblance between the envoy and their constituency. Descriptive representation means that the emissary shares some characteristics or identity with the body politic, such as race, Gender, ethnicity, and religion; for example, a descriptive representative of women would be women themselves.

Siow (2023:534) notes that substantive representation reflects inclusion in policies, laws, and initiatives that address all groups' needs and concerns, particularly those historically marginalised or discriminated against. Inclusion ensures these policies create equal opportunities and promote equity among various societal groups. Even if a representative does not share the same background as a particular group, their commitment to substantive representation ensures inclusivity by focusing on meeting and addressing the needs of diverse populations (Celis, K 2012:524-529).

Siow (2023:534) further highlights that while empirical scholarship has focused on measuring different forms of representation in debates and policy, it often assumes that simply mentioning groups like women equates to substantively representing their

interests and perspectives. However, studies centred on descriptive representation pay less attention to whether non-descriptive representatives substantively represent other groups. Siow (2023:535) observes that some scholars argue that centring on descriptive representative risks essentialising them, as minoritised women have diverse interests and perspectives. Additionally, Siow notes that existing definitions of women's issues often overlook intersectionality and primarily focus on the experiences of white women. Moreover, the political discourse typically addresses minoritised women's issues within a narrow, highly stereotypical framework. This leads us to the question of just what factors inform and influence the inclusion of women in peace processes.

According to Celis and Childs (2008:419), descriptive and substantive representation concepts work together to promote a holistic approach to inclusion. The authors suggest that inclusion is ultimately fulfilled when both descriptive and substantive representation are aligned to ensure all members of society are represented, valued and heard within decision-making processes (Celis and Childs, 2008:420). One could argue that this dual focus leads to a more inclusive society where diverse voices sit at the table and significantly impact decisions.

Various scholars such as Fritz (2020), Pelham (2020), Paffenholz and Ross (2015), Waylen (2014) and Ellerby (2016) have reflected extensively on women's inclusion in peace processes and the factors that influence their descriptive or substantive participation. Therefore, understanding these factors and their importance is critical. However, for this study, they will not all be included in the criteria for determining whether women are descriptively or substantively included in peace processes, as they might expand the study unnecessarily. For clarity, the factors, among others, entail decision-making procedures, selection procedures and criteria, transfer, support structures provided to included actors, coalition-building and joint positioning, and inclusion-friendly mediators.

Paffenholz and Ross (2015:34) devised a framework outlining the incorporation of diverse groups and delineating the timing and methods for integrating additional stakeholders into the negotiation process, whether during the pre-negotiation, negotiation or implementation stages. The authors assert that engaging stakeholders

across all phases of the peace process will sustain their influence throughout. This observation will be critical to the research at hand, as it will allow the researcher to examine the extent to which women are included across all phases of negotiations so that they can make a substantive or meaningful impact throughout rather than mere descriptive attendance. Aggestam and Svensson (2018:150) highlight a strong correlation between gender equality and peaceful societies.

Paffenholz and Ross (2015:33) assert that women's inclusion and participation in peace processes is meaningful only where there is impact; otherwise, such inclusion or participation becomes merely descriptive or procedural. Aggestam and Svensson (2018:156) argue that improving women's rank will help them progress to being mediators. The authors further argue that procedural inclusion must be structured to empower participating actors to be effective. They contend that simply involving all pertinent parties in achieving a sustainable agreement is insufficient.

In support of the above on the value of women's inclusion, Pelham (2020:5) notes that women's groups achieve meaningful influence by actively shaping agendas, contributing to the substance of agreements, participating in their implementation, and advocating for the initiation or resumption of negotiations and the signing of agreements. Pelham contends that this process is about ensuring comprehensive involvement throughout. Pelham's observation above supports the idea of several scholars, such as Ellerby (2016) and Seranathna (2015), on the value of women when included in peace processes.

Concerning the criteria used to assess women's participation in peace processes, Waylen (2014:498) argues that "analysing not only the participation of women and gender actors and their result but also the form and structure of the negotiations themselves will present a better grasp of how these processes are gendered''. She applied this to the South Africa and Ireland case studies, whose lessons are relevant to this study.

Building on Hendricks's (2021) and Adebajo's (2021) perspectives, Fritz (2020:74) argues in favour of professional mediators to ensure that women, once in such positions, execute their roles effectively. Fritz (2020:72) also looked at the criteria in his analysis, including whether women were lead mediators, chaired any sessions,

had decision-making powers, had access, could advocate for their interests, organised themselves into networks or influenced the agenda. Contending extensive training for mediators, especially for large-scale conflict, Fritz (2020:71) laments the selection criteria for high-level mediators, which is based on political appointment and diplomatic standing rather than mediation skills and experience, which could significantly influence the design, participation, and outcome of such conflicts.

In the preceding section, the research has notably examined the concepts of descriptive and substantive participation of women in peace processes. The study has further considered the circumstances determining whether participation is descriptive or substantive and examined evidence of substantive participation of women in peacemaking. Despite contentions raised by some scholars, notably Hendricks (2015), there is empirical evidence in the literature showing that inclusion and substantive participation of women in peace processes does indeed make a difference, as will be deduced from the section that follows.

3.6 Substantive Participation of Women in Peace-Making: Impact and Outcomes

The substantive participation of women in political and peace processes has both highlighted their potential positive impact while equally uncovering the myriad challenges they still face. Several comprehensive case studies have been undertaken to assess evidence of the substantive participation of women in peace processes. Paffenholz and Ross (2015:31) referenced a study on the *Broadening Participation Project*, exploring how the involvement of additional actors alongside primary negotiating parties affects the quality, sustainability and implementation of peace and transition agreements. The study examined 40 comprehensive case studies through a comparative approach using qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. A notable discovery of the project is that the advantages of inclusion are only realised when included parties can impact the process. It is equally crucial for participants within these groups to be regarded as representative and legitimate.

In her analysis, Waylen (2014:516) examines how women in Northern Ireland strategically utilised established formal rules, while in South Africa, they ensured the adoption of regulations mandating women's participation once the negotiations

commenced. She concludes that although being present at the negotiating table is crucial, it is insufficient for women to occupy roles within negotiating teams solely. They should also hold positions in technical roles such as technical committees. Waylen (2014:498) warned against women merely being present in extensive plenary sessions, where decisions are often predetermined elsewhere. Instead, she emphasised the importance of women's presence at all levels and in various capacities, including high-level decision-making roles. Waylen (2014:517) further emphasised the need for women to be present early in the negotiations when the structure, purpose, and agendas are defined.

Norvedt (2021: 2) and Tripp et al. (2011:349-350) note the growing consensus that the involvement of women would improve the likelihood of enduring peace post-conflict and that placing women in crucial positions holds greater significance than simply increasing the number of women involved. Therefore, it can be argued that, for women to be effective in their roles within the peace process, they will need to be supported through the necessary training and appointed to higher positions that will give them authority and allow them to make mistakes while they learn the ropes.

Hendricks (2020:79) challenges the idea that women's inclusion can lead to significant societal changes, suggesting that despite women's involvement in peace processes in various regions, including the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan (before 2019), South Sudan, and Somalia, lasting peace and fairer societies have not consistently emerged. Hendricks (2020:79) highlights a lack of consensus in the literature regarding critical aspects such as the impact of gender provisions on peace sustainability, the optimal number and roles of women in negotiations, and whether they should be integrated into negotiating parties or serve as mediators or facilitators themselves. Additionally, Hendricks contends that proponents of the belief that women's participation brings about a qualitatively distinct peace have yet to provide compelling evidence[12].

[12] Hendricks (2020) cautions against the mere inclusion of women in a more profound engagement with the form and content of formal peacemaking processes, emphasising the transformation of peace tables and peace processes their presence can provide.

This notwithstanding, other scholars have advanced convincing arguments to the contrary, underlining empirical evidence on the impact and outcomes of women's inclusion in several peace processes. Norvedt (2021), for example, observes that according to a data set created by The Council of Foreign Relations based on empirical studies of peace processes since 1990, parties demonstrated a higher likelihood of reaching an agreement when women's groups exerted significant influence on the process.

To buttress the point above, using Liberia as a case study, Masitoh (2020:72) attributes the success of resolving Liberia's conflict to women's participation in order to demonstrate the need to apply the concept of 'Gender Equality'.

Masitoh' study highlights how women can actively contribute to peace processes to render their participation more substantive and supported. It concludes that women in Liberia have made significant efforts to resolve conflicts and establish sustainable peace. Masitoh demonstrates that women's success is mainly attributed to their efforts in the creation of various organisations and affiliations, such as the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL), Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), and the Women in the Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) (Masitoh 2020:83). In addition, and to further support Masitoh's point about the power within women's groups which can strengthen their substantive participation, Hendricks (2020:73) highlights preceding initiatives in South Africa, such as the establishment of the Women's National Coalition in 1992, which advocated for a 30% representation of women across political party lines during the *Convention for Democratic South Africa* negotiations, illustrating that when women come together, this will result in successful outcomes for the group.

Interestingly, it is Hendricks (2020:73) who identified several notable women's peace movements in Africa during that era. These peace movements demonstrated the need for women to work within groups and to derive strength from one another to participate meaningfully or substantively in peace processes. This gave credence to the African proverb, "If you want to walk fast, walk alone, but if you want to walk far, walk with others". The various women's peace movements are detailed below:

i) Rwandan women formed the Peace Action Campaign in 1994;

ii) Burundi women established the *Le collectif des Associations et ONG Feminines du Burundi* in 1994 to push for women's involvement in the peace process;

iii) Exiled Sudanese women in Nairobi created the Women's Voice for Peace in 1994 to train women for participation in peace committees at the village level;

iv) Kenyan Somali women in Nairobi founded the Wajir Peace Initiative in 1995 as a rapid response team with early warning capability at the community level and

v) Femmes Africa Solidaritiet was established in 1996 to empower women for leadership in peacebuilding.

Furthermore, Hendricks (2020:74) noted the emergence of subsequent organisations, including, for example, the South African Women in Dialogue (2003), Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace (2003), and the Uganda Women's Peace Coalition (2006), along with many others that advocated for women's inclusion in peace processes.

According to Hendricks (2020:75), these organisations successfully trained numerous women peacebuilders at national or regional levels, who exerted pressure on leaders, including government officials and rebel factions. For instance, women actively negotiated and signed the Sun City Agreement following the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. According to Hendricks (2020:75), women operating under the Mano River Women's Peace Network pushed the Liberian parties to sign peace agreements in Liberia. Additionally, mediators who recognised the significance of women's contribution to peace negotiations facilitated their engagement and the integration of women's demands into the peace accords.

Using the success of Liberian women in peace processes and in support of Gizelis and Joseph's (2016) argument, Masitoh (2020:73) highlights the challenge of external actors who use generic and predetermined templates without understanding local realities, thus emphasising the importance of understanding the local context. Gizelis and Joseph (2016:539) link decoupling, the gap between international and local norms, to challenges in peacebuilding, suggesting that it arises from the unwillingness or inability of locals to adopt policies, especially if perceived to be imposed from

outside. This critique underscores the need for nuanced interventions that differentiate between reluctance and capacity limitations in local communities' implementation of international norms. In other words, for women to feel that they are substantively involved, they must equally believe that they have been architects of the solutions.

Masitoh (2020), Gizelis (2015), and Joseph's argument about the challenges posed by decoupling international and local norms highlight the complexities of peacebuilding. It underscores the need for external actors to move beyond generic templates and to understand and support local capacities. This approach is crucial for ensuring that local communities accept interventions and are effective in the long term.

According to Masitoh (2020:74), Liberia and Ivory Coast's 2009 adoption of National Action Plans to implement UNSCR 1325 further emphasises the region's proactive stance in peacebuilding and promoting gender equality in these processes. It indicates the unique contributions different regions can make to the global peace-building discourse, provided they are willing to understand and leverage local capacities and knowledge. In addition to Masitor (2020:75, Paffenholz and Ross (2015: 56) undertook several case studies to evaluate inclusivity within peace processes, including Timor Leste, Burma/Myanmar, Liberia, and Somalia. Chapter 5 of the study addresses these cases fully. It is important to note that in Columbia, the women's movement's impactful lobbying and mobilisation influenced President Santos to appoint two women to the government's negotiating team in 2013, a historic first (Salamanca 2014:26). However, while Busran-Lao (2014) views this development as a shift, one could ask whether taking a seat of a temporarily absent male participant is sufficient and can be regarded as substantive participation by women.

Ensuring the peace process includes women in descriptive and substantive roles is crucial to its effectiveness. This chapter underscores that inclusion must go beyond mere presence and allow for impactful participation. By drawing on scholars like Hendricks, Siow, and Waylen, this chapter expands on the foundations laid in Chapter 1. There, the initial argument stressed the worldwide marginalisation of women in public decision-making, highlighting the significant growth in the literature addressing

women's involvement in peacebuilding since the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Throughout the peace processes, this study emphasises that when women are substantively included and supported, their participation contributes to more inclusive and sustainable peace initiatives.

This interconnected analysis from this chapter ties back to the argument presented in Chapter 1, reinforcing the necessity of comprehensive and meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes to create more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes.

One of the often-cited impediments to women's inclusion is inadequate preparedness for the unique challenges involved in conflict resolution and peace-building, which is considered either too masculine or militaristic, hence the importance of supporting women in impacting peace processes (UN Women, 2021). Recognising and supporting women's roles in these processes is crucial.

3.7 Support for Women in Peace Processes

Women need robust support to enable their meaningful participation in peace processes. Daley (2007:341) highlights the significance of supporting women's groups in achieving their objectives. This is exemplified by the All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference held in Arusha from July 17 to 20, 2000, with backing from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation. This conference brought together fifty Burundian women from various social groups, including the diaspora and refugee camps, illustrating the importance of "diversity in representation and the power of women's networks" (Krause, Krause and Bränfors, 2018:1007).

However, the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of this support remain critically underexplored in the literature. While Daley and others document the immediate positive impacts, such as assistance in drafting proposals to incorporate gender-specific clauses into the peace agreement and the subsequent acceptance of almost all these changes by the agreement's parties (Daley: 2007), less is said about the aftermath. Did these women maintain their influence in post-agreement implementation and governance? Were there sustained resources and coalitions to

continue advocating for women's issues? The temporary support systems often lack continuity, diminishing the potential long-term impact of initial successes.

Moreover, there is scant discussion on the structural barriers women continue to face even with such support, such as societal norms, economic constraints, and political marginalisation (True, 2016). Support efforts might fail to foster substantial and enduring participation without addressing these underlying challenges. The literature would benefit from a more nuanced analysis of the barriers and enablers of the involvement of women beyond symbolic events, to ensure that interventions are not only meaningful in the short term but also transformative in the long term.

