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**Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the
Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Case
Study of Goma**

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DECLARATION

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Summary

Lack of representation and participation of women in decision-making is a global phenomenon that has been under public discussion for many years. While women constitute half of the global population, they are underrepresented in decision-making at all governance levels around the world and continue to lack access to political leadership and resources (Delys, 2014). Women, however, continue to challenge these inequalities by applying, for example, international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1979 (UN, 1979), which affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world. According to a CEDAW (2018) Fact Sheet, 187 of 193 UN member states have ratified this convention. Feminist theory has articulated gender as an underlying factor in inequality, reinforced by patriarchy in societies where male domination continues in all public spheres, whether economic, social or political. The exclusion of women, even in areas that very much affect their lives, is a worrying trend. For women living in conflict situations, masculine hegemony is often even a threat to their lives and frequently leads to sexual violence when men and even boys use aggression to destroy and abduct civilians. O’Driscoll (2017), who states that women’s rights are often side-lined in the rush to achieve a political settlement to end conflict, argues instead that all actors have to be willing to confront and deal together with the root causes of gender-based discrimination and inequalities across multiple levels in order for a society to progress. In the North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), women live with great insecurity and in very vulnerable situations, with long-term impacts on their mental and physical health. These women’s lived experience of conflict affirms the importance of their

inclusion in any attempts at peace. Peace efforts need to be informed by their experiences, which can be used to build strategies to end conflict. Ignoring women's input to policies for sustainable peace remains, therefore, a deficiency for any peacebuilding effort, as is demonstrated in the case of DRC.

Various scholars have insisted on the significance of inclusive participation in addressing conflict. Particularly noteworthy is John Paul Lederach's (1997) approach, based on a peacebuilding pyramid consisting of three levels of leadership and the different actors who must be included in peace discussions. He argues that all actors in conflict must be included in peace discussions in order to ensure a durable peace. Yet the reality is that, despite insistent calls for their inclusion, women are generally overlooked as an important class of actors. This exclusion is based on gendered relations of power present in most societies around the globe and rooted in gender inequalities. UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSC, 2000) is a cornerstone document advocating for women's greater participation in peacebuilding. However, implementation of the WPS Agenda focuses more on supporting women as victims of war violence rather than enabling women as agents of change who can inform and shape future strategies for the prevention and achievement of sustainable peace.

This thesis, set in the context of field research conducted in North Kivu province in DRC, explores the barriers to women's participation in peacebuilding processes and their potential contributions. From the field, it is evident that women's organisations and groups are doing remarkable work in supporting women on the ground, providing them with much needed health, counselling and humanitarian services. This is not enough, however. Grassroots women and civil society groups that work with women in North

Kivu are advocates for peace, yet insecurity continues to damage their lives and confine them to destitution; for them there is no peace. Against all the odds, local women activists are organising themselves; they have established security measures, clinics for support, training in health and support for access to justice and development. They are also speaking out about injustice and the impact of conflict on women. Women's organisations are also leading discussions on peacebuilding at the community level through the Collective of Women's Associations for Development (CAFED), a women's umbrella organisation that gathers all women's groups and organisations together to share their work and plan for peace. CAFED is using the Congolese National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (DRC, 2010) to advocate for change. Through years of running their organisations and experiences of working with the community on the ground, these local woman leaders have accumulated important leadership skills. However, despite their commitment to peacebuilding efforts, they are excluded from formal peace meetings, even those held at the grassroots level. They face many challenges, given their patriarchal and conflict-ridden context, in terms of maintaining and sustaining their work, including a lack of resources, difficulties in travelling for work-related meetings and the fear of intimidation from male counterparts. Women, essentially, are threatened when they speak out and expose injustice. These challenges have been noted by the Georgetown Institute (2017), which outlines three important issues for women's empowerment within the context of the WPS Agenda: participation in economic, social and political life; justice in formal legislation and the absence of informal discrimination; and security for women within the family, community and society. Action on each of these issues is essential to integrating Congolese women in peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding processes and discussions continue to be dominated and designed by men, while women continue to suffer the consequences of conflict. The detrimental exclusion of women calls for urgent attention in addressing gender inequalities and relations of power, through education and informal and formal discussions with men, boys, women and girls at home, in the community, at society level and in all institutions.

Lederach's (1997) integrated peacebuilding pyramid provides a potential avenue for integrating women in peacebuilding globally and in the North Kivu region, yet challenges to women's integration and inclusion in peacebuilding, as identified in this thesis, must be addressed. Women can only be fully integrated by ensuring gender equality and addressing relations of power in each level of the pyramid.

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My father used to say education has no age limit. In his way of understanding, he died thinking I had already undertaken and completed a PhD, based on a graduation photograph I sent him after completing my Master's degree in 2008. This was disclosed to me by my brother Patrick during a memorial service in 2012 for my dad – and it was this discovery that led me to undertake this study of a subject close to his heart: my dad, the very proud father of five daughters, was a peaceful man who believed in the emancipation of women. Reaffirming my beliefs for gender equality, this thesis is dedicated to him as its inspiration was my true legacy from him.

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List of abbreviations

ACCORD	African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo
CAFED	Collective of Women's Associations for Development
CCEDEF	Coalition for the CEDAW
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNDP	National Congress for the Defence of the People
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FARDC	Armed Forces of DRC
FDLR	Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FNL	Burundian National Forces of Liberation
GAD	gender and development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GW	grassroots women
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LWL	local woman leader
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
MONUC	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (later MONUSCO)

MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (previously MONUC)
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NIWC	Northern Ireland Women's Coalition
RCD	Rally for Congolese Democracy
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SO	senior official
STD	sexually transmitted disease
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	UN Human Rights Commission
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	UN Security Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAD	women and development
WID	women in development
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Introduction

Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

A Case Study of Goma

According to John Paul Lederach, peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept that generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict into more sustainable, peaceful relationships (Lederach, 1997). Peacebuilding can also be described as interventions that are designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict by creating a sustainable peace. Peacebuilding activities address the root causes or potential causes of violence, create expectations for peaceful conflict resolution and stabilise society politically and economically.

The participation of women in peacebuilding has been often cited as crucial, given the gendered impact of conflict and the important role that women often play at decision-making tables. However, their exclusion from peacebuilding is a common occurrence, even when their role has been clearly stated and reaffirmed by international instruments such as the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) (UNSC, 2000). Almost two decades since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the participation of women in peacebuilding remains low at international and national levels (UN Women, 2015). A 2018 report on women, peace and security by the UN Secretary General (UN, 2018) confirms this challenge, indicating that between 1990 and 2017, in all major peace processes, women only constituted 2% of mediators, 8% of negotiators and 5.5% of witnesses and signatories.

UNSCR 1325 is often described as incorporating three Ps: protection, prevention and participation. Recent debates about the impact of UNSCR 1325, as it reaches its 20th anniversary, suggest that the protection component has received most attention to date,

with women's victimhood, susceptibility to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence and safety needs to the forefront of international efforts to engender peacebuilding. In contrast, efforts to promote the prevention and participation components of the agenda have wilted, as has been highlighted in various reports, including a global study on implementation of UNSCR 1325 (UN Women, 2015).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the participation of women in conflict and peacebuilding has been ignored, with most accounts of the conflict tending to portray men as the primary actors and women as passive, naive sufferers (Lubunga, 2016). Accounts that feature men as fighters and/or peace negotiators tend to make it difficult to identify and understand the active participation of women in peacebuilding during war. The stereotyping of women as mere victims of war has led to a failure to recognise their contributions to peacebuilding activities. Women rarely have equal access to resources, authority or decision-making prior to, throughout or after war as men do. Moreover, women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes is affected by their roles and family responsibilities. Although women are poorly represented in many aspects of peace processes and peacebuilding, there is a body of feminist scholarship that directs attention to the importance of women's inclusion and provides case studies of women's activities, often at the grassroots level of conflicted societies (for example, Naghari-Anderlini, 2000; Porter, 2007; Cockburn, 2007; O'Reilly, 2015; Ní Aoláin et al, 2018). This thesis makes an original contribution to this knowledge through this case study of the participation of women in peacebuilding in DRC.

As is well documented, while women have been severely impacted by gender-based violence associated with long-running conflict in DRC (Freedman, 2016), their involvement in any of the very partial formal peace efforts to date has been limited.

Whitman (2006) notes that there were no women participants in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement in 1999 and that only 9% of delegates at the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City in 2002 were women. Indeed, women sometimes had to barge uninvited into meetings discussing peace and security – as happened at Sun City, where Congolese women found creative ways to express their views as outsiders to the talks. While global concerns about the conflict in DRC have very much focused on women’s victimhood, e.g., DRC as ‘rape capital of the world’ (Freedman, 2016), this thesis will explore women’s efforts to promote peace and security in DRC, specifically in Goma in the North Kivu province. In doing so, the thesis will necessarily analyse ways in which cultural norms underpinning gender inequality in Congolese communities still stymie women’s full participation. The thesis will critically assess current peacebuilding efforts from a gender-sensitive perspective and will put forward arguments as to why integrating women into peacebuilding matters and suggestions as to how this can be achieved.

Background

Women have long been associated with peace and peacebuilding (Naraghi-Anderlini, 2000). This is exemplified, for instance, by the experiences of women in Northern Ireland, who struggled to be included at the negotiation table. The Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) eventually succeeded in getting elected to the multiparty talks that led to the Belfast Agreement in 1998; they also had a say in its content in terms of gender equality, human rights, civil society participation and prisoner releases (Kilmurray and McWilliams, 2011). Another example is Liberia, where women were actively and heavily involved in bringing peace. According to Brandt (2012), using a window of opportunity that opened during civil war in Liberia, a group of women launched a non-violent campaign for peace and, in doing so,

challenged traditional gender norms and mechanisms of exclusion and managed to increase their participation in formal political institutions.

Women in DRC, severely affected by war and conflict, have been at the forefront of calls for peace. Even when uninvited, they have come up with strategies aimed at participating in the decision-making table. As mentioned above, Congolese women played a critical role in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City in 2002; they made sure they were heard by performing a play that highlighted the damage done by war in DRC and singing a song of peace. These women, in fact, made it clear that peace in DRC was paramount, over any ethnic, regional or political divisions that existed (Whitman, 2006).

Each of those examples demonstrate that women can play a positive and critical role in peace efforts. Furthermore, their determination and novel way of organising clearly point to the innovation and additional value that women can bring to peacebuilding. Women should not have to barge onto decision-making tables; rather, their participation should be embraced given the perspective and value that they bring to discussions. However, as Potter (2004) points out, while the participation of women in peacebuilding efforts is justified on the basis of justice and equality, such participation continues to be low. Exploring this issue requires highlighting the importance of including women in peacebuilding and how this inclusion can be achieved.

While the rationale for undertaking this research was to make an original contribution to academic and policy debates about women and peacebuilding as sketched out above, the motivation for this research derives from my own personal and professional background. I was inspired to address this topic because of my engagement as an activist in gender equality and human rights issues for many years. This engagement began when I was a social worker in Kenya, working with the most marginalised groups in society, including

commercial sex workers, street girls and women heads of households in Kibera, one of the largest slums in Nairobi. These women's lives were blighted by traditional gender relations and power dynamics that posed insurmountable obstacles to their inclusion and empowerment (Rehn and Johnson, 2002).