There is also a growing acknowledgement that adopting a gender-sensitive approach to peace development is critical to effectively address the distinct needs of women, men, boys, and girls who have been uniquely impacted by conflict (Fapohunda:2011). However, gender inequality remains a persistent challenge in peace processes worldwide, with women often facing systemic barriers that limit their involvement, leading to their political marginalisation and highlighting the need for institutional reforms to create inclusive peacebuilding efforts. Women's participation is essential for sustainable peace, yet they are underrepresented at negotiation tables, constituting less than 10% of negotiators and less than 3% of signatories in major peace processes (Coomaraswamy, 2015:12), which undermines the inclusivity of these efforts (Norton, 2016: 45-46). This political marginalisation is driven by deeply entrenched societal norms and exclusionary political structures (Paffenholz, 2014:126) and is further perpetuated by a lack of institutional support and political will to promote gender equality (True, 2013: 78). Addressing these challenges requires significant institutional reforms, such as the implementation of frameworks like UNSCR 1325, the creation of gender-sensitive policies, quotas for women in peace negotiations, and capacity-building programs (United Nations, 2000:5; O'Reilly et al., 2015:56-58). Bridging the gender gap in peace processes involves concerted efforts to tackle both gender inequality and political marginalisation, ensuring women's voices are heard and influence the outcomes, fostering an environment of inclusivity for sustainable and comprehensive peace (United Nations, 2000:7; True, 2013: 79).

It is noteworthy that, women's substantial participation in peace processes is linked to positive outcomes, such as more durable peace agreements and effective local

peacebuilding efforts (Zürcher et al., 2021). However, women face numerous challenges in political participation, including deeply entrenched societal norms, exclusionary political structures, and a lack of institutional support. These barriers often result in limited representation and influence in decision-making processes (True, 2013). In Liberia, for example, women's grassroots movements significantly impacted peace negotiations, but in countries like South Africa, the technocratic nature of peace processes frequently marginalises women (Waylen, 2014)2. Therefore, addressing women's systemic political participation challenges is crucial to enhancing their substantive involvement and ensuring that their contributions lead to meaningful impact and sustainable peace (True, 2013).

Addressing these challenges and providing the necessary support can ensure that women's contributions to both formal and informal peace processes lead to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. This approach validates women's roles and amplifies their impact on global peace and security.

The above speaks to the complexity of the problem of women's participation in peace processes. It makes it necessary to confront some obstacles confronting women in their endeavour to play a more critical role in peacemaking.

In conclusion, while women's substantial participation in political and peace processes has demonstrated significant positive impacts, especially when they are seen as legitimate, participate early, and have access to training, many challenges remain. These include entrenched biases, resistance to their involvement, lack of resources, and societal norms. Overcoming these challenges requires concerted efforts to support and uplift women at all levels and in various capacities to ensure their contributions are both valued and effective.

This next chapter outlines the methodology and tools used to address the key research questions regarding women's inclusion in peace processes.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the approach and tools employed to answer key research questions on women's inclusion in peace processes. Through qualitative analysis, based on the case study method, the research evaluates women's presence and participation and their roles, responsibilities, and decision-making powers in peace processes across the African continent.

Baxter and Jack (2008:544) highlight that qualitative case studies enable researchers to explore or describe a phenomenon within its real-life context using various data sources. This method allows for an in-depth investigation of individuals, organisations, interventions (whether simple or complex), relationships, communities, or programs. Yin (2003) asserts that a case study design is appropriate when the goal is to answer "how" and "why" questions, particularly when the researcher cannot influence the behaviour of the study's participants.

The research uses a qualitative, desk-top analysis of academic scholarship to thoroughly examine women's inclusion and involvement in peace processes. According to Cleland (2017:61), qualitative research addresses the 'how' and 'why' of research questions, facilitating a more profound comprehension of experiences, phenomena, and context.

Additionally, according to Cheong, Lyons, Houghton and Majumdar (2023:1), secondary data, particularly open data, is preferred to increase efficiency and gain geographical expanse while also being a powerful method to gain insights that primary data analysis cannot offer. The authors emphasise that secondary sources are crucial in disseminating information about a research topic, aiding broader communication among researchers and scholars.

Therefore, the study uses secondary and tertiary sources of information rather than primary sources. The researcher reviews the literature on women's descriptive and substantive inclusion in peace processes, ultimately contributing to a valuable body of literature for use in peace processes that struggle with meaningful inclusion of women.

It should further assist women in examining the circumstances under which they are brought into peace processes to ensure that their participation is not a mere token but should count.

4.2 Research Tools: Criteria for Evaluating Substantive Participation

As noted earlier, this study is anchored on the pertinent recommendations of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which aim to ensure women's inclusion in the entire peace process – from prevention to peacebuilding and at all levels, including decision-making. Therefore, UNSCR 1325 serves as the overarching reference and touchstone for assessing women's meaningful and impactful participation in peace processes.

It is perhaps helpful to recall here that women's participation in peacebuilding is just one of four pillars identified and indicated in UNSCR 1325. The other three, which do not fall within the ambit of the present study, are protection, prevention, relief and recovery. The UNSCR 1325 spells out three essential criteria for women's participation, which is the primary concern of this study. These include representation, recognition, and incorporation.

To complement and complete the above criteria, to deepen the research and understanding of the concept of descriptive or substantive participation, the research further resorts to another set of three criteria identified by Ellerby (2016), which includes a clear women's agenda, the participation and involvement of women in the peace process and women's advocacy in the peace process. Ellerby (2016:135-150).

The researcher added a seventh criterion, **support,** to these six criteria, respectively drawn from UNSCR 1325 and Ellerby (2016). Combined, these criteria should give a sense of the extent to which women are substantially included in peace processes.

Together, these constitute the seven tools employed in this study to assess women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

The seven criteria selected for this study aim to provide a comprehensive assessment of women's meaningful participation in peace processes. These criteria capture

various dimensions of inclusion and underscore the importance of recognising and supporting women's roles in achieving sustainable peace.

A synopsis of each of these, together with the reasoning behind their selection, is provided below

- **Representation** - This variable seeks to measure the voice and value women bring to the peace process, notably by assessing the extent to which women are represented in peace processes, decision-making, and leadership positions. Meaningful representation ensures that women significantly influence the outcomes of peace processes.
- **Recognition** - seeks to ascertain what constitutional and legal protections are in place to guarantee the inclusion and safeguarding of women's interests in peace processes and broader political infrastructure design. Recognising women's rights and contributions is crucial for establishing an inclusive political infrastructure.
- **Incorporation** - seeks to determine whether women's involvement in the peace process covers the full range of activities or is selective, often confined to secondary and subordinate roles within male-dominated institutions. It extends beyond leadership to include rank-and-file personnel. True incorporation means that women's contributions are valued at all levels.
- A **clear women's agenda** or a specific plan for women is a collection of clearly defined and typically documented strategies and objectives presented to key stakeholders during negotiations. Such an agenda details the timing and methods for integrating women into peacebuilding efforts, ranging from their participation in government and interim bodies to calls for legal reforms. A well-defined agenda ensures that women's participation is purposeful and strategically aligned with the broader goals of the peace process.
- **Access and active involvement of women in the peace process** aims to measure the extent to which women can engage in official peace negotiations. Ellerby suggests that this should be considered as a spectrum of potential engagement, from complete exclusion to indirect and direct involvement in the proceedings. It also addresses the barriers women face in participating fully in peace processes.

- Regarding **women's advocacy in the peace process**, Ellerby (2016) posits that if women are granted any level of access, it could facilitate the presentation and acknowledgement of their agenda, which largely depends on another critical element: the support from leaders. Advocacy here refers to how the primary conflict parties and mediators/negotiators acknowledge the importance of including women in the overarching security dialogue, highlighting the importance of championing women's involvement in the processes.
- **Support for Enhanced Women's Participation in Peace Processes.** The researcher added this criterion to investigate what measures exist or can be envisaged to bolster and improve women's involvement and impact on peace processes. In including this criterion, the researcher seeks to respond to arguments in the literature about women's inadequate preparedness and the lack of institutional support to enable women to succeed as essential actors in peace processes.

These seven criteria will be used to analyse the case studies to answer the key research questions about women's inclusion in peace processes. Together, these criteria constitute the framework used in this study to evaluate women's meaningful and substantive participation in peace processes. Applying these criteria to real-world empirical cases will provide insight into the effectiveness of women's representation and the impact of their inclusion on achieving sustainable peace.

4.3 Case Study Selection and Justification

In examining women's participation in peace processes across Africa, case studies are selected from different socio-cultural zones and backgrounds on the continent to capture both the diversity of subjects and the context in which women's inclusion in peace processes occurs.

The study also analyses African conflicts in which women were involved as mediators or in any other substantive way, capturing their participation broadly within the peace processes. A purposive sample of illustrative cases was selected from the continent between 2001, when the UNSCR 1325 was adopted, and 2022 when the study ends. These case studies span the following regions: Central, West, North-East and East Africa.

While these case studies focus on the African continent, others beyond the continent are referred to where relevant. For example, the study includes instances where women were more involved and where they were less so. This broad selection of case studies is meant to avoid bias. This approach is supported by authors such as (Gerring and Seawright 2008:1) when they inquired whether randomisation works with case studies. He suggested that it does not, as “any given sample may be widely representative” (Gerring and Seawright 2008:1). He indicates that randomisation might not be viable when the number of cases is small, thus rendering random sampling an unreliable approach to case studies. The authors concluded that even if the randomised sample is representative, there is no guarantee that the gathered evidence will be reliable. Gerring et al. (2008) further asserted that cases could be derived from the researcher's interests, as scholars pick areas of study based on their interests. Another instance might be where area studies drive case selection.

This researcher uses illustrative/descriptive case studies to assess whether women participate descriptively or substantively in peace processes. According to Baron and McNeal (2019:20), illustrative case studies are descriptive investigations that portray one or more instances of an event to elucidate the situation. Baron and McNeal (2019) further assert that this type of study "depicts a situation or a phenomenon, outlining what is happening and why."

Thus, this research focuses on case studies selected across the African continent for many and varied reasons, including the following: their place of occurrence, Africa, they fall within the period under investigation (2001-2022); had women as participants or lead mediators; involved both formal and informal peace processes; were characterised by devastating humanitarian outcomes; provide opportunities for cross-regional and country comparison; have had protracted or recurring conflicts; women in these cases have borne the brunt of conflict and are searching for long-lasting and sustainable solutions; these countries had various cultural experiences and colonial influences; they have vast natural resources, and they are characterised by high poverty and civil strife.

Case studies have been drawn from the following regions of the African continent and encompass instances where women have participated as mediators and where they have played substantive roles, which could be classified under Track II:

East Africa

- Kenya (2008)
- Uganda (2004-2006)
- Burundi
- Somalia (2007-2008)

Central Africa

- Central African Republic (2012-2013)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (2008)

North-East Africa

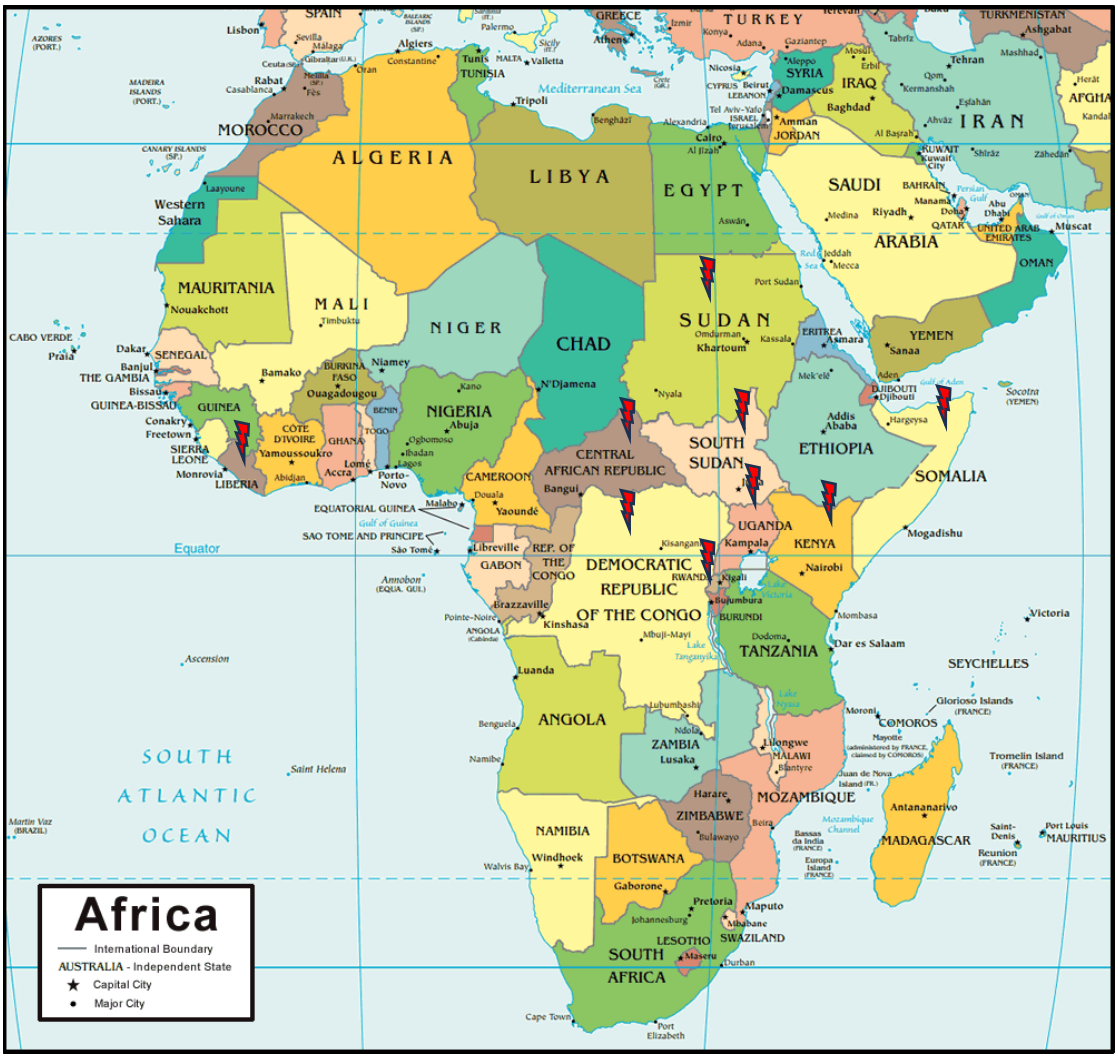
- Sudan-Sudan (2012)
- Sudan (2001-2005)

West Africa

- Liberia (2003)

This chapter has outlined the methods and tools used to address the critical research questions regarding women's inclusion in peace processes. The researcher has suggested enhancing the understanding of descriptive or substantive participation by applying several criteria from Ellerby (2016) and UNSCR 1325. The selected case studies represent diverse socio-cultural backgrounds across the continent, aiming to reflect the varied contexts of women's involvement in peace processes. The researcher believes this approach will provide a more comprehensive and objective perspective on women's roles in African peace initiatives.