My subsequent work in Ireland with AkiDwA (a migrant women's network in Ireland) and Wezesha (an African diaspora-led development organisation in Ireland) has brought me into contact with women survivors of gender-based violence in conflict contexts, many of whom continue to struggle with trauma. In view of this trauma, I researched the social and health needs of such women living in Ireland for the Irish Health Service Executive. The findings and recommendations of the corresponding report, *Healing the Wounds of War* (Wezesha, 2016), are already informing policies and services in Ireland. Since 2010, I have been involved in the development of Ireland's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs, 2019) and in monitoring and evaluating its implementation – especially the two vital aspects of meeting the needs of women living with the aftermath of conflict-related gender-based violence and promoting women's participation.

Through Wezesha, three times in the last four years I have made work-related visits to DRC where I have built connections and working relationships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and women working on the ground in Kinshasa (capital of DRC) and Goma (capital of the North Kivu province in eastern DRC). These visits and my work with women have helped me improve my understanding of overlapping conflicts and their impact on women. My experiences and activism in addressing gender-based violence in particular has led me to undertake this research, while my engagement with women in DRC and Kenya has clearly shown me how women are making huge efforts

to address conflicts, to maintain peace and to develop their communities by undertaking many social and economic initiatives.

I was left with unanswered questions, however. Why is there a lack of recognition of the role of women in societies in conflict and of their response to the violence which surrounds them? What are the barriers to their voices being heard? And how can these barriers be addressed? These are questions I intend to explore further in this thesis.

Objective of the thesis

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the roles that women play in peacebuilding in Goma, the barriers they face in relation to their full integration in peacebuilding efforts and the way their contributions can be enhanced.

Key research questions

The survey of relevant literature and the fieldwork carried out in Goma focused on answering the following questions:

- What has been the impact of war in Goma, particularly on women?
- Have there been any attempts at peacebuilding in the area and have attempts at peacebuilding at the national level had any impact in Goma? Who was included? If peacebuilding failed, why?
- What are the perceptions of peace, security and peacebuilding by women's groups in Goma?
- What has been the level of women's participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
- What are the factors that have facilitated or hindered women's participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
- How can women's participation in peacebuilding be enhanced?

Theoretical framework

John Paul Lederach's theoretical work on peacebuilding provides an influential and incisive account of how sustainable peace can be built in war-torn societies. His approach, which has been widely used in theory and practice (Paffenholz, 2013) and applies to any conflict context, is based on a pyramid model with three levels and the corresponding actors (Lederach, 1997): top leadership (political, religious and military leaders with high visibility), middle-range leadership (religious and ethnic leaders, humanitarian leaders, NGOs and academics and intellectuals), and grassroots leadership (local leaders, local health officials, leaders of indigenous NGOs, community developers and refugee camp leaders).

Lederach argues that sustainable transformative peace can only be built when all three layers are in influential dialogue and meaningful relationships with each other. Chapter 2 will outline Lederach's theory in greater detail and explain why it is so useful in conceptualising a peace that integrates the needs and interests of all actors. However, an examination of Lederach's pyramid from a gender perspective will also reveal very stark power inequalities in terms of inclusion in peacebuilding: women are generally confined to the grassroots level and have limited influence in the middle-ranging and (especially) the elite levels.

The literature on peacebuilding consistently notes that women, on account of their gender, face social exclusion in many forms. The concept of gender is used to distinguish biological sex differences between females and males from the socially produced differences between being masculine and being feminine (Holmes 2007). Selebogo (2020, quoting Newman 2002) and Oakley, (1995), defines gender as a social construct

within which biology is interpreted, with the concept of gender referring to the socio-cultural definition of man and woman and the way societies distinguish men and women and assigns them differing social roles. As well as being a characteristic of individual's identity, gender is embedded in social institutions and reproduced through divisions of power around labour, politics and sexuality Bradley (2007). In this thesis therefore gender is treated as social norms, attitudes and activities that society deems appropriate to men or women and also as a social structure which creates and reproduces gender inequality (Risman 2004). In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as in decision-making opportunities.

Generally speaking, despite cultural variations, there are consistent differences between women's and men's gender roles in relation to power; this includes access to productive resources and the ability to exercise decision-making authority (Miller, 2001). Most political and economic institutions are historically dominated by men and tailored to (elite) men's experiences. This domination of institutional power, termed patriarchy by many feminists (Hine, 2008), results in masculine forms of behaviour being idealised. As Hines (2008) asserts, the power imbalance that defines gender relations influences women's access to and control over resources, their visibility and participation in social and political affairs and their ability to realise their fundamental human rights. Consequently, women's liberation movements have challenged patriarchy and made demands for gender equality (Hines, 2008). Gender equality here refers rights, responsibilities and opportunities on equal terms for women and men and girls and boys. Gender equality recognises the diversity of different groups and ensures that the interests,

needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration (UN Women, 2012a).

In relation to conflict and post-conflict situations, Luchsinger (2010) argues that the systemic exclusion of women from the public sphere – they are very underrepresented in political parties, armies, military leadership and fighting – reflects a vicious cycle of exclusion; furthermore, the fact that women are also excluded from the processes for designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks results in insufficient attention paid to redressing gender inequalities and women’s insecurity. Cheldelin and Eliatamby (2011), in noting that the needs of women are not met and that their capacity and potential peacebuilding and recovery efforts remain unutilised, maintains that the chances of achieving sustainable peace are diminished by under participation by women, despite them forming a sizeable part of the population. Swaine (2019) argues structural inequalities and unequal power dynamics reduce the ability of women to seek political power, this takes away the political right of women and pushes them from peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, she says,

Addressing gender relations is central to a holistic conceptualisation of peace incorporating aspects of economic and social justice, equality, and human rights (pg. 7)

Women’s exclusion has been noted by many people, including the former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon (UN News, 2012), who expressed his concern about slow progress in three specific areas: women’s participation and representation in peace talks, the inclusion of provisions to promote women’s and girls’ rights in peace agreements, and increasing women’s representation in elected and appointed posts. Cheldelin and Eliatamby (2011) highlight the important roles of women as activists and advocates for

peace, affirming that women wage conflict non-violently by pursuing democracy and human rights, participating in peaceful demonstrations, and transmitting messages of peace. Cockburn (1998) underlines the role of women as peacekeepers and relief aid workers, as mediators contributing to reducing direct violence, as trauma healing counsellors and as policymakers, arguing that women work to transform relationships and to address the roots of violence. As educators and participants in development processes, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict. Kimmel (2006) has argued that women's exclusion is an outcome of socialisation processes, whereby roles are defined by society and are reaffirmed by an historical experience of unequal relations and the failure to recognise the contributions, unique insights and values that women bring to peacebuilding.

In this thesis, I focus on peacebuilding processes and the exclusion of women driven by gendered power structures, norms and male dominance. This gendering of society is very evident in the DRC context. As has been noted in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (2017) report on the country's gender profile, gender relations in DRC are determined by strong male-dominant gender norms. While reporting on DRC, Selebogo (2020) argues most formal roles allocated and played in the peacebuilding processes are dominated by men indicating an unequal distribution of power between men and women. As I observed during fieldwork, there is deep-rooted gender inequality in DRC communities for reasons associated with patriarchy, traditions and norms surrounding male hegemony and power relations. These power relations are manifested, for instance, in the way women in the North Kivu province are targeted for sexual violence. According to Freedman (2011) sexual and gender-based violence has become normalised in DRC, as "part of everyday life". Zihindula, Makhubele and Muthuki (2018) support this view, pointing out that armies and armed groups use sexual violence as a devastating tactic of

war. The ongoing and recurring conflict in the North Kivu region of DRC has led many people to leave their homes, ending up in towns such as Goma for security purposes and even though there are many national and international NGOs operating in Goma, sexual violence remains a huge problem. Freedman (2011) points out that these NGO's, while helping the victims, fail to address the fundamental causes which are rooted in traditional gender roles and representation, with low social, political, and economic status of women in Congolese society. Women voices therefore are not heard and this causes challenges in addressing the major issues affecting them.

However, based on my observations of them during my field research, Congolese women are changing the narrative and perceptions of eastern DRC as the 'rape capital of the world' (UN News, 2010). Women in DRC are changing their country from within, risking their lives to speak out and taking up the political fight against sexual violence, and Congolese women need to be taken seriously in order to bring peace to DRC (Masika, 2017). Yet, despite the great insecurity and violations of human rights they experience, women in DRC are excluded from peacebuilding processes. While the basic ideas behind Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid theory – that integrated peacebuilding drawing on all societal layers will be effective and sustainable – is a convincing paradigm for peacebuilding, my gender analysis of the pyramid will reveal the power dynamics and exclusionary mechanisms that operate against women in the Goma region. It is important to identify the barriers that restrict women to the lower levels of the pyramid and to pinpoint the kind of interventions that will empower women to engage more fully in all three leadership levels (grassroots, middle-ranging and elite) and to become genuine partners in peacebuilding. These ideas will be tested in the context of Goma in eastern DRC.

Methodology

In April 2018, I carried out field research in Goma, prior to which I had conducted a scoping study in Kinshasa during a work-related visit in 2015 (see Appendix 9).

The objective of the scoping study was to get a sense of the situation of women in DRC and of how they have been affected by overlapping conflict, as well as the policies and practices supported by agencies for peacebuilding and recovery. I identified six key organisations to meet for the purpose of the scoping study, and meetings – held with either heads or senior officers – were finally held with four: DRC Ministry of Gender and the Family, Christian Aid (which works at the national level and has offices in both Kinshasa and Goma), the Independent National Electoral Commission and Wezesha DRC (see Appendix 8). These meetings were highly insightful regarding the situation of women in DRC. In addition, women I met during a two-day convention at that time added further insight and perspective to this study.

The field study, based on qualitative research, was carried out in Goma with the support of two gatekeeper organisations, namely, Christian Aid and Caritas International Goma. It focused mainly on grassroots women living in Goma and women leaders of the organisations that support them, most of whom had been displaced due to overlapping conflicts in the North Kivu region.

The research methodology and questions were approved by the Irish School of Ecumenics Research Ethics Committee before the visit to DRC (see Appendix 1). Research ethics clearance was particularly important for my work given that, while discussion on peacebuilding may not be sensitive, the subject can trigger trauma due to negative experiences of violence during conflict. Both Christian Aid and Caritas

International Goma assisted not only in developing the questions but also in ensuring backup support for the participating women, in many of whom trauma was evident, mainly because they had experienced or witnessed abuse and have lost loved ones and because violence was still ongoing. These women, as well as receiving support, have been meeting in groups to share their experiences, to advance small economic enterprises and organise solutions to restore security in their villages.

Eight focus group discussions were held with grassroots women who had relocated to Goma due to ongoing conflict within the North Kivu region and five interviews were held with local women leaders, mainly activists within the region and many heading small organisations. A further eight interviews were held with targeted senior professionals working with international and national NGOs in providing support to women in the region. For the discussions and interviews, I explained the purpose of my study and guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, who formally granted their consent. All interviews and focus group discussions were digitally recorded.

Various themes were covered that included the women's understanding and analysis of conflict and violence in the region, perceived causes of the conflict and of the impact on women, views and experiences of the involvement of women in peacebuilding attempts and general perceptions of the WPS Agenda (as derived from UNSCR 1395) and of factors influencing women's participation.

The field work methodology, findings and analysis will be discussed in greater depth in later chapters and will be used to bolster the argument for integrating women into peacebuilding for sustainable peace.