Figure 1: Geopolitical Map of Africa depicting countries under study



4.4 Ethical Considerations

In carrying out this study, the researcher endeavoured to adhere strictly to the highest standard of ethics required in academic scholarship. On the importance of ethics in research, Resnik (2015) suggests that it increases the trust and reliability of the study while guaranteeing that findings are transparent, reproducible, and accountable. He further notes that it contributes to advancing knowledge, ensuring the research is relevant, helpful, and beneficial to society.

Gallegos-Erazo, Guevara and Campoverde (2021:9) define ethics in research as 'the disclosure of methods applied during the study, where the researcher must always maintain an impartial position, honesty with intentions, not giving away the results,

using scientific rigour as a basis for the credibility of the results. While employing the research method above, the researcher critically evaluates the credibility, relevance, and reliability of the secondary sources to ensure the integrity and validity of the research findings.

The data collection methods conform to the University's ethical standards, and the researcher is committed to upholding all ethical guidelines. No interviews were conducted for this study, as the researcher sourced all information from secondary sources.

For reliability and validity in this study, information was sourced from secondary sources adhering to the University's ethical standards and guidelines. Since secondary sources can introduce bias or misrepresentation, several strategies were employed: triangulation for cross-verifying information, critical evaluation for credibility and relevance, transparency in documenting the origins and context of each source, and methodological rigour to ensure consistent and reliable data collection and analysis.

Baxter & Jack (2008:544) note that qualitative case studies allow researchers to investigate or describe a phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple data sources. This approach enables exploring individuals, organisations, interventions (whether simple or complex), relationships, communities, or programs.

According to Yin (2003), a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study.

In the chapter that follows, case studies are presented, and each peace process identified earlier in the text is thoroughly examined and scrutinised.

Criteria for Evaluating Substantive Participation captured on 4.2 above with elements recalled and depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Substantive participation of women in peace processes: Criteria and elements of appreciation (evaluation components).

	Criterion1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5	Criterion 6	Criterion 7
	Representation	**Recognition**	**Incorporation**	**Agenda**	**Access**	**Advocacy**	**Support**
Elements of Appreciation	Impactful Inclusion of women in leadership and decision-making positions	The existence of Constitutional and Legal protections for women and their interests	Inclusion & Involvement of women in the complete spectrum of the peace process	The existence of a specific plan for women's protection, promotion & participation in the peace process	Ease and Extent of engagement of women in the official peace process	Sensitization & Acknowledgement of the importance of including women in the overarching security dialogue	The existence of measures to bolster and improve women's involvement and impact, including adequate preparedness and institutional facilitation for women

Chapter 5: Case Study Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses selected case studies of instances where women participated in peace processes in four regions on the African continent. The research uses the criteria described in the preceding chapter on methodology not only to assess how women's participation in formal processes was substantive but also to determine where women have meaningfully participated under Track II processes. As seen earlier, the following criteria are used to assess women's participation: representation, incorporation, recognition, a clear women's agenda, access, advocacy, and support.

Illustrative case studies are Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia, the DRC, CAR, Sudan, South Sudan, and Liberia. Each case study starts with a cursory overview of the conflict's history and context, alluding, where necessary, to its ramifications and implications for women. Thereafter, efforts to resolve the conflict are examined, and the role of women in the peace process is highlighted.

In assessing the extent and efficiency of women's participation in the peace process, recourse is made to three criteria for determining substantive participation indicated in the UNSCR 1325 concurrently with three other criteria enunciated by Ellerby (2016). In combining the two sets of criteria, to which the researcher has added the seventh, it is expected that the findings of this research should be more complete and convincing concerning the substantive participation of women in peace processes. It is further hoped that the researcher's contribution to academic scholarship is evident from the combination of criteria from UNSCR 1325 and Ellerby (2016) and the proposition of the additional criterion of support for women's participation.

5.2 Evaluation of Women's Participation in Selected Case Studies

This section will address the nature of the conflict or crisis and the challenges that confronted the selected countries. The section will demonstrate the protracted nature of some conflicts that saw communities perish while some were displaced. The study also reflects on the various interventions, some under the auspices of the AU, the UN

and others where women acted on their own and also, in some instances, with the support of women's organisations to end the strife they lived under. The analysis of each country concludes with a section where the researcher engages with the seven criteria for participation to establish the extent to which each criterion was or was not met to demonstrate their involvement in each country's peace processes.

5.2.1 Kenya

5.2.1.1 Crisis and conflict over an electoral process

Kenya has experienced several political crises, with the most acute erupting in 2007 over an electoral dispute. This crisis led U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the African Union to undertake mediation efforts to restore peace and stability.

According to Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011), Dayal and Christien (2020), and Kabokwa (2024), the historical and political context of these crises reveals that Jomo Kenyatta's flawed constitution perpetuated inequality and exclusion by allowing the ruling elite to concentrate power and resources, thereby worsening societal disparities (Preston-McGhie and Wamai et al., 2011:12-13). This near-imperial presidency resulted in the marginalisation of various groups, exacerbated by resource scarcity. The 2002 election, which saw President Kibaki take office, marked a significant political shift. However, his administration faced challenges such as inherited weak institutions and persistent corruption, which undermined public trust and contributed to the 2007-2008 violence (Preston-McGhie and Wamai, 2011:13-14). Kibaki's failure to honour a crucial Memorandum of Understanding with opposition leader Raila Odinga and his inability to address impunity and corruption further weakened the administration. Furthermore, the mishandling of electoral violence in 1992 and 1997 established a precedent that reinforced a culture of impunity. The 2007 conflict, driven by allegations of election rigging, became the most violent in Kenya's history, as documented in the Waki Report Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV, 2008).

Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011:15) observe that despite several prominent leaders and former heads of state efforts to initiate dialogue in Kenya, these attempts were unsuccessful. Subsequently, Ghanaian President John Kufuor, serving as Chairman of the African Union (A.U.), arrived in Kenya on January 8, 2008. Recognising the

A.U.'s mandate to intervene in difficult situations such as "war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity," Kufuor aimed to secure Agreement for external mediation (Preston-McGhie and Wamai, 2011:13). The authors further note that upon his return to Ghana, Kufuor announced the A.U.'s establishment of a Panel of Eminent African Personalities to address the crisis, chaired by Kofi Annan and including former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and former Mozambican First Lady Graça Machel.

5.2.1.2 Participation of women in the Kenya Peace Process

Preston-McGhie et al. (2011:3) describe the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR), led by H. E. Kofi Annan and the African Union (A.U.) and how a panel of Eminent African Personalities aimed to resolve the conflict arising from the disputed results of the December 2007 presidential elections was created. After 42 days of negotiations, President Mwai Kibaki and Hon. Raila Odinga signed a power-sharing agreement, which ended the violence and political deadlock. The mediation process subsequently addressed a range of long-term issues underlying the conflict.

Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011:4) note that the inclusion of women in Kenya's dialogue process was notably higher than previous mediation efforts. Women made up 25% of the negotiating team, with Mrs. Graça Machel, renowned for her work on the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, being one of the three prominent panel members. Her extensive experience in women's issues and her senior position enabled her to highlight and **advocate** for critical issues effectively (Preston-McGhie and Wamai 2011:17). Additionally, her familiarity with the country's dynamics and robust civil society networks further strengthened her role. As a further sign of women's **representation** in the peace process, the mediation process also saw the involvement of several senior female advisors from the United Nations and the A.U., including a staff member from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and an advisor on Transitional Justice (Preston-McGhie and Wamai 2011:17). Thus, the Kenyan mediation process stands out for its significant representation of women.

The Geneva Union Commission (2014:310) underscores the crucial role of negotiators in mediation and the importance of achieving consensus among them. The mediation

in Kenya was enhanced by the skill of the mediators, supported by an international team. Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011:18) further note that in Kenya, substantial capacity within civil society and among women leaders, **supported** by international actors, was crucial for their effective engagement at a technical level around the table with the issues being negotiated. Additionally, female and civil society leaders' strong networks, organisational skills, and international advocacy efforts were significant assets.

Effective conflict analysis, through early diagnosis and timely intervention, underscored the importance of the process. These methods, including the mediator's presentation of 'power-sharing' as one potential resolution among many, illustrate the mediator's patience in leadership, allowing negotiators the opportunity to reach joint decisions (The Geneva Union Commission 2014:310).

Kabokwa (2014:42) reports that women leaders mobilised funds for a women's consultative meeting on the Kenyan crisis on January 24, 2008. Kabokwa notes that women's groups strategically positioned themselves informally to access resources that could empower them to participate at more formal levels. They created mechanisms to generate funds locally before seeking external support. As a result, and to signal **access** as one of Ellerby's criteria for participation, women played a significant role in track 1 mediation by being included in the panel of eminent African persons and political party members.

Kabokwa (2014: 42), Dayal and Christien (2020:3) and Christien (2020: 6) further highlight Graca Machel's active involvement in rallying women to ensure the success of her mediation efforts. Notably, she played a crucial role in increasing women's involvement in the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process (KNDR) by establishing the Women's Consultation Group (Dayal and Christien 2020).

Machel encouraged women with different ethnic and political affiliations to come together and reconcile their differences through open and frank discussions among the participants. This session, known as the "spitting session," allowed the women to address divisive issues freely, fostering a path towards consensus on the crisis[13].

[13] Involving women in these discussions emphasised their essential contribution to peace processes, ensuring that various perspectives were considered and that the solutions were more comprehensive and inclusive (Kabokwa 2014: 42).

Following this constructive dialogue, the women collaborated in drafting a memorandum, which was presented to the mediation team on January 25, 2008. To ensure **a clear women's agenda** as one of the criteria for participation, a committee comprising twelve women from various organisations was chosen to deliver this memorandum. The content of the memorandum played a crucial role in shaping the long-term agreements under Agenda Four, which called for reforms to address the root causes of the violence (Kabokwa 2024:43).

Kabokwa (2024:42) confirms that women participated in various capacities during mediation. They served as panel members, as senior advisors to the mediator, and in multiple roles supporting mediation efforts. Additionally, they held senior positions within political delegations and led civil society organisations. Kabokwa (2014) and Dayal and Christien (2020) also note that women were actively engaged beyond the negotiation rooms, working at grassroots levels and influencing local and national initiatives. This responds to the criterion of **incorporation**, as women were included and impactfully involved in the complete spectrum of the peace process.

Expanding on this point, Dayal and Christien (2020:2) emphasise that women are vital in Track II[14] peace processes, which are essential for fostering inclusive peacebuilding. Their roles include advocating for their participation in formal negotiations, advancing democracy and gender equality, organising peace initiatives, and advising official negotiators. Supporting this, Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011:17) highlight that while women had substantial representation in the Kenyan mediation, it was their connections with women outside the formal process that significantly influenced the inclusion of women's issues in the mediation, further demonstrating the incorporation of rank-and-file women in all activities as one of the criteria from the UNSCR 1325 being tested in this study.

Moreover, Dayan and Christien (2020:3) suggest that informal negotiations, distinct from formal peace talks, provide a vibrant arena for women's advocacy for peace. Dayan and Christien (2020) note the significance of women's role in informal peace processes, highlighting their participation in various activities. The authors note that

[14] Based on existing research, Dayan *et al*. (2020) characterise informal or Track II processes as diplomatic or consultative engagements involving groups that are not necessarily primary parties to the conflict but aim to contribute to negotiations aimed at ending the conflict.

this involvement must often be noticed and recorded in formal negotiation arenas and literature.

Kabokwa (2024:43) notes that in Kenya, women representatives at the negotiating table advocated for increased participation by women. This advocacy ensured the **recognition** of women by including them in significant bodies such as the Independent Electoral Review Commission, the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, and in humanitarian efforts for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), thus ensuring women's inclusion in the broad spectrum of the peace process as well as in the post-conflict period. They also pushed for constitutional reforms and emphasised including civil society actors in the mediation process. This recommendation stemmed from civil society's ability to effectively mobilise and ensure that women's concerns and priorities were communicated to the mediation team.

Preston-McGhie and Wamai (2011:18) underscore the importance of civil society's engagement throughout the mediation process and note that a robust civil society is essential for achieving a durable peace agreement.

Overall, the Kenyan case study meets all seven (7) of the working criteria for this study: representation, recognition, access, a clear women's agenda, incorporation, advocacy, and support.

5.2.2 Uganda

5.2.2.1 A conflict marked by abductions, killings, looting, mutilations and rape

The International Crisis Group (2004:1) observed the protracted conflict in Northern Uganda, spanning over 18 years and resulting in the internal displacement of over 1.5 million people. During this time, a massacre occurred, claiming numerous lives, including those of women and children, reflecting the government's failure to protect its citizens.

Muhenda (2014) and The International Crisis Group (2004:1) identify critical aspects of the Northern Uganda conflict: firstly, it involved a struggle between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Secondly, it encompassed tensions within the predominantly Acholi population, who suffered extensively from indiscriminate violence and child abductions for military, auxiliary, and sexual purposes aimed at

intimidating the Acholi and undermining the government. Thirdly, it was exacerbated by the animosity between Uganda and Sudan because they supported rebellions within each other's borders. Lastly, it perpetuated the historical North-South divide that has influenced Ugandan politics and society since gaining independence in 1962 (The International Crisis Group 2004:2).

Muhenda (2014) further explores the Northern Uganda conflict, which endured for 25 years until resolutions were pursued through military operations, mediation, and peace negotiations between the Ugandan government and the LRA forces. He recalls that some scholars characterised the Northern Uganda War as a "forgotten war" because it endured for 25 years with Uganda and the international community, only later addressing it with lasting solutions.

The International Crisis Group (2004), supported by Muhenda (2014), acknowledges that the LRA, at times, was seen as a response to the brutality of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) and the neglect of northern Uganda by the government, gaining initial passive support among the Acholi. However, this support waned as the LRA escalated its attacks, massacres, and abductions during the 1990s. Muhenda (2014) further indicates that the LRA attempted to present itself as a political representative for northern grievances during the Juba Peace Talks despite concurrently inflicting violence and suffering upon the Acholi people. According to Wepundi, Mwanaki, and Morolong (2009:1), rebel leader Joseph Kony delayed signing the peace pact, citing a need for clarity on the accountability arrangements in his favour. The Juba Agreement specified that LRA members would be tried in Uganda by a special war crimes chamber of the High Court. However, Kony's lack of genuine commitment to peace was revealed by his execution of his deputy, Vincent Otti, his chief negotiator, reorganising the LRA negotiating team, and the breakdown in reliable communication with the Juba mediators. It emerged that the LRA was rocked by internal feuds pitting Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti, the second in command, against each other, leading to Kony's alleged detention in November 2007. Although the Juba talks had nearly collapsed during a four-month deadlock between January and April 2007, the process was revitalised with the appointment of Joaquim Chissano as the Northern Uganda peace envoy.

5.2.2.2 The role of women in the Uganda Peace Process

According to Muhenda (2014) and Wepundi et al. (2009), Yoweri Museveni appointed Betty Bigombe, a woman and member of the Acholi community, to his cabinet to explore peace talks with Joseph Kony. Simultaneously, the government launched an offensive against the United Holy Salvation Army (UHSA).

Muhenda (2014) observed that Joseph Kony's loss of trust in the negotiations, culminating in the LRA killing of its chief negotiator, Otti, collapsed the mediation efforts. Betty Bigombe's endeavours were ultimately unsuccessful as the war persisted.

According to the American Friends Service Committee (2023:6), Madame Betty Bigombe was the chief negotiator in formal discussions between the Government of Uganda and the LRA. Her facilitation led to the LRA agreeing to participate in the Juba Peace Talks, which significantly expedited the peace process and enabled ongoing community-level peacebuilding efforts in affected regions of Uganda. Rubimbwa (2017) argues that Ugandan women's perspectives influenced the outcomes of these negotiations in an unconventional manner. Although Joseph Kony and Yoweri Museveni did not sign the document during Bigombe's time as a mediator, it shaped northern Uganda's peace recovery and development strategy.

In her 2008 testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Bigombe detailed her extensive involvement in securing peace in Uganda, first as a government official and later as a chief mediator. She recounted her return to Uganda in 2004 to organise the first face-to-face meeting between Ugandan government representatives, the LRA, and various community leaders, which became known as the "Bigombe 2 Initiative." This initiative laid the groundwork for the ongoing peace talks in Juba, South Sudan. After a series of meetings from 2006 to 2008, mediated by Riek Machar, the Ugandan government and the LRA signed a truce on August 26, 2008 (Bigombe:2008)

Bigombe also praised the significant role of women in the peace process. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she worked with courageous women in internally displaced persons camps in northern Uganda. These women played a crucial role in her initiative to persuade LRA combatants to defect by delivering letters promising security and

resettlement kits. Within two months, this effort led to approximately 5,000 defections, reducing the LRA's size and capacity and greatly diminishing its military capabilities. Furthermore, Bigombe (2008) notes that Ugandan women actively participated in peaceful demonstrations and travelled to Juba with the Women's Peace Torch to **advocate** for the inclusion of women's perspectives in peace negotiations.

Wepundi et al. (2009:9) state that the 2004-06 mediation efforts involving the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) North Uganda Peace Initiative were a struggle as the LRA had some distrust of Bigombe, wrongfully considered a government agent. This attempt, launched by a foreign actor, did not achieve its intended outcomes. Furthermore, it is believed that the International Criminal Court (ICC), with its arrest warrants for LRA leaders, has had a controversial impact on peace efforts in Northern Uganda, as these warrants were seen to have effectively killed off the Bigombe initiative. The authors note that a new mediation effort, which overlapped with Bigombe's second attempt, began in late 2005 and early 2006, facilitated by Leonzio Angele Onel, a Sudanese Acholi, who successfully connected the LRA with the Government of Southern Sudan. To demonstrate **representation** as one of the criteria for participation as per the study, while Bigombe was notably the only woman at the formal negotiation table, the broader efforts of northern Ugandan women were instrumental in advancing the peace process (Wepundi et al. 2009:10).

In sum, the Uganda case study responds to two (2) of the seven (7) criteria: representation and advocacy.

5.2.3 Burundi

5.2.3.1 A vicious cycle of inter-ethnic conflict fuelled by poverty and power struggle

Bentley (2004) highlights that the ongoing violence in Burundi, despite numerous peace efforts, has claimed around 350,000 lives over ten years of civil conflict. This violence, exacerbated by ethnic divisions, should be viewed within the broader context of the Great Lakes region. Bentley (2004:12) points out that the ethnic tensions in Burundi are similar to those that led to the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Post-2000 developments in Burundi reveal significant challenges to the peace process, particularly in achieving a ceasefire with rebel groups not involved in negotiations.

Following the transfer of power from Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya to Hutu Domitien Ndayizeye on May 1, 2003, in line with the Arusha Accord, violence escalated, further devastating the already suffering civilian population. Bentley (2004) also recounts the 1993 coup in which Tutsi officers killed President Ndadaye and key Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) officials, leading to severe retaliatory violence. Mandela's mediation, which succeeded Nyerere's, saw accelerated negotiations and the inclusion of rebel groups bolstered by international support. However, Mandela's insistence on signing the Arusha Peace Accord on August 28, 2000, despite some parties' reservations and the exclusion of major rebel groups like the National Forces of Liberation (FNL) and National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), limited the accord's effectiveness and long-term stability (Bentley, 2004:13; Mthembu-Salter, 2002:31; Van Eck, 2000).

Earlier in the study, Paffenholz and Ross (2015) emphasised and demonstrated the value of including women substantively in peace processes while they also observed obstacles to women's inclusion in the Burundi peace process. Using the Burundi peace negotiations as a case study, Paffenholz and Ross (2015:33) observed that Hutu negotiators opposed the inclusion of women's groups at the negotiation as many were deemed to represent the Tutsi community.

However, throughout this challenging period in Burundi, it is crucial to understand women's role in the peace process and assess its impact using the seven criteria enunciated earlier in the study.

5.2.3.2 The role of women in the Burundi Peace Process

The Graduate Institute, Geneva (2018) reports that after Mandela was appointed mediator for the Burundi peace talks in Arusha, women comprised 30% of the delegation. Mandela's pledge to incorporate women's perspectives into the final peace agreement was testimony to **recognition** as one of the criteria in this study. **Supported** by international NGOs and the U.N., women formed a united coalition spanning ethnicities, actively engaging with negotiating parties, mediators, and influential external actors in a demonstration of one of the criteria under examination: **'representation'**. Beginning in 1998, seven women from civil society participated as observers, achieving permanent observer status by 2000 due to lobbying and **advocacy** efforts and mediator backing.

According to the Graduate Institute, Geneva (2018), two women played crucial roles in the mediation teams: Ruth Perry from Liberia with Mandela's team and Carolyn McAskie from Canada with Nyerere. Their involvement facilitated women's groups' '**access'** to the peace process. According to the Graduate Institute (2018), the All-party Women's Conference successfully articulated a comprehensive **'women's agenda'** in their final Declaration, demanding equal participation in decision-making, land ownership rights, an end to impunity for sexual crimes, and safeguarding women's rights, and finally the removal of the embargo imposed on their country (Diop 2002:149).

Furthermore, the Graduate Institute of Geneva (2018) refers to Mandela's '**support'** for a women's Consultation held in Pretoria. At the assembly, women addressed key peace talk themes, emphasising justice, advocating for traditional authority in new institutions, and promoting women's enhanced participation in current and future public and economic spheres. Their goals included integrating armed actors into the peace process and achieving a ceasefire.

Diop (2002:47) elucidates that despite starting with just twelve members, the group was resolute in pursuing peace for their nation and easing the hardship their people endured.

Further, an All-party Women's Conference advocating for women's inclusion was established in 2000 following a briefing in Arusha by the UNIFEM and the Nyerere Foundation. It convened with two women from each negotiating party, alongside civil society, refugees, the diaspora, and international organisations. Held shortly before the Agreement's finalisation, it significantly influenced the talks, with over half of its recommendations adopted in the Arusha Accord. Diop also underscores Burundi as a critical example illustrating the importance of unity and collective action among women seeking influence in peace processes.

According to Diop (2002:148), women's participation in consultations with mediators and regional powers was gained through **advocacy** rather than formal processes because, although not directly at the negotiating table, they actively lobbied during the process. Mediators facilitated their involvement through consultations in Burundi and elsewhere, enabling meetings with negotiators and influential external figures. President Nyerere facilitated women's engagement when he decided to give

the floor to the delegation when the need arose, considering United Nations procedures that allow observers to make interventions (Diop, 2002:148).

According to Diop (2002:157), the efforts of Burundian women, **supported** by U.N. agencies, mediators, and African women's NGOs, played a crucial role in shaping the final peace document. Through sustained **advocacy** backed by the Facilitation and Mediation Support (FAS) and UNIFEM, they secured participation in the third round of peace negotiations in Arusha. Despite initially being denied participatory status, to demonstrate the criterion of **recognition,** their agenda was incorporated into the final discussions through parallel meetings with mediators and participants, eventually leading to observer status and the ability to intervene (Diop 2002:147 &152)

Women in Peace and Transition Processes (2018) discovered that the Arusha negotiations in Burundi resulted in the accord incorporating several women's demands and extensive provisions on gender equality. Moreover, to further satisfy the criteria of **'recognition'**, which seeks to ascertain what constitutional and legal protections exist for women, it is noted that the 2005 Constitution mandates a 30 per cent quota for women in elected positions. Additionally, Burundi has established a Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights, and Gender, and in 2003, rape was recognised as a crime against humanity.

The Burundi case study responds to all seven (7) substantive participation criteria: a clear women's agenda, representation, recognition, access, advocacy incorporation, and support.

5.2.4 Somalia

5.2.4.1 A prolonged conflict and state collapse fuelled by internal and external forces

Somalia has endured decades of civil wars, inter-clan conflicts, militias, warlords, terrorism, and numerous other violent conflicts Abdi et al. (2021:46). These crises have led to the loss of many innocent lives, the destruction of state institutions and infrastructure, and a collapse of trust in governance. Consequently, they have severely impacted agricultural production, culminating in a nationwide famine. Abdi et al. (2021:46) further argue that radicalism, extremism, corruption, the militarisation of clan

members, inequalities, extreme poverty, and widespread youth unemployment have exacerbated the country's challenges.

Elmi and Barise (2006:1) examine the root causes of the conflict, highlighting competition for resources and power, military regime repression, and colonial legacies. They argue that the situation has been worsened by politicised clan identities and the ready availability of weapons, and they support Abdi et al.'s observation regarding the significant number of unemployed youth. Regarding peace obstacles, they point to Ethiopia's hostile policies, the lack of interest from major powers, inadequate resources, and the warlords' disinterest in peace as major factors impeding the Somali peace process.

According to Abdi et al. (2021:47), Somalia initially transitioned to democracy after gaining independence from Italy in 1960, allowing all citizens to vote and stand for office and permitting freedom of association. However, clan loyalties began to dominate political dynamics soon after independence, leading to the demise of democratic aspirations. The authors state that the trend worsened following Siyad Barre's overthrow of civilian rule in 1969, as political parties increasingly reflected clan affiliations, undermining the sustainability of democratic ideals. Newly established democratic institutions were further paralysed by self-rule, corruption, poverty, and insecurity (Abdi et al., 2021:47). The authors do not explain why self-rule would be paralysing when it should be welcome. They identified three primary actors in Somalia's complex political landscape as internal factions and active militant groups like Al-Shabaab, each pursuing distinct political goals, perspectives, and affiliations.

Elmi and Barise (2006:35) argue that Ethiopia's interference is the most significant and enduring factor in sustaining the Somali conflict. They claim that Ethiopia has provided shelter and arms to various spoilers, undermined key peace agreements such as the Cairo Accord (1997) and the Arta Agreement (2000), and manipulated both the Somali peace process in Kenya and the transitional government. The authors also assert that Ethiopia has frequently sent weapons across the border and, on occasion, occupied several towns in southern Somalia. They view Ethiopia as a powerful and strategically positioned state that, besides being a hostile neighbour, seeks to keep Somalia weak and divided. Elmi and Barise (2006:40) further recall the role played by Ethiopia and Kenya in the peace process, which Ethiopia initiated in 2001.

Regarding the peace conference in Kenya, Elmi and Barise (2006:40) indicate that Ethiopia spearheaded the process and managed it for two years with Kenya's assistance, resulting in a charter, parliament, and government of their design. When the heads of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states convened in Khartoum in 2001, Ethiopia pressured the other IGAD countries, claiming that the Arta process was incomplete. The authors suggest that Ethiopia then pushed for a resolution calling for another peace conference in Kenya.

At the start of this conference, Ethiopia began manipulating the process by controlling the agenda and the forum. With the host country's support, Ethiopia granted substantial power to the warlords it favoured while side-lining traditional, religious, and civil society leaders. Highlighting the importance of inclusive peace processes, Abdi et al. (2021:54) emphasise creating an environment where all citizens, including marginalised groups such as women, can contribute equally to sustaining peace and fostering development. They argue that inclusive peacebuilding processes are essential for achieving lasting stability.

Paffenholz and Ross (2015:57) assert that within the Somali context, these country case studies, despite the patriarchal and clan-based structures, women across the country played a significant role in fostering peace and reconciliation for many years, in a clear demonstration that when women are empowered, they can break through barriers to make a substantive contribution to peace processes. Further, in places like the divided town of Galkayo, women from both sides formed a mediation and reconciliation committee transcending political boundaries to address trade disputes and conflicts. Additionally, these women proactively trained other women in conflict resolution, analytical thinking and leadership skills, demonstrating that women recognised the necessity of ensuring that women continued to play a substantive role in peace processes beyond their time.

To further demonstrate women's impact and their substantive role in peace processes, Paffenholz and Ross (2015:57) assert that in traditional Somali society, peacemaking through dialogue and mediation is typically the domain of men, mainly traditional elders. However, the authors note that as wives, mothers, businesswomen and members of civil society, women influence the elders and others to intervene in conflicts, mobilise resources for peacebuilding and bridge divisions within the clan

system to facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties. This was deemed significant because, within traditional Somali society, women focus on various issues, including sustainable livelihoods, education, and practical community reconciliation.

5.2.4.2 The role of women in the Somali Peace Process

The Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative's report on the Somali National Peace Conference in 2002 (2018:2) highlights that the conference held in Arta, Djibouti, in 2000 was notably inclusive compared to previous peace efforts following the state collapse and onset of war in 1991. Notably, the conference coincided with the adoption of the UNSCR 1325, which might have given impetus to women to lobby for their inclusion. Aimed at ending the conflict and restoring a central government, the conference involved a broad spectrum of participants, including civil society organisations, clan elders, and politicians. Women's organisations gained official inclusion through effective advocacy efforts directed at conference organisers, including U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and facilitator President Guelleh of Djibouti. Women's groups formed a cohesive coalition known as "the Women's Clan," recognised as "the Sixth Clan," which increased their influence in the negotiations.

According to the Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative's report (2018:9), President Guelleh diverged from past practices by **advocating** for the participation of numerous and varied civil society groups such as clan elders, intellectuals, the diaspora, women's groups, religious leaders, and representatives from the burgeoning business community. Bradbury and Healy (2010:64) note that this underscores the importance of women's equal participation and complete engagement in maintaining and promoting peace and security and the necessity of enhancing their role in decision-making related to conflict prevention and resolution.

Diop (2002:142-154) observes that although women were not explicitly informed of their exclusion due to gender, they discerned that the five clans negotiating in Arta consisted exclusively of men. Upon realising this, women representing diverse clans approached the mediation team and advocated to be recognised as an additional clan.