Thesis structure

This thesis is structured in 7 chapters. **Chapter 1** broadly discusses conflict, peacebuilding, gender and women in peacebuilding, drawing on the existing literature on these topics. It also examines international instruments and mechanisms designed to ensure gender-sensitive peace and security, paying specific attention to UNSCR 1325. ‘Participation’ is one of the core pillars of the UNSCR 1325 ‘Women, Peace and Security’ agenda, but critical perspectives on 1325 as a vehicle for women’s participation will be introduced and discussed, with attention to the gendered barriers that hinder women’s inclusion. **Chapter 2** provides the theoretical framework for the thesis, mainly focusing on Lederach’s (1997) peacebuilding pyramid and his argument that peacebuilding must be related to the plural nature of a conflict and so requires initiatives at many levels. Explored first are the pyramid levels of leadership (and the corresponding actors) and the advantages of a pluralistic peacebuilding approach to conflict transformation. That analysis is followed by a feminist critique of Lederach’s model that explores how gendered power inequalities constrain women’s abilities to inhabit all levels of peacebuilding and outlines why integrating women in peacebuilding is essential to creating sustainable peace. **Chapter 3** provides a background to the conflict in DRC, drawing on existing research and examining the causes of war, conflict and violence in DRC and the limited success of attempts at peace to date. **Chapter 4** and **Chapter 5** describe the research methodology and present field research findings from Goma, respectively. **Chapter 6** analyses the field research findings in light of Lederach’s theory. The thesis concludes with **Chapter 7**, which proposes recommendations on how to integrate women into peacebuilding with particular reference to the situation in DRC.

Chapter 1

Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: A Critical Analysis of 1325

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, a wealth of academic research, feminist advocacy work and international policy frameworks have emerged that recognise the gendered nature of conflict and the related importance of bringing women's perspectives and voices to bear on all facets of peacebuilding – from conflict prevention, to the protection of civilians, to participation in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction. A cornerstone of the international community's response to this work was the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 and its evolution into a family of related resolutions over the last two decades. The call for women's participation in all aspects of peacekeeping, making and building is a central pillar of this resolution (UNSCR 1325, 2000).

This chapter first sets out the background to the adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000 and the thinking behind it on why women's participation matters. However, twenty years after its adoption there are criticisms of how the participation of women is conceptualised in the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and although the Resolution has existed for two decades, there is still a very noticeable implementation gap, especially in relation to encouraging women's participation in peace processes and peacebuilding. Gendered power inequalities continue to prevent women's full participation and while they are often active in grassroots peacebuilding, their contributions are not recognised in the conventional power politics that surround peace processes. These points will be introduced in this chapter and then further elaborated in chapter 2, where Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid which identifies the contributions of different societal

layers to peacebuilding, will be subject to a gendered power analysis which will reveal the barriers to women's participation in and beyond the grassroots.

1.2 International calls for women's and participation in peacebuilding

Since the early 1970s women around the globe have become more aware of the denial of their rights and have held several international women's conferences under the auspices of the UN to address ongoing inequality, discrimination and injustice. Previously, and according to Bunch (2006), the growth of second-wave feminist movements in the 1960s led to the evolution of gender planning and development theories that focused on new analysis and insights into the status of women in societies relative to men, bringing new approaches and perspectives beyond women's equality in the domestic sphere (women's roles as wives and mothers) to occupy the global stage. This feminist critical thinking led to the concept of gender mainstreaming (Bunch, 2006), which is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. The concept was first introduced at the 1985 UN Nairobi World Conference on Women and was later established as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995a).

Beyond the development sphere, further advances in the inclusion of women and gender perspectives in international thinking and policy emerged in the same time period in relation to human rights, security and peace. Four major World Conferences on Women were held between 1975 and 1995, commencing in Mexico in 1975, (established as International Women's Year), at which a World Plan of Action for implementation of its objectives was created. Since then, the 8th of March has been celebrated as International Women's Day. The Second World Conference on Women, held in Copenhagen in 1980,

reviewed progress in implementing the goals of the previous conference, focusing on employment, health and education. At the Third World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985, governments of 157 countries adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (UN, 1985) which outlined measures for achieving gender equality at the national level and for promoting women's participation in peace and development efforts. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, was a watershed in the global agenda for gender equality, with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995a) adopted unanimously by 189 countries. This document, essentially an agenda for women's empowerment, is considered a key global policy document on gender equality that sets out strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality in 12 critical areas, including violence against women, women and armed conflict and women in power and decision-making.

The work of these UN conferences and civil society provided the background for the key document in terms of legitimising calls for women's inclusion in peace processes and peacebuilding i.e., UNSCR 1325 passed in 2000 and later a whole set of WPS (Women, Peace and Security) follow-up resolutions. According to the Global Study report by UN Women (2015), the adoption of UNSCR 1325 can be attributed to several factors, including the efforts, determination and personal convictions of the permanent representatives of Bangladesh, Namibia, Canada, Jamaica and Mali and the influence of women's NGOs carrying forward the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995a) – all working together to assess the UN's overall approach to peace operations.

1.3 UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Adopted in October 2000, UNSCR 1325 (UNSC, 2000), acknowledges that armed conflict has a disproportionate impact on women and girls even though most are not directly engaged in combat. It seeks to mitigate the impact of war and conflict on women by calling on states to protect women in warfare and promote their participation in various peace and security processes, including peace negotiations, constitutional and electoral reforms and reconstruction and reintegration.

UNSCR 1325 is a remarkable achievement since it represented the first time that the UNSC specifically addressed the impact of war on women and girls and their central role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. As mentioned above, UNSCR 1325 builds on the UN's Women's Conferences (especially that held in Beijing in 1995) but also on a body of international humanitarian and human rights laws and legal instruments – including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (UN, 1979), an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly – in providing the basis for achieving equality between women and men by ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for election as well as education, health and employment.

UNSCR 1325 is often described as resting on four inter-related pillars (UNSC, 2000): participation, prevention, protection and relief and recovery. All four are integrally linked to each other.