Diop (2012:150) further asserts that after determining there were no legal or traditional barriers to this request, it was agreed that they would be acknowledged as the sixth clan, granting them participation in the negotiations, demonstrating the **criterion of representation,** as per this study. Women successfully gained seats at the negotiating table through their innovative approach and mobilisation efforts. Their agenda for peace and gender inclusion was subsequently integrated into the meeting outcomes. Additionally, according to Bradbury and Healy (2010), women's organisations (the sixth clan) successfully secured a quota of 25 out of 245 seats.

As a result of women's involvement and to demonstrate a **'clear women's agenda'**, the Transitional Charter, an outcome of the conference, emphasised the rights of children, women, and minorities.

According to Paffenholz, Buchanan, Potter, and Prentice (2015:7), supported by Bradbury and Healy (2010:64), during the Kenyan-led Somali peace negotiations from 2001 to 2005 (the Mbgathi Conference), efforts were made to ensure meaningful participation of women. A total of 55 women were included: 21 served as officially registered observers and 34 as official voting delegates. Among them, 26 women participated as members of faction groups or the Transitional National Government. Bradbury and Healy (2010:64) highlight that each Reconciliation Committee formed during the process included a female member. Two women were part of the influential 'Leaders Committee' comprising 22 faction leaders and five civil society members. This composition indicates that women achieved some formal representational gains at the Mbgathi talks, mainly due to international backing. Paffenholtz et al. (2015:7) confirm that women benefited from **several support mechanisms** from international organisations, notably through a women's resource centre established by U.N. Women. Equipped with computers, photocopiers, printers, and internet access, this centre facilitated the production and distribution of materials advocating for women's positions to delegates, the mediator, and other key figures during plenary sessions and negotiations. As one of the few facilities with adequate equipment, the centre provided crucial material support to women's groups for their advocacy efforts. Additionally, influential figures were compelled to utilise the centre's resources, granting women **direct access** to the negotiating parties (Paffenholtz et al., 2015:7).

The Somali case study responds to five (5) of the seven (7) substantive participation criteria: a clear women's agenda, representation, access, advocacy, and support.

5.2.5 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

5.2.5.1 A protracted and pernicious conflict with multiple causes and cataclysmic consequences.

Whitman (2007:30) points out that since 1996, two consecutive wars have caused immense suffering among the population of the DRC. In May 2001, a study by the International Rescue Committee revealed that 2.5 million people had perished due to the conflict over the preceding 33 months, particularly in the eastern region of the country. Of these casualties, about 350,000 deaths resulted directly from violence, while others were due to diseases, malnutrition, and the collapse of the healthcare infrastructure (Whitman, 2007:31). Furthermore, Whitman (2007:35) indicates that the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), mandated by Chapter 5 of the Lusaka Agreement, was held from 2000 to 2003 to address the crisis. Following six months of negotiations, Sir Ketumile Masire, the former President of Botswana, was appointed as the neutral facilitator for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

Whitman (2007:35) asserts that Joseph Kabila was open to engaging with Sir Ketumile Masire as a facilitator following Laurent Kabila's assassination in January 2001. The Declaration of Fundamental Principles, signed in Lusaka on May 4, 2001, was a crucial initiative that provided the necessary momentum to restart the dialogue process and reaffirmed the parties' commitment to the inter-Congolese dialogue. Following this, Sir Ketumile Masire visited various provinces in the DRC to assist in selecting representatives for the peace talks. To demonstrate **advocacy** as one of the criteria for meaningful participation under study, additional groups such as religious organisations, human rights associations, trade unions, youth groups, professional organisations, and women's groups were included in the delegation (Whitman, 2007:34). The inter-Congolese dialogue resumed on February 25, 2002, in Sun City, South Africa, and concluded on April 19, 2002, resulting in the signing of 34 resolutions. Finally, on April 2, 2003, the Pretoria Peace Agreement was signed in Sun City by all parties involved in the dialogue.

5.2.5.2 The role of women in the DRC Peace Process

To ensure equitable representation of women, Whitman (2007) mentions that female delegates collaborated to issue an open letter to the preparatory meeting delegates in Gaborone. The letter stressed that the current underrepresentation of women undermines principles of gender equality. It reminded the DRC government of its commitments to the Protocol on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, and the SADC Declaration on Gender Equality. The letter called for adherence to the SADC quota requiring 30% of delegates to be women (Whitman, 2007:39). Changes were made to the selection process of "forces vives" candidates for the Inter Congolese Dialogue (ICD) to address disparities in representation. Whitman (2007:38-40) describes how women established temporary offices to manage their duties, holding regular meetings to discuss decisions made by the Commission. The Commission formed five groups: Political and Legal, Humanitarian, Social and Cultural, Defence and Security, Economic and Financial, and Peace and Reconciliation. Each group included women delegates and major party delegations, satisfying the **representation** criterion indicated by the researcher in previous sections. Consequently, women made up 25% of the "forces vives" delegation, resulting in 40 women participating as delegates at the ICD, comprising 9% of the total delegates (Whitman, 2007:39). This constituted powerful **advocacy** at various levels, which yielded positive results for women's representation.

According to Diop (2002:150), and in demonstrating the **criterion of a 'clear women's agenda'**, the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action, embraced by women representing various parties involved in negotiations in the DRC, facilitated increased official seats for women in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. Additionally, many women were accredited as observers of the Dialogue. Strengthening synergies between these groups bolstered the women's caucus during the Dialogue, providing a platform for strategising on how to impact negotiations effectively and engaging with national and international media to highlight the pivotal role of women in peace processes.

To demonstrate **access** as a criterion and meaningful participation in the peace process, it is worth noting that Johnson-Sirleaf led the Humanitarian, Social, and Cultural Commission, proposing specific recommendations such as establishing rehabilitation centres for women and girls affected by the war. To satisfy the criterion

of **recognition** which seeks to ascertain what constitutional and legal protections are in place, as per the study, it is important to note that the Commission also called for restoring women's dignity in the DRC and creating a National Human Rights Watchdog to enforce compliance with human rights measures. Additionally, efforts focused on reinforcing women's identity through promoting equality and ensuring their 30% participation in national decision-making roles (Whitman, 2007:40).

To ensure women's meaningful participation in peace processes, supporting those seeking to establish partnerships with international and regional institutions and agencies is essential. Partnerships can offer financial and political backing to empower women to influence decision-makers pertinent to peace efforts on the continent. As evident from the above, and to demonstrate the criterion, **'support'** as per the research study, such support was received from UNIFEM by allocating 14 women to the women's group to assist them with a plan. This allowed women to participate meaningfully in the Inter-Congolese dialogue (Whitman, 2007).

This case responds to six (6) of the seven (7) substantive participation criteria: a clear women's agenda, recognition, advocacy, representation, access, and support. The criterion of incorporation failed to emerge clearly in the study.

5.2.6 Central African Republic (CAR)

5.2.6.1 Endemic conflict from poor governance and institutional collapse

Sıradağ (2016:86-97) observes that since gaining independence in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) has struggled to build effective state institutions, resulting in persistent social, economic, and political crises. Despite the independence of French-speaking African countries, France has continued to exert economic and political influence in the region. As a result, no president has managed to achieve stability in the CAR. The CAR faced ten military coup attempts between 2005 and 2015, exacerbating its instability (Sıradağ 2016:87; Zahar and Mechoulan: 2017:1). The most debilitating and disruptive crisis was witnessed in 2013 when an insurgency led by Seleka forces, a coalition of armed, primarily Muslim groups, seized the Capital Bangui and ousted the Government of Francis Bozizé. In response to brutality by

Seleka ("alliance") forces, "anti-balaka" (meaning "anti-machete) coalitions of Christian fighters in the South were formed and launched violent attacks on Seleka fighters and Muslim civilians of the north (Centre for Preventive Action, 2024). Due to the scale of the crisis, the U.N. Security Council established a peacekeeping force United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission (MINUSCA), in 2014 that incorporated the African Union and French forces that had previously deployed to the CAR (The International Crisis Group, 2007) and labelled it a "phantom state" due to its lack of security and institutional collapse. François Bozizé's ascent to power via a 2003 coup was followed by the CAR Bush War (2004-2007) between the government and rebel forces led by Michel Djotodia.

The conflict saw partial resolution with the Birao Peace Agreement in April 2007, followed by the Libreville Agreement of June 2008, which established elections, recognised the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) as a political party, and formed a national unity government (Security Council Report: 2007; Zahar and Mechoulan: 2017). Nonetheless, Seleka group attacks resumed in December 2012, leading to a 2013 coup by Michel Djotodia, which caused widespread displacement and numerous deaths. Djotodia, who succeeded Bozizé, altered CAR's foreign and security policies, developing new political, economic, and military relations with China and South Africa and signing various agreements with these countries.

According to Zahar and Mechoulan (2017), on January 10, 2014, a conference in N'Djamena marked the end of Djotodia's regime and initiated a political transition. A ceasefire agreement, signed on July 23, 2014, in Brazzaville under the leadership of Sassou Nguesso, launched a new political process featuring nationwide consultations and the Bangui Forum. Concurrently, other mediation efforts occurred, including a conference in Nairobi organised by Sassou Nguesso, which resulted in an agreement between the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka factions, represented by Michel Djotodia and François Bozizé, respectively. This Agreement, signed on January 22, 2015, was rejected by both international partners and the transitional government.

Akpasom et al. (2016:10) note that the conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR) have severely impacted civilian populations, who have suffered under the oppression of various armed groups. It can be surmised that women and children must have been the worst affected, as has been proven in the literature review. By mid-2014, these

conflicts had resulted in 487,580 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), with 65,580 residing in the capital, Bangui. The authors attribute the ongoing conflicts and their regional security implications to the CAR's proximity to crisis-ridden countries such as Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan. Furthermore, the CAR's colonial history and strategic importance, including its extractive resources, have maintained these linkages (Akpasom, 2016:182).

Following Djotodia's resignation, the National Transitional Council elected Catherine Samba Panza, the mayor of Bangui, as interim President of CAR in January 2014. However, Sıradağ (2016:87) notes that this did not stop the conflict. President Samba-Panza was praised by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry as the Central African Republic's first female head of state since independence. Her human rights and mediation background gave her a unique opportunity to advance the political transition, unite all parties to end the violence and guide her country toward elections by February 2015 (Reliefweb: 2014).

Welz (2014:606) highlights the competition among international actors such as the A.U., Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the U.N., and, to a lesser degree, the European Union (E.U.) for control over crisis resolution, relevance, and visibility. Notably, Chad and France were critical drivers of these organisations' agendas. In the researcher's view, such competition, instead of coordination, does not help the women's course of inclusion in peace processes.

As of 2014, Welz (2014:609) observes that no well-planned peace operation, sustained long enough to have a lasting effect on the security situation in the CAR has yet been implemented.

5.2.6.2 The role of women in the CAR Peace Process

According to Zahar and Mechoulan (2017:21), since the onset of the most recent crisis, the Central African Republic has experienced a surge in community mediation efforts, a departure from previous conflicts in the country. These initiatives began during the peak of inter-communal violence in December 2013 and January 2014, often spearheaded by local figures such as state officials (neighbourhood leaders, municipal employees, gendarmes, and prefects), religious leaders, traditional

authorities (especially sultans), respected elders, traders, school principals, as well as youth and women leaders.

Attempts to seek a solution to the crisis led to establishing a transitional council that elected a woman, Bangui Mayor Catherine Samba–Panza, as the new President of the country (2014 – 2016). This marks the most significant instance of the involvement of women in the Central African Peace Process. Catherine Samba–Panza, a women's rights advocate, was also a member of the CAR Female Lawyers Association – devoted to fighting against genital mutilation and other forms of violence against women in Central Africa. She was a National Council for Mediation member, seeking national reconciliation and peace in the Central African Republic. In this regard, and a clear case of substantive **representation** by a woman, it is noteworthy that she co-presided over the National Dialogue organised within the ambit of the Peace Process.

The International Crisis Group (2014) observes that as a candidate for President of the CAR, Catherine Samba-Panza made the most articulate speech, emphasising that she was born in Chad to a Cameroonian father and a Central African mother, making her the “best example of regional integration”. She stated that she would put in place a technocratic government with no more than eighteen members and an equal number of men and women, thus clearly taking a stance for women’s **representation** in the peace process and national governance. After leaving office as the first female President of the CAR, Catherine Samba–Panza 2017 became President of the Pan-African Women's Leadership Observatory and Co-Chair of the African Union Network for Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise–Africa).

Welz (2014:603) indicates that despite Samba-Panza's plea for the disarmament of the Séléka and the anti-Balaka, fighting continued. The anti-Balaka split into a majority group, willing to negotiate, and a minority group under the tutelage of the ousted Bozizé, which continued its fight.

Her actions and the various high-profile functions and roles played within the society and institutions of public governance are arguably the reason why the Central African Republic's National Action Plan (2019 – 2022) incorporates the participation of women at all levels of decision-making, especially regarding the prevention, the management and resolution of conflicts and peace consolidation. This aligns with two criteria under study, i.e., **advocacy** and **recognition.**

According to Zahar and Mechoulan (2017:22), there were also efforts at the local level which included women. Among those were the mediation committees, also known as local peace committees or Social Cohesion Committees (Comités de Cohésion Sociale), which have undertaken several roles. These include mediating between armed groups and communities, negotiating agreements to reduce community violence, and providing early warning. They note that these local mediation committees have become institutionalised and are now present in all neighbourhoods of Bangui and many towns across the prefectures. Their functions include facilitating inter-communal dialogue and discussions with armed groups, promoting reconstruction and reconciliation efforts, monitoring security and crime in neighbourhoods or villages, and serving as an early-warning system to alert security bodies to imminent threats.

In another example, Zahar and Mechoulan (2017:24) underscore the **support** provided to the women as evidence of the presence of one of the criteria under study. In this regard, in late 2016 in Bambari, a collaborative effort with the local peace committee trained 65 women leaders on the role of women in resolving local conflicts and peacebuilding. These trained women were later involved in organising the reopening of Bambari's central market.

While there is little substantial evidence in the literature on the significant role played by women in the Central African Republic (CAR) in achieving peace in the country, Affa'a-Mindzie and Mahmoud (2014), on the contrary, opine that women's contributions to the peace process in the CAR proved crucial for external mediators sent by regional leaders to help transition from violence to political solutions.

Nganda (2021) observes that there has recently been a growth in women's groups and local networks dedicated to protecting women and children, as well as increased women's involvement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding across various countries in the region. In response to deficiencies, women have organised to amplify their voices at the regional level, demonstrating their commitment to influencing discussions on security, political, economic, and social issues within their countries and across the region. Additionally, Nganda recalls that in 2019, a meeting of the ECCAS meeting of Ministers of Gender and the Advancement of Women recommended the creation of a Network of Women Mediators of Central Africa, aiming

to enhance women's roles in peace and security matters at both continental and global levels.

This research found that the CAR case study meets four (4) out of seven (7) criteria for women's participation in peace processes: support, advocacy, recognition, and representation.

5.2.7 Liberia

5.2.7.1 Two brutal bush wars against dictatorship and a failed peacebuilding project

Masitoh (2020:77) details that the Liberian civil war spanned fourteen years, from 1989 to 2003, making it one of the most brutal conflicts in African history. Masitoh, supported by Goyol (2019), notes that the war was divided into two phases, with the first from 1989 to 1997 and the second from 1999 to 2003 resulting in human rights abuses, which left no one in Liberia safe, regardless of their age or gender. Goyol (2019) submits that over 150,000 people are estimated to have been killed, while half of the country's 3 million citizens were displaced by 2003. The latter phase, from 1999 to 2003, was particularly intense, featuring the conflict between President Charles Taylor and the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), led by Sekou Conneh. LURD, primarily comprised of Muslims, controlled much of the Liberian countryside. Another faction, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), emerged from LURD and seized several southeastern villages and cities, committing atrocities such as rape and murder. Masitoh (202:78) observes that despite peace talks initiated by LURD and MODEL in 2003, President Taylor threatened severe repercussions against them for opposing his government.

Masitoh (2020) also observes that President Taylor provided support to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002), the alliance which resulted in murder, rape, numerous civilian casualties and other human rights violations. The conflict eventually subsided through the efforts of Liberian women, notably led by activist Leymah Gbowee. The success of the women's peacebuilding efforts, exemplified by the formation of the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) in 2002, can be attributed to their comprehensive approach that

addressed societal levels, from families to workplaces. WIPNET, a West African Network for Peace Development (WANEP) branch, was founded in response to the first civil war and focused on fostering peace and advocating for human rights (Masitoh 2020:76).

Gallo-Cruz and Remsberg (2021:77) suggest that after a 14-year-long civil war that devastated the country with over 250 000 casualties, millions displaced, and a population left traumatised and in political and economic ruin, the women of Liberia received recognition for their courage and persistence in bringing warring parties together. Gallo-Cruz and Remsberg (221:78) further observe that what the movement realised went far beyond ending the war and this historic victory. From the above, it can be deduced that the women's confidence must have been lifted, giving them the energy to continue on this path and beyond. Fuest (2008) observed that the women's movement also gained organising skills that carried over into post-war peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Adams (2008), the European Commission (2006), and Gallo-Cruz and Remsberg (2021:77) all affirm that the dedication of the movement resulted in increased leadership roles for women across all levels of political office.

5.1.7.2 The role of women in the Liberian Peace Process.

Diop (2002:150) and Masitoh (2020:83) note that Liberian women took advantage of their **advocacy** tour to the peace negotiations in Ghana to meet with, and lobby international organisations and agencies for support, such as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Red Cross, and Medecins Sans Frontieres. They convinced them to visit several refugee camps and advocate for more humane treatment and increased aid for refugees.

Dayal and Christien (2020:7) and Amedzrator (2014:6) point to the involvement of Liberian women in both formal and informal peace processes (track 1 and II), which fostered strong coordination among diverse groups and women's networks. For example, they convened a one-day meeting before the formal peace negotiations to draft the Golden Tulip Declaration, a unified framework outlining women's objectives and demands, thus producing a **clear women's agenda.** This Declaration advocated

for substantial women's **representation** in Track I processes and promoted gender equality through 50 per cent **representation** of women in transitional leadership roles (Dayal and Christien. 2020:6). Mediators and parties to formal negotiations benefit when they leverage, incorporate, and address the grassroots work of women involved in Track II peace processes (Amedzrator: 2014:6).

In this regard, Dayal and Christien (2020:8) recall that women's organisations such as the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), established in 2000, and the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), provided remarkable **support** to Liberian women, conducted consultations across borders, engaging with groups in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, thereby illustrating the regional scope of the conflict. According to Goyol (2020:130), MARWOPNET brought women peace-builders from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia to urge women's involvement in peace processes and called on their Presidents to end the conflict in the region.

Dayan and Christien (2020:8) report that during these interactions, women physically blockaded the venue of the peace talks to ensure negotiators remained at the negotiating table until reaching an agreement, using their presence to advocate for peace. The authors further emphasise that this action prompted involvement with the official mediation team, and a delegation of eight women from MARWOPNET observed the 2003 Track I negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

In a related context, and to demonstrate the criteria of **incorporation,** Amedzrator (2020:6) pointed out that women involved in informal diplomacy also called for increased women's participation in post-conflict institutions, including all levels of the current and incoming Liberian government, as well as within all structures leading the peacebuilding process. This process ushered in the election of the first woman President on the African continent, Madam Johnson Sirleaf. It will be recalled that, unlike her male predecessors, Johnson Sirleaf's emergence on the scene not only silenced the guns but also led to the reconstruction of failed institutions for political, economic and social progress. Masitoh (2020:80) remarks that women also used unconventional methods, such as withholding conjugal rights from their men, to force them to conclude a peace agreement.

Dayal and Christien (2020:5) observed that the Track II peace processes in Liberia demonstrate the diverse roles women can play in peace efforts. These roles include legitimising formal negotiations by organising meetings and consultations with conflicting parties and negotiators and advocating for peace through mass campaigns and sit-ins.

The success of Liberian women in the peace process is a testament to the effectiveness of local capacities and the importance of tailoring interventions to the specific context of a community. The case of Liberia illustrates how local actors, particularly women leaders, can play a significant role in mediating conflicts and contributing to peace agreements, as seen in the 2003 peace agreement that ushered in Ellen Johnson Sirleaf following the Liberia elections.

In summary, the Liberia case uncovered five (5) of the seven (7) criteria, namely, representation, access, a clear women's agenda, incorporation, and support.

5.2.8 Sudan

5.2.8.1 Conflict over power, identity and resources with huge humanitarian consequences

El-Battahani (2010:10) highlights that the last fifty years of Sudanese history have been dominated by civil war, which has caused widespread casualties, displacement, and disruptions to education and health services. This era has led to significant destruction of Sudan's physical, human, and social capital and missed development opportunities. Supporting this view, Simons and Dixon (2006:8) describe the North-South War as part of a more extensive network of conflicts involving various groups competing over land, water, natural resources, political power, and cultural identity. Moreover, Obodozie (2023:10) and Gahungu, (2024:99) mention lessons arising from the partition of Sudan, which show that collaboration and cooperation of the citizenry must be considered from the outset from the bottom up, not from the top down, especially in the sharing of natural resources, including the substantial oil wealth, between the ethnic groups.

El-Battahani (2010:10) further explains that the conflict's causes are intricate and multifaceted, including economic, resource-based, ethnic, cultural, religious, and

international factors, each with different impacts depending on the region. He contends that these factors are politically driven by the state's crisis of legitimacy and its role in economic exploitation, which fuels competition among political elites for control of state institutions. Moreover, El-Battahani (2010) and other scholars emphasise that the conflict is also driven by marginalisation affecting not just the South but also groups such as the Beja in the east, the Fur in Darfur, and the Nuba in Kordofan, who have clashed with the Sudanese government or its militias over various issues.

In all this, women and children were adversely affected, including through mass displacement. The concern in this study is to investigate the role of women in ensuring a return to security and stability in the country.

Recognising the importance of involving women in the peace process amidst negotiations for separation, the Initiative for Inclusive Security brought together a mixed group of fifty women leaders from the governments of National Unity and Southern Sudan, along with representatives from civil society in November 2006. This consultation aimed to enhance women's participation in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the group collectively identified key objectives essential for achieving this aim (The Initiative for Inclusive Security: 2006).

5.2.8.2 The role of women in the Sudan Peace Process

In her analysis of the peace processes in the two Sudans, Ellerby (2012:7) observed that the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) contains extensive provisions, including entire sections, dedicated to addressing women's broad security needs. Ellerby (2012:7) opines that a primary factor contributing to the incorporation of gendered security concerns is the existence of a women's agenda. This agenda aims to specify the conditions under which women should participate in peacebuilding efforts, encompassing their representation in government, transitional committees, and advocacy for legislative reforms. A second factor, 'political space,' refers to the extent to which women can engage in formal peace processes. Access to this space varies along a continuum, from complete exclusion to indirect and direct participation. For instance, female members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) negotiating party had **direct access** to the talks. According to Ellerby

(2012:8), other women involved in the DPA process had indirect access facilitated by UNIFEM, which brokered their access to A.U. mediators.

Ellerby (2012:9) reported that due to Sudanese restrictions on their activism, third-party facilitators played an increasingly pivotal role in advancing gendered security. Women's groups operated primarily outside Sudan, including Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP), the Sudanese Women's Union, the New Sudan Women's Federation, and the New Sudan Women's Association. These organisations faced challenges as Bashir's regime and the National Islamic Front enforced bans on women's groups within Sudan itself.

The importance of learning from past mistakes at the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and ensuring they were not repeated in the Darfur peace process was underscored (Ellerby 2012:9). During the negotiations, UNIFEM facilitated a series of three-week meetings between gender experts and various women's groups to develop a unified agenda that dealt with priorities of women in the peace process and reconstruction in Darfur (UNICEF, 2007). This initiative enabled women activists to articulate their demands effectively, subsequently integrated into the final peace agreement, satisfying the criteria of **a clear women's agenda.**

Despite the conflicting parties' lack of gender sensitivity, Ellerby (2012:9) remarked that mediators demonstrated a gender-conscious approach, supported by the A.U.'s inclusion of women in their delegation to Darfur and their history of promoting women as mediators in conflicts such as Burundi and Liberia. International NGOs and the U.N. played crucial roles in supporting women's coalitions across ethnic lines, enabling them to engage with negotiators, mediators, and influential external stakeholders.

On Sudan and in particular, regarding the Darfur peace process between 2009 -2017, the Graduate Institute of Geneva (2018:5) states that during the Doha mediation process, mediators frequently travelled to Darfur to consult with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), particularly women's groups. As a demonstration of the criteria, **representation**, women actively participated as co-chairs at all three civil society conferences. Although specific details on the number and composition of women's delegations were not publicly disclosed, mediators informally pursued rough quotas for various population groups, including women. From 2011 to 2017, women were

involved in numerous consultation workshops during the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), comprising 7 to 34 per cent of participants.

To demonstrate the criterion of **recognition** of women's issues in the legal frameworks or policy documents, the outcome document of Doha 1 (16-19 November 2009) recommends a 30 per cent quota for women's representation in official negotiations and all levels of authority post-peace Agreement. It also calls for reviewing and reforming laws concerning women to align them with international conventions ratified by Sudan. The Declaration further urges the prosecution of individuals responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, including rape, and advocates for reparation and compensation for women victims. Itto (2006:58) points out that despite resistance among many individual Sudanese men towards gender mainstreaming, the official government stance in the South supports women's equality and empowerment.

Regarding women's empowerment, the Geneva Graduate Institute (2018:10) notes that, as **support** to the women, in line with one of the criteria for meaningful participation, mediators organised several peacebuilding workshops and trainings in Doha involving both conflict parties and civil society. Women participants in the Doha peace process benefited from these initiatives, which enhanced awareness among conflict parties about the perspectives and preferences of women activists. Support from U.N. agencies, mainly through workshops conducted by women within the U.N., assisted women activists in articulating their demands using the language of Resolution 1325.

In sum, the Sudan case study responds to five (4) of the seven (7) criteria: representation, access, a clear women's agenda, recognition, and support.

5.2.9 South Sudan

5.2.9.1 A conflict fuelled by ethnopolitical differences and strife among the elite over access to power and resources

The case study of South Sudan cannot be fully understood without considering the broader historical context of Sudan. South Sudan, which gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after a prolonged and violent conflict, illustrates this interconnected history. According to M'mboga Akala (2024:130), in Alusala et al. (2024) observed that

the two-year negotiations between Khartoum and the SPLM led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) concluded in January 2005, ending 21 years of conflict. The CPA established a six-year interim government and a referendum to determine South Sudan's political future. The Agreement allocated 25% of political seats to women and created the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare, and Religious Affairs to promote gender equality, though achieving these goals remains elusive (M'mboga Akala, 2024:130).

Wepundi et al. (2009:2) underline the CPA's fragility, evident when the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) withdrew from the national unity government in late 2007 due to Khartoum's non-compliance with wealth-sharing and troop redeployment agreements. This withdrawal was exacerbated by violent clashes between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which resulted in significant casualties. Despite multiple agreements, including the CPA, ongoing conflict persisted due to unresolved issues in Darfur and internal power and resource disputes.

Like many peace processes, according to Mading (2018), the South Sudan peace process was characterised by several agreements, including the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) mediated by IGAD between 2014 and 2015, according to the United States Institute for Peace. Gahungu (2024:98) points out that despite South Sudan's independence on July 9, 2011, ongoing civil war has marred celebrations. The conflict, which began in 2013 due to contestation between President Salva Kiir and former deputy Riek Machar, has drawn much of the population into ethnic violence. The origins of this conflict lie within the SPLM as a power struggle (Gahungu, 2024:98). Gahungu (2024:98) and Okeg (2014) highlight that by August 2015, nine peace agreements had been signed, with the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) being signed under IGAD, A.U., and other international actors' auspices. Gahungu (2024:99) notes that while these actors played significant roles, their involvement was also influenced by political and economic interests. The question to ask is whether the signatories were serious about fostering peace to ensure that the young nation of South Sudan survives and thrives.

M'mboga Akala (2024:134) recalls that before the R-ARCSS, the Addis Ababa Agreement had been signed. The Agreement, which promised equal citizenship and political participation for men and women, significantly advanced women's roles in Sudanese politics (Dagne, 2011; Arabi, 2011). However, Lakor (2014:10) condemns these agreements for often prioritising military gains over sustainable peace. Albino (2014:18) raises concerns about transparency and leadership trust, while Akol (2014) argues that successful negotiations rely on trust among stakeholders. Pendle (2014:28) emphasises the importance of the Wunlit conference[15] in addressing distrust and involving local community empowerment, particularly for women. Lo-Liyong (2014) analyses the traditional approach of the Wunlit meeting, focusing on truth-telling and community accountability.

PeaceRep (2024) summarises subsequent peace efforts, culminating in the 2018 R-ARCSS, which introduced a new power-sharing arrangement implemented in early 2020, while Githigaro (2014:128) stresses the importance of local ownership and women's inclusion in high-level negotiations. Githagaro (2014) further mentions that including women aligns with feminist peacebuilding perspectives and is crucial for enhancing the peace process in South Sudan.

In an arrangement that would later benefit the women of South Sudan, even before independence, in November 2006, amid the transitional arrangements in Sudan, the Initiative for Inclusive Security brought together fifty women leaders from the governments of National Unity (GNU) and Southern Sudan, along with representatives from civil society. This Consultation focused on enhancing women's participation in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Together, they outlined the goals of increasing women's roles as leaders in peacebuilding (Initiative for Inclusive Peace, 2006).