The first pillar, referring to participation, addresses the inclusion of women in peace processes and peacebuilding and emphasises the need for more female special representatives in order to expand the role of women in peacekeeping. UNSCR 1325

urges states to increase women's participation at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes and to appoint more women to senior levels in field missions, as military observers, civilian police and human rights observers. Furthermore, underlined is the need to expand gender-sensitive training for UN personnel and missions to bolster future long-term participation and to increase funding for women's groups – a key point, since many women groups and organisations doing vital work operate with little or no resources. A UN report (2019) recommend the promotion and meaningful participation of survivors and members of civil society, including women's organizations and community leaders and argued their participation is central in all conflict prevention and response efforts. UNSCR 1325 recognises that women are poorly represented in all sectors of the society and is based on the idea that women's full participation in peace processes can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. Some of the reasoning behind this thinking will be discussed later in this chapter.

The second pillar deals with the prevention of all forms of structural and physical violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, against women and girls in conflicts, the pillar calls for improving intervention strategies in the prevention of violence against women, including by prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law. According to a UN Women report (2017a), worldwide 35% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate-partner or non-partner violence and in times of conflict, the incidence of these forms of violence can escalate as sexual violence is used in war (Kronsell and Svedberg, 2012). Additionally, women and girls living in conflict zones are often targeted during conflict and are sexually abused or abducted. According to True and Davis (2015) there is a need to address the significance of

gendered inequalities and discriminatory practices in societies. They emphasise the importance of having gender analysis to help explain widespread and systematic SGBV, which they argue is crucial for prevention at the point of escalating violence and in peacebuilding.

The third pillar specifically focuses on protection women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations, such as in refugee camps. As noted by Maedl (2011) sexual violence is often prevalent during war and conflicts, sometimes used as a weapon of war. The emphasis on protection women and girls is to ensure their safety, physical and mental health and economic security and respect for their human rights, including the prevention of, and ending of impunity for, conflict-related gender-based violence).

The final pillar, which focuses on relief and recovery in conflict and post-conflict situations, aims to improve outcomes for women and the broader community and to ensure that women and girls' specific needs are met, for example in gender sensitive approaches to the experiences of women and girls in refugee camps (UN Women, 2012a). The pillar calls for advancement of relief and recovery measures to address international crises through a gendered lens.

Further to the adoption of UNSCR 1325, several more resolutions have been adopted to bolster specific aspects of the agenda (see Appendix 4 for a full list of global Women, Peace and Security commitments and instruments). These include UNSCR 1820 (UNSC, 2008), which notes the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and calls on member states to protect women from gender-based violence during conflict; UNSCR 1888 (UNSC, 2009a) establishing a UN Special Rapporteur on Sexual Violence in Conflict; 1889 (UNSC, 2009b), strengthening participation by calling on member states to address

obstacles to women's participation; UNSCR 1960 (UNSC, 2010) strengthening 1820 by creating mandatory reporting mechanisms for sexual violence in conflict; UNSCR 2106 (UNSC, 2013a), pressing for an end to impunity for CRSV; UNSCR 2122 (UNSC, 2013b) initiating the 15 year review of implementation; UNSCR 2242 (UNSC, 2016a), urging resourcing of implementation of the WPS agenda and adoption of a gender perspective on countering violent extremism; UNSCR 2467 (2019) recognising the continuum of sexual violence and the importance of services for victims and UNSCR 2493 (2019) urging full implementation of the Resolutions as the 20th anniversary approached (<http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>). Combined, these ten resolutions, including UNSCR 1325 as the foundation document, encompass the 'Women, Peace and Security' (WPS) Agenda. Member states of the UN are tasked to adopt the WPS agenda in their domestic and international politics through creating National Action Plans, however as of August 2020, only 86 UN Member States (45% of all UN Member States) have UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan, Peace Women (2020). As is clear from the above, UNSCR 1325 is rooted in the premise that women's inclusion in the form of their presence and participation in peacebuilding processes and their perspectives and contributions to the substance of talks will increase the chances of attaining viable and sustainable peace (UNSC, 2000). While the WPS family of Resolutions is premised on the assumption that women's participation matters, it is important to consider the thinking behind this assumption and make a case as to why women's participation matters.

1.4 Theorising why women's participation matters

Arguments that women's participation matters in peace processes and peacebuilding can be based on a number of theoretical (and in some respects contradictory) positions about

women's relationship to peace. Russell and O'Flynn (2011), for example, suggest that there are usually four different types of arguments made for including women in peacebuilding: a 'nature' argument that stresses women's inherent peacefulness; a 'justice' argument that recognises women as 50% of every population; an 'interest' argument that suggests women as a group have shared interests to realise in post-conflict processes and; a 'role model' argument that considers the inclusion of women will lead to eventual change in gender norms by encouraging girls and women to get involved in political life.

Russell and O'Flynn's first 'type' equates to the 'women and peace hypothesis' which suggests that women, broadly speaking, may have a natural or genetic proclivity towards peace (Bronéus, 2014; Abduljaber and Kalin, 2019). This notion is problematic, however, as it is evident that women are a diverse group and may have a range of positions in relation to conflict, as victims, perpetrators or actors (Moser and Clark 2001). The second type ('justice') links to imbalances of participation between men and women and highlights that women are half of the world's population, therefore recognising women participation is a matter of equity and can foster democracy and compel gender equality. This idea is supported by Cockburn (2007), in noting that a peace process cannot be seen as democratic and responsive to all citizens without the equal participation of women (around half of a nation) in formal negotiations. The 'justice' argument recognises women should not be subject to systemic discrimination and that they should have the same civil and political liberties as men and in turn this should help with how decisions are made and the quality of those decisions. Within this justice argument, women's political participation is expected to promote gender equality by challenging the existing social and political structures that perpetuate a culture of women's subordination in both the private and public sphere. However, according to Russell and O'Flynn the problem

with the justice argument is that it assumes women in power are homogenous and that they will all pursue the same agenda. This does not recognise women's complex identities and the idea that they might represent divergent views amongst themselves. The third 'interest' type, associate's women's participation within parliament or government as having a positive influence to furthering 'women's interest' in general. The argument here is that women have shared interests based on common experiences (such as child bearing, care work or GBV) and that they are best placed to safeguard and promote their own distinctive interests, as opposed to men claiming to know the best interests of women. Both the 'justice' and 'interest' arguments make a valid point that unless women are physically present in peace negotiations, parliaments or governments, their interests will not be adequately addressed. However, critics of these kind of arguments point out that women are a diverse group which make it harder for their multiple and contingent interests to be identified and accommodated. Finally, in the fourth argument Russell and O'Flynn suggest their own preferred stance which is that women's political participation creates role models which will shift the idea that politics is a male domain. This should lead to more women and girls engaging into discussion on women's political participation, inspiring more of them to engage in political activity. For Russell and O'Flynn the strength of this argument is that it recognises both unity and diversity. Women are seen as one of the biggest and most visible groups in any society, yet interests and identities among women may differ. However, increasing numbers of women in a political system can bring long term change in gender norms and in societies riven by ethnic identities can introduce other identities into the political equation. As Russell and O'Flynn point out, there are difficulties with some of the common arguments for women's inclusion in peacebuilding because they rest on universalised claims about women as a group. However, there is little doubt that peace processes and peacebuilding

cannot aspire to be just, equitable or socially transformative if women's participation is not part of the process. Peacebuilding, as currently understood, must be inclusive and this requires women's participation, in order to realise broad understandings of peacebuilding that have been emerging in recent decades.

1.5 Understanding peacebuilding and the importance of women's inclusion

One seminal thinker in the field of peace studies, Johann Galtung (1996), describes peace in negative and positive terms. Thus, negative peace is the absence of direct forms of physical violence, i.e., it is negative in the sense that something undesirable has stopped happening. This is undoubtedly important because of the toll direct violence takes on people and societies. However, a more 'positive peace' includes the restoration of relationships and the creation of social systems conducive to human and societal advancement, therefore if peace is going to be more than absence of violence as described by Galtung, positive peace has to be about social transformation, the integration of human society and the full attainment of basic human needs. Arguably, both negative and positive peace require a gendered approach that takes women's experiences and participation seriously.

Peace in Galtung's framing is more than the absence of war, yet peace – both negative and positive – is most obviously absent when war, conflict and violence break out, since these elements always create situations for civilians of direct physical harm and also of insecurity and need, often leaving them destitute. According to Dumasy (2015), some 1.5 billion people are estimated to be living in countries affected by violent conflict that shatter lives and stunt development. As argued by True and Davis (2015) women are often exposed to more extreme forms of violence, as armed conflict and the presence of

weapons legitimises high levels of brutality and even greater levels of impunity especially when war and conflict goes unresolved.

In relation to positive peace, in recent years, international organisations and communities in conflict seeking ways to establish peace have embraced the concept of peacebuilding. The aim of peacebuilding is not only the immediate cessation of violence but also societal transformation for development, security, social and economic justice and reconciliation Dumasy (2015).

Peacebuilding can be defined in many different ways, with scholars, policymakers and field practitioners having different conceptions of the process. Influentially, in his *Agenda for Peace* (UN, 1992), former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined peacebuilding as ‘the process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict (1992, p. 8).

According to Lederach (1997), peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept that generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict into more sustainable and peaceful relationships, further emphasising that peacebuilding centrally involves the transformation of relationships and cultures by ‘sustainable reconciliation’ that requires structural, cultural and relational transformations. Peace, therefore, is not merely a stage in time or a condition, but a dynamic social construct. As a ‘scholar-practitioner’ with ongoing engagement in, and facilitation of, practical peacebuilding in recent times, Lederach has brought many insights to peacebuilding.

Lederach (1997), in arguing that a successful peacebuilding strategy must reach all components of society and not just focus on high-level political actors, describes actors and issues in conflicts in terms of levels of leadership (top, middle-ranging and grassroots), illustrated using a pyramid. It is this peacebuilding model which I will discuss in depth in Chapter Two, paying particular attention to gender dynamics across the levels of the pyramid.

Much of the literature on the subject describes peacebuilding as an important process that should be based on positive relationships. As Porter (2007) says, ‘peacebuilding involves all processes that build positive relationships, heal wounds, reconcile antagonistic differences, restore esteem, respect rights, meet basic needs, enhance equality, instil feelings of security, empower moral agency and are democratic, inclusive, and just’ (p. 34). Following on these calls for peace efforts to be democratic, inclusive and just, Brandt (2012) argues that peace requires the equal involvement of men and women to rebuild a nation following an armed conflict. Furthermore, Ford (2015a) points out that women make a measurable difference in the quality of peace negotiations in raising key economic and social issues, including education, health and justice.

In addition, many researchers have noted that women in communities during conflict are often doing the work that lays the basis for this positive peace and reconciled relationships. Porter (2004), for example, in her study on women, civil society and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland observed women’s first-hand experience of supporting and building communities during and after the conflict. She noted that women were more committed to finding long-term solutions to conflicts than men and had acquired qualities, including negotiation and bargaining skills, that gave them a greater potential for resolving disputes and conflicts, transcending pain and suffering and developing a

predisposition to peace. This is an entirely logical point; because women tend to be deeply invested in the welfare of their families and communities, they want war to stop and life to return to normal. They can bring peace by playing their part as custodians of the future of their community, as illustrated by an appeal by Leymah Gbowee to the then president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, on behalf of Liberian women:

‘We are tired of war. We are tired of running. We are tired of begging for food. We are tired of our children being raped. We are now taking this stand to secure the future of our children. Because we believe, as custodians of society tomorrow, our children will ask us, mama, what was your role during the crisis?’ (Gbowee 2011, p.141)

Rehn and Johnson (2002) discuss how, in struggling to ensure peace for themselves and their families, women, in addition to articulating and representing their families, organise groups for change in their communities, send human rights reports to organisations around the world, act as relief providers and peacekeepers, organise dialogues and build relationships with other women and men across the lines of conflict. There are many compelling examples of initiatives where women organise themselves and develop strategies to ensure their inclusion in peace processes and negotiations.