[15] Wassara (2019) notes that the 1999 Wunlit Peace and Reconciliation Conference is the most prominent and thoroughly documented local peace conference conducted in South Sudan during the Second Civil War. Held in Wunlit, a village in Bahr el Ghazal near the border between the Dinka of the Lakes region and the Nuer of Western Upper Nile, the conference marked a significant shift in the conflict dynamics after eight years of internecine strife. Despite its limitations, this reconciliation effort was a pivotal moment in the South Sudanese war and preceded the many and subsequent peace agreements (Council of Sudan Churches: 1999).

5.2.9.2 The role of women in the South Sudan Peace Process

Literature reveals numerous peace processes involving South Sudan, showing women's disjointed engagement in various initiatives. M'mboga Akala (2024:130), as noted in Akec et al. (2014), observes that, similar to Northern Uganda, South Sudanese women actively organised to support peaceful conflict resolution. They travelled internationally to raise awareness and lobby human rights organisations for peace through groups like the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace, the New Sudanese Women's Federation, and the New Sudanese Women's Association (Itto, 2006; Jok, 2011; Arabi, 2005).

Lo-Liyong (2014:40) in Akec et al. (2014) emphasises that achieving lasting peace in South Sudan requires grassroots involvement, including the aspirations of community members directly affected by the conflict. The author further points out that the CPA mandated that 25% of government positions be allocated to women due to women's advocacy. However, there is ongoing uncertainty about whether these positions are filled based on merit, as dissenting views often face suppression, which hampers South Sudan's progress and development.

Acknowledging the extent to which women have sought to influence peace in South Sudan, Lo-Liyong (2014) observes that women have played a crucial role as peacemakers by bridging tribal divides through marriage and influencing various societal issues. They have reached out to conflict-affected areas and facilitated understanding of the war's impact (Lo-Liyong, 2014:41). M'mboga Akala (2024:134) adds that women contributed to peace efforts subtly, even risking their lives by marrying across enemy lines to foster peace (Itto, 2006).

Lo-Liyong (2014:134) further hints that women employed various tactics to be heard, including denying conjugal rights or threatening to strip naked. Dinka and Nuer women showed resilience by visiting each other across ethnic territories to address communal issues when male leaders were uncooperative (Ito, 2006; Jok, 2014). Rabele (2024:154) acknowledges that women's contributions, often informal and not part of formal mediation, are frequently overlooked.

Rabele and Wielenga (2023:7) record that women were included as advisors and support staff to IGAD, though their **representation** was limited. According to an

interview with an IGAD mediation unit staff member, in January 2014, three of ten women served as advisors while others provided background support. The authors also corroborate observations that South Sudanese women were also represented through the Women's Bloc, though their participation was weak Kumalo and Mulleneaux (2019) and Desmidt et al. (2017)

To illustrate the **incorporation** criterion, the South's Interim Constitution mandates a 25 per cent quota for women's representation in legislative and executive roles, making it unconstitutional for any government body to exclude women from decision-making positions. Itto (2006:58) also noted that President Kiir of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has appointed women as chairpersons of the Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission. Additionally, he is said to have formally rejected any list of appointees for state and GoSS positions that do not include women. As of 2006, Itto notes that two cabinet ministers, four parliamentary committee chairpersons, and two presidential advisors were women.

M'mbog Akala (2024:131), in Conflict Management and Resolution in South Sudan, identifies evidence to substantiate the criteria of **recognition** in Article 20 (1-5) of the Interim Constitution, which guarantees women's rights to equal participation in public life, property ownership, citizenship, pay, healthcare, maternity leave, and protection from harmful practices (Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, (TCRSS), 2011). This notwithstanding, as Jok (2014) and Arabi (2011) noted, the opportunity to stabilise and advance South Sudan was missed. Although these rights were included in the Bill of Rights of the Interim Constitution of South Sudan (2005), progress relies on the support of key decision-makers, which needs improvement (M'Mbog Akala, 2024:131).

Rabele (2024:145), in Conflict Management and Resolution in South Sudan, remarks that excluding women from mediation leadership has contributed to slow progress in the mediation process in South Sudan. The author further laments the limited information available on the role of women in mediation leadership (Rabele, 2024:151).

Although women's involvement in the peace process has been acknowledged, it has been described as limited, meeting only three (3) of the seven (7) criteria for participation: representation, incorporation and recognition.

5.3. Challenges that confront women in peace processes

The above case studies were not without challenges which women had to overcome. The case studies demonstrated that women across various African peace processes faced consistent challenges, primarily stemming from limited access to decision-making roles and deeply rooted patriarchal norms. In countries like Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, DRC, CAR, and Liberia, women were often marginalised and excluded from formal negotiation tables (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Their contributions were frequently confined to unofficial or supportive roles rather than leading positions. Cultural barriers further compounded these challenges, as traditional norms commonly relegated women to domestic spheres, undermining their influence in public and political arenas (Hendricks, 2020).

Despite these obstacles, women played pivotal roles at grassroots levels, advocating for peace and reconciliation. Their efforts were often overshadowed by male-dominated institutions and leadership (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Moreover, the lack of institutional support and preparedness for women's participation in peace processes limited their impact, highlighting the necessity for more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to conflict resolution (Fritz, 2020). These challenges underscore the importance of addressing structural inequalities and enhancing support systems to empower women as crucial actors in achieving sustainable peace.

5.4 Conclusion of Case Studies

While the findings of the various case studies will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter, some broad conclusions and comparisons of the case studies are noteworthy.

The study found evidence of all seven criteria for assessing substantive participation of women in peace processes in differing degrees within the case studies. On average, all case studies met over 50% of the criteria under examination. For instance, in East Africa, Kenya and Burundi met all seven criteria (representation, recognition, incorporation, access, a clear women's agenda, advocacy and support). On the other hand, Uganda met only two criteria (representation and advocacy), while Somalia met

five criteria and failed to meet two: recognition and incorporation. In the Central African region, the Central African Republic met the criteria of representation, recognition, advocacy, and support, while the DRC met six criteria except incorporation. In North-East Africa, on the other hand, the analysis showed that Sudan met all criteria except for recognition and advocacy. In contrast, South Sudan could not meet the criteria of access, a common women's agenda, advocacy, and support.

In West Africa, the last region, Liberia, succeeded in meeting five of the seven criteria but did not demonstrate evidence of having met the criteria of advocacy and recognition.

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that women represent a population segment that consistently and disproportionately bears the brunt of conflict. They are the ones who lose children and partners on battlefields, face displacement, and suffer the loss of their livelihoods during such crises. Women are often tasked with rebuilding society and restoring its social fabric after the devastation caused by conflict. The chapter also highlights that women are not passive observers to their suffering and the processes that may alleviate it. From the perspective of the various criteria used in the study, the chapter has demonstrated that women are skilful masters in peace processes and must not be overlooked.

Chapter 6: Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of the case studies examined in the previous chapter. It distils lessons from the research results, recommends improving women's participation in peace processes, and suggests avenues for future research in this domain.

Results are depicted in tables and graphs, which are carefully commented on for clarity. Recourse to statistical methods represents an attempt to measure how well countries concerned in the case studies responded to the seven criteria for substantive participation of women in peace processes. On the other hand, an opportunity is offered to evaluate, at a glance, the performance of all nine subjects in the case studies.

Nevertheless, the researcher is mindful that the variables or criteria employed in the study cannot be solely apprehended by quantitative means. The concept of "substantive participation" and its elements of appreciation remain essentially qualitative, though they involve some quantifiable elements, like "quotas" reserved for women's representation in various governance institutions and processes.

6.2. Presentation of Research Results

This study set out to determine whether including women in peace processes is impactful. Hanna Pitkin's theory on "substantive participation" was employed in the study by evaluating seven scientifically accepted criteria for determining substantive participation. The research results are summarised and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation of criteria by country case studies & cumulative scores

Country	Criterion 1 Representation	Criterion 2 Recognition	Criterion 3 Incorporation	Criterion 4 Agenda	Criterion 5 Access	Criterion 6 Advocacy	Criterion 7 Support	Total	% by Country
Kenya	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	100.00%
Uganda	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	2	28.57%
Burundi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	100.00%
Somalia	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	71.43%
DRC	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	85.71%
CAR	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	4	57.14%
Sudan	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	5	71.43%
South Sudan	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	3	42.86%
Liberia	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	5	71.43%
Total	9	5	5	6	6	6	7		
% by criterion	100.00%	55.56%	55.56%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%	77.78%		

- Each country is assigned a binary score for each of the seven criteria as meeting the criterion or not. The overall score is aggregated, and the overall percentage over the seven criteria is calculated. Figure 2 visualises these results. Figure 3 maps only the overall percentage score obtained as described above to its corresponding country in Figure 4; the relative strength of the criteria in the study is presented.
- The study has 7 variables (criteria) and 9 countries. This means each criterion can appear only a maximum number of 9 times (9 countries). To calculate the Relative Strength per Variable (RSV), the percentage of positive outcomes per variable over nine are computed. That is the number of positive outcomes for a variable divided by the total number of countries.

6.3 Interpretation of Results

From the table above, all countries, without exception, met the representation criteria outlined in Resolution 1325, demonstrating a solid acceptance of the requirement that women should be included in peace processes. Women played active roles, including chairing, facilitating, mediating, negotiating, advising, witnessing, observing, and signing agreements, thus ensuring impactful representation.

Fifty-five per cent (55%) of countries have established constitutional and legal protections for women and their interests. These protections are best expressed in legal instruments to ensure sustainability and guarantee women's rights beyond the negotiation process.

According to the findings, 55% of countries have incorporated and involved women throughout the entire peace process, meeting the criterion of incorporation. The study reveals that women frequently used informal methods, such as public protests or lobbying male delegates, to influence negotiations. In some instances, unconventional tactics, such as denying men conjugal rights, were also employed, as seen in Liberia, showcasing the resourcefulness and determination of women to influence peace processes in various countries.

Sixty-six per cent (66%) of the countries examined had specific plans for women's protection, promotion, and participation in the peace process. Women's involvement increased the likelihood of integrating gender provisions into peace agreements. In six of nine countries, there was clear evidence of women having a defined agenda to participate in the talks or ensure that their issues were addressed by mediators or themselves. Ellerby (2016) highlights a clear women's agenda as a sign of substantive female participation.

Regarding the ease and extent of women's engagement in the official peace process, 66% of the case studies responded positively to the criterion of access.

Concerning awareness and recognition of the importance of including women in the broader security dialogue across Africa in response to the criterion of advocacy, 66% of the case studies tested favourably.

The findings revealed that 77% of the case studies reflected measures to strengthen and enhance women's involvement and impact, including sufficient preparedness and institutional support from various peace-promoting institutions.

While mediators and donors generally supported efforts to improve women's participation in most of the peace processes studied, this was remarkably not evident in the case studies of South Sudan and Uganda. Although donors were involved in both cases, there was no documented direct support for women.

These findings are further summarised and depicted in the graphs that follow:

Figure 2: Evaluation of Criteria by Country

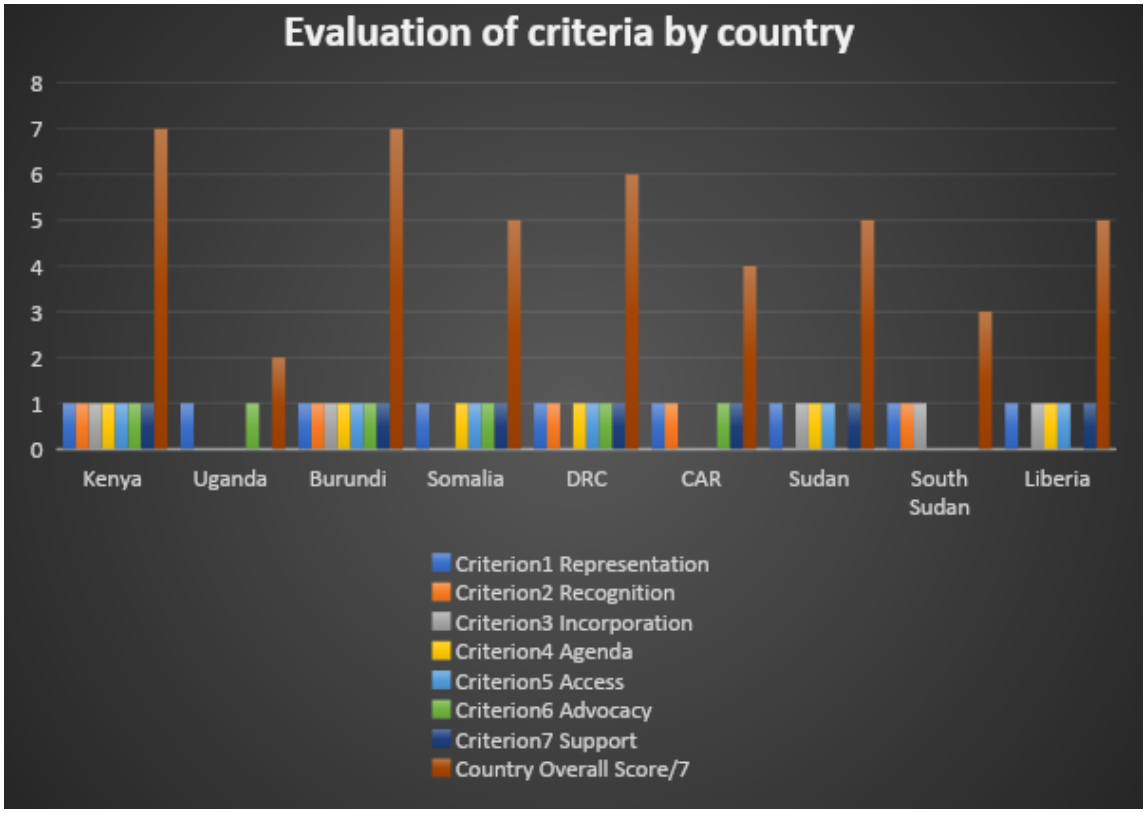


Figure 3: Country Score by Percentage

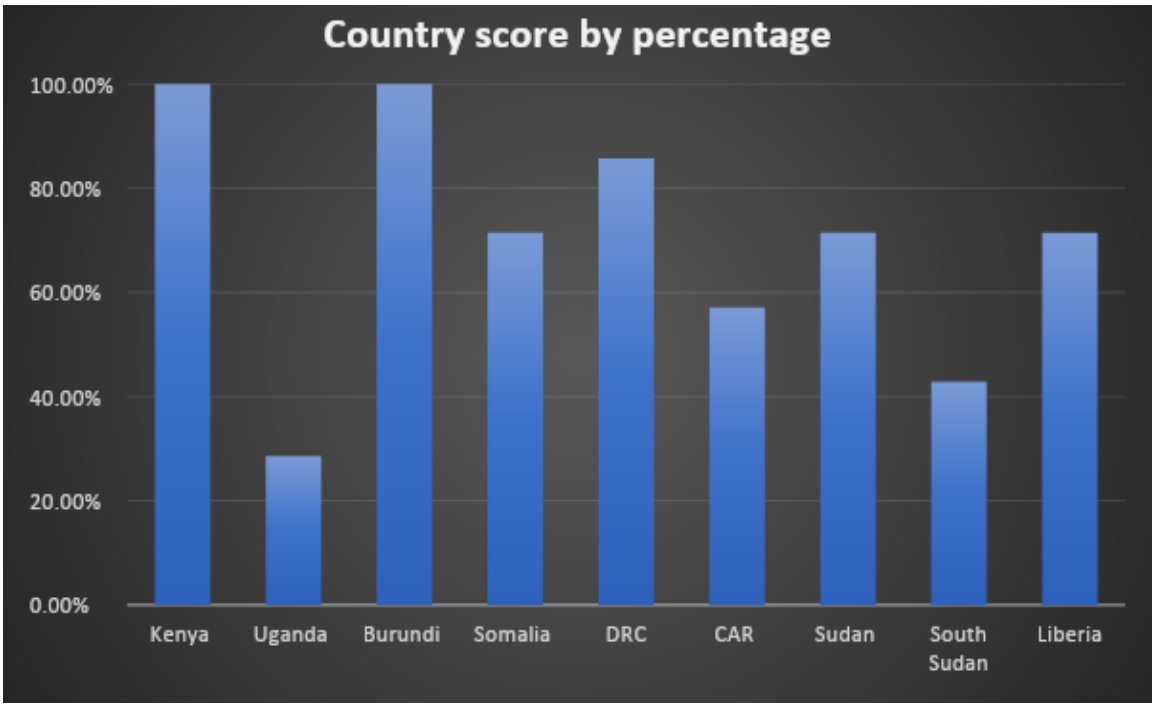
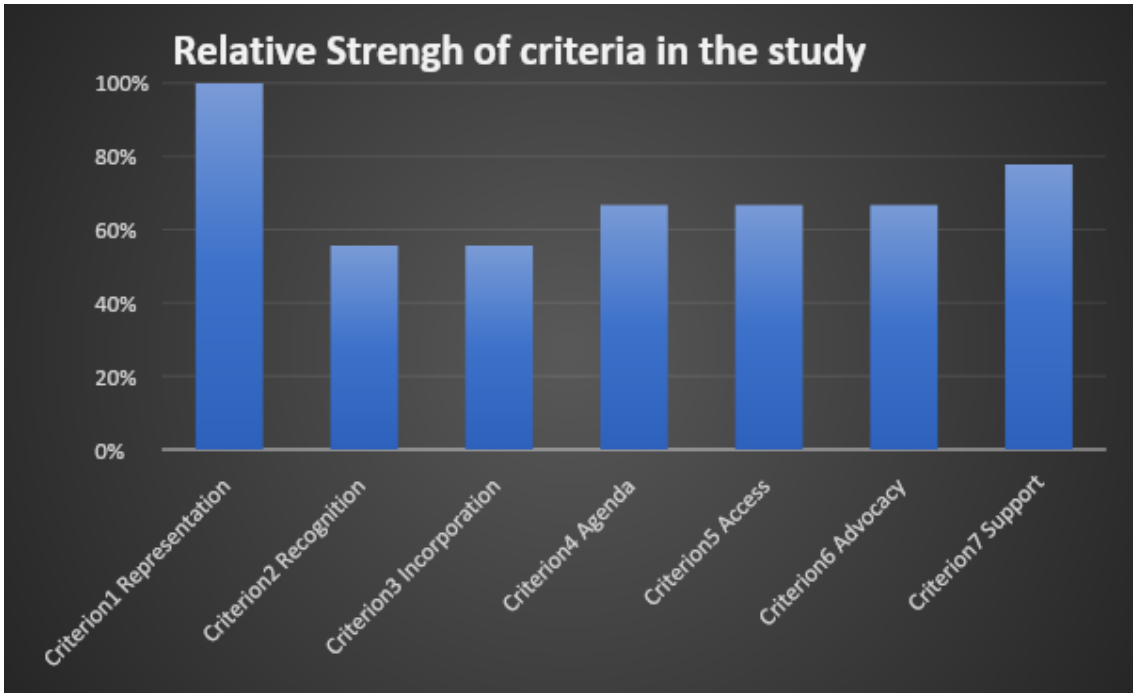


Figure 4: Relative Strength of Criteria in the Study



6.4 Responses to Research Questions

This section revisits research questions to determine if the findings produced adequate answers.

The overall question of the research is: How are women included in peace processes and is such inclusion substantive?

The following sub-questions were explored in the search for answers to this overall quest.

i) *According to literature, is the participation of women in peace processes descriptive or substantive?*

Theories and trends in the literature show that the participation of women in peace processes can be descriptive or substantive. However, this study was concerned with determining through nine case studies whether women's participation is substantive. Overall, the research findings concluded that all nine cases, which span four regions, responded to the criteria for determining the substantive nature of women's participation. The response to the second question provides evidence to support this point.

ii) *Is there evidence of the substantive participation of women in peace-making?*

The findings from the participation criteria tested against several countries, judging the country score by percentage and the relative strength of criteria in the study, suggest that women's participation is more substantive. Furthermore, the case studies above have demonstrated evidence of women's substantive participation in peace processes. Two countries (Kenya and Burundi) excelled, each scoring 100% on the criteria scale, followed by the DRC at 85%. One country, Uganda, scored lowest at 28%, followed by South Sudan at 42%. The Central African Republic, with 57%, scored just above average, while Liberia, Sudan and Somalia each scored 71%, further demonstrating that women's involvement has been substantive. In addition, evidence has shown that women have been involved in the peace process. The criterion of representation gave women a voice and emphasised the value women bring to the peace process. The research assessed the extent to which women are

represented in peace processes, decision-making, and leadership positions, thus significantly influencing the processes. Meaningful representation ensures that women significantly influence the outcomes of peace processes. Furthermore, women achieved **recognition** in those countries and ensured that their constitutional and legal protections were in place to guarantee the inclusion and safeguarding of their interests in peace processes. Recognising women's rights and contributions is crucial for establishing an inclusive political infrastructure, as evidenced by the Kenya, Burundi, CAR, South Sudan, and DRC case studies. Evidence has shown that women were **incorporated** and involved in the full range of activities associated with the peace process. Rank-and-file personnel were included, demonstrating that women's contributions are valued at all levels (see Kenya, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan and Liberia). A **clear women's agenda** or a specific plan for women, a collection of clearly defined and typically documented strategies and objectives, was presented to key stakeholders during negotiations as seen in Kenya, Burundi, Somalia, DRC and Liberia. A well-defined agenda ensured that women's participation was purposeful and strategically aligned with the broader goals of the peace process. **Access** and active involvement of women in the peace process, which aims to measure the extent to which women can engage in official peace negotiations, was demonstrated by Kenya, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, DRC and Liberia. The study looked at a spectrum of potential engagement in these countries, from complete exclusion to indirect and direct involvement in the proceedings. In line with this criterion, the study also addresses barriers women face in participating fully in peace processes. Regarding women's **advocacy** in the peace process, women were supported by leaders in Kenya, Burundi, Uganda, DRC, CAR and Somalia. In this regard, the primary conflict parties and mediators/negotiators acknowledged the importance of including women in the overarching security dialogue, highlighting the importance of championing women's involvement in the processes. The researcher added the **support** criterion for enhanced women's participation to investigate what measures exist or can be envisaged to bolster and improve women's involvement and impact on peace processes. In including this criterion, the researcher sought to respond to arguments in the literature about women's inadequate preparedness and the lack of institutional support to enable women to succeed as essential

actors in peace processes. This criterion was aptly demonstrated in Kenya, Burundi, Somalia, DRC, CAR, Sudan and Liberia.

iii) What circumstances determine whether participation is substantive?

Research has found that women's participation becomes more substantive when supported by other women, including mediators, donors, and their governments. The criterion of 'support' scored 71% cumulatively from all countries where Kenya, Burundi, CAR, DRC, Somalia, Sudan and Liberia demonstrated the support that led to women's substantive inclusion and participation in peace processes. Uganda and South Sudan, on the other hand, registered far less support for women's involvement in these processes. In some cases, the support was provided mainly by UN agencies. It enabled the women to own resources such as photocopiers and printers, often used by negotiating parties, thus bringing them closer to the negotiations. Therefore, it can be concluded that a nurturing and supportive environment that also empowers women to take more meaningful roles can foster peace in conflict-ridden situations.

iv) According to the literature, what is the reported impact on the outcome of a peace process due to women's inclusion in the peace process?

In the case studies, reference is made to the criteria of 'recognition', which is evident in various countries (Kenya, Burundi, DRC, CAR, and South Sudan). Women's agendas received recognition and were expressed in national action plans, while some were incorporated into the constitutions of some countries, as per Table 2 in Chapter 6 of the research study. Overall, this criterion scored 55% across all countries with Kenya, Burundi, CAR, the DRC and South Sudan demonstrating this criterion in their action plans while Somalia, Uganda and Sudan lagged behind. Recognition or inclusion of women specific demands into country action plans ensured that their needs were safeguarded and protected irrespective of which government came to power. While the study did not focus much on the impact of women's involvement, some scholars such as Norvedt (2021: 2) and Tripp et al. (2011:349-350) note the growing consensus that the involvement of women would improve the likelihood of enduring peace post-conflict and that placing women in crucial positions holds greater significance than simply increasing the number of women involved. Therefore, it can be argued that, for

women to be effective in their roles within the peace process, they will need to be supported through the necessary training and appointed to higher positions that will give them authority and allow them to make mistakes, while learning on the job. At the same time, they acquire the skills required to be most effective.

Thus, having addressed the questions above, the researcher presents general conclusions to the study below.

6.5 Observations and Recommendations

There were instances where substantive involvement of women surfaced through the individual actions of outstanding women. Nevertheless, the researcher observed how collective participation by women influenced the peace process.

Women's contributions sometimes went unnoticed, unrecorded, and unreported despite participating in the peace process and contributing impactfully in the background to secure a specific outcome of the peace process. Women's participation is sometimes ignored because of cultural biases and prejudices, as in the case of South Sudan. The lens from which the case is being examined runs the risk of presenting an outcome that suggests little involvement of women. In addition, evidence of substantive women's involvement is not sometimes in scholarly literature but in reports, making it difficult to use as authoritative sources.

This study revealed and underscored women's resolve to contribute to peace processes and respond to their socio-political challenges.

While UNSCR 1325 exists, no checklist compels male mediators, negotiators, or participants to ensure that the process is inclusive and that women are involved in the peace talks. A checklist, if introduced and applied each time there is a possibility of negotiations or talks about talks, would go a long way towards ensuring meaningful participation of women in peace processes.

The UN and the AU must deploy a prominent male and a female figure in tandem, never only a solo male figure. This will ensure that women's capacity as mediators or negotiators is sharpened, thus broadening the search pool for skilled women in peace processes.

While Africa has seen the appointment of more women as foreign ministers in the last 10 to 15 years, more can still be done. More women need to be appointed to higher and more influential positions to advance them into roles as mediators or negotiators. Traditionally, most mediators or negotiators have been Heads of State, while Ministers, in spite of vast knowledge, are ignored even as Special Envoys. As more women participate in and win elections, they will increasingly take on leadership roles or join negotiating teams.

Parliaments with a high number of female Members could expand the search, broaden the net, and serve as reservoirs for competent and potential women mediators or negotiators.

Additionally, women should recognise that they can draw strength and support from others in similar situations. Regular engagement in international conferences or workshops will allow them to share experiences and lessons learned.

The African Union and the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa have a list of women trained in peacebuilding. Such a list must be considered when deploying women mediators and negotiators.

Providing adequate support can significantly enhance women's success in peace processes. Third parties can assist by creating a formal women's agenda, acting as go-betweens to connect with decision-makers, and promoting an inclusive process that addresses women's security concerns and broader security issues.

The study also found that Track I processes benefit from women's involvement through Track II initiatives. Although these initiatives are not always documented, it does not mean that they do not exist. They represent a crucial aspect of women's engagement. The research highlights that women participate in all phases of the peace process, notably through Track II initiatives. The researcher advocates further tracking these less-documented processes to fully utilise women's contributions to peacebuilding.

Integrating women's Track II initiatives into formal peace processes could create a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to peacebuilding. This integration would boost local engagement and ownership, garnering support for negotiations while highlighting the perspectives and expertise of individuals often sidelined in formal negotiations between conflicting parties.

Despite the international community's investment in training and supporting women in peace processes, the issue lies not in the lack of capable women but in structural barriers that hinder their effective participation. It is crucial to continue identifying and addressing these obstacles.

Having responded to the research questions earlier and made observations and recommendations from the study, the next section draws general conclusions about the study.

6.6 General Conclusion

This study's underlying assumption is that women's participation in peace processes is desirable, demanded, and a determinant in achieving successful and sustainable peace in conflict zones.

The presumptive premise for the above is that women constitute the segment of the population that invariably and disproportionately suffers the most in situations of conflicts-women are the ones who lose their children and husbands on battlefields. They are most often displaced and deprived of their livelihood during conflicts. They are the ones left to pick up the pieces and patch up a new society and the social fabric after the devastation, disruption, and death visited by conflicts upon their populace.

As the African continent continues to witness a proliferation of conflicts, women are increasingly becoming actors in their own right and contributing substantively to peace processes. Mediators and donors also advocate for more women's involvement, persuaded that the often-elusive peace can be easily found and sustained through the inclusion and impactful participation of a major segment of the population long left in the periphery of critical processes and decision-making.

This study found that women frequently had to use informal methods, such as public protests or lobbying male delegates, to influence processes. Incorporating women's Track II initiatives into formal peace processes can create a more inclusive approach to peacebuilding. This strategy would increase local ownership and support for negotiations while amplifying the perspectives and expertise typically left out of formal discussions.

The research has equally demonstrated that a growing number of countries are taking laudable constitutional and regulatory measures to protect and promote women's interests and initiatives in conflict resolution and participation in peacebuilding. In some cases, such measures feature prominently in National Action Plans designed to promote and preserve gains and advances in the domain. This notwithstanding, it is essential that the effective implementation of such measures is monitored for both substantive participation of women in peace processes and the sustainability of peace.

The researcher believes the study has advanced academic scholarship by applying two sets of criteria, including an additional seventh criterion introduced by the researcher. The findings are anticipated to be thorough and more compelling in demonstrating women's substantive involvement in peace processes.

The researcher hopes that the perspectives gleaned through this study will help promote women's substantive participation in peace processes and inform and influence policy and institutional arrangements to leverage the contributions of all stakeholders in the collective quest for peace and security in a troubled world.

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