In Northern Ireland in 1996, Catholic and Protestant women joined forces to found the NIWC – one of the few organisations that worked across Catholic and Protestant lines – to ensure women’s representation in formal peace negotiations. Kilmurray and McWilliams (2011) note that the non-sectarian nature of the NIWC meant that its leaders were instrumental in developing the language of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, specifically in reference to victims’ rights and providing for the reintegration of political prisoners and mixed education and housing. Since the main parties to the conflict had overlooked such issues, the NIWC ultimately contributed to advancing the social cohesion needed to

sustain peace. Thus, it could be said that it was women who helped the Belfast Agreement take shape and take hold.

Another good example is Liberia where in 2003, during the Second Liberian Civil War, the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement forced a meeting with the then president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and secured his promise to attend peace talks in Ghana to negotiate with the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy rebels. A delegation of Liberian women applied further pressure on the warring sides at the peace talks; one particularly imaginative action was 200 women wearing white, dominating the conversation outside the negotiating room and threatening to remove their clothes any time the negotiators tried to ignore them by leaving. Their actions, which forced an agreement during the stalled peace talks, led to peace in Liberia (after 14 years of civil war) and subsequently brought to power the country's first female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Gbowee, 2011).

As can be seen from the above, many studies portray women as the principal driving forces in peace initiatives and as generally showing a keen interest in peace processes, forwarding a range of reasons in favour of women's participation. They range from the need to acknowledge women's complex roles in conflicts, to their experiences sustaining families and communities, to their wider aspirations to achieve more gender justice in post-conflict societies as part of a positive peace. Whatever the reasoning however, the rituals of peacebuilding often preclude women's full participation. When peace negotiations and rebuilding destroyed economies arrive to the level of formal processes, women fade into the background. Other peace-related activities by women, such as reviving local economies and rebuilding social networks, are seen as peripheral to formal peace mechanisms and consequently have received little recognition. Arguably, with the

exclusion of women's voices the chances of achieving sustainable peace are diminished (McCarthy, 2011).

1.6 A critical perspective on 1325 as a vehicle for women's participation

This chapter is making an argument that women's participation matters if negative and positive peace are to be established in conflicted societies. UNSC1325 seems to be the key international normative framework that can be used to ensure this happens. The Women, Peace and Security Resolutions promote women as participants and expect signatories to ensure their presence.

Yet despite some indications of progress, UNSCR 1325 still has not delivered on its stated objectives. A 2015 survey on UNSCR 1325 after 15 years (UN Women, 2015) showed that it had little impact on women's role in peace processes; under half of peace agreements signed in that period made any references to women, while, in 31 major peace processes underway between 1992 and 2011, only 9% of negotiators were women and only 3% of UN mission military were women, and these were mainly employed as support staff.

While UNSCR 1325 has set a precedent advocating for women's participation into peacebuilding, this global policy has however been critiqued by other scholars who note that the UN Resolution, despite its merits, somehow fails to address the gendered power imbalances that keep women out of formal peacebuilding. Pratt and Richter point out that the general or universal principle of women's inclusion into peacebuilding can remain a mere recommendation, thus ineffective if structural factors such as poverty or widowhood are overlooked. Unfortunately, WPS sets only general guidelines without touching into particularities (Pratt and Richter, 2011). In DRC, as will be explored further

in this thesis for example, the economic, social, environmental and cultural factors could be a major hindrance to women's participation in peacebuilding, as evidence already shows their absence in most of societal power structures. Women in DR Congo are hit by poverty since they are continuously discriminated against from employment access, and those whose partners lost their lives during conflicts and war are even in most precarious conditions. The current conflict context of Goma, as the field research will indicate, would obviously question the practicality of UN resolutions given its particular socio-cultural, economic and environmental challenges. Overall, Hudson suggests that WPS has done little to challenge structural or root causes and power hierarchies that perpetuate women's inequality and insecurity, arguing that gender relations are about unequal power relations and that peacebuilders should acknowledge the political nature of such gender dynamics if participation is to be realised (Hudson 2016).

As well as the practical criticisms of how far the WPS agenda has enabled change for women's participation in peace building, other critics suggest that the agenda itself has not done enough to challenge stereotypical views and empower women as agents of peace. Otto, for example, notes the fact that the lack of references to women's rights and equality in WPS reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. She argues that women are represented as dependent and defenceless victims needing military protection rather than as equal partners in dispute resolution, which she says, "exposes the gender conservatism of the Security Council's emerging social agenda" (Otto, 2010, 254). Ni Aoláin (2017) likewise underlines how women are primarily treated as victims not as autonomous actors and that WPS fail to challenge the war system from a feminist perspective. The focus on the protection from sexual violence pillar does indeed seem to have overtaken interest in participation, as the focus of the majority of the nine follow up Resolutions in the WPS

‘family’ shows (see page 20 above). Many critics of how the WPS agenda has evolved point to the ways in which focus on the protection pillar has swamped commitments to enhancing women’s participation. NATO’s view on WPS, for example, are not above such critiques. For this intergovernmental organisation there is an emphasis on, programmes funded on the basis of ‘Women as victims of sexual violence’. As the centre-piece element driving conceptions and programmes, they acknowledge the prevention and protection pillars for victims/ survivors as central (NATO, 2019, pg. 44), yet the predominance of this approach undermines greatly the perceptions of women as change agents or actors. This assumption of looking at women solely as victims undermines their opportunities for participation. With such an approach, men will always be considered as protectors and women seen as the weaker sex. Kirby and Shepherd (2016) also question the emphasis on prevention and protection rather than on participation of women. For them, this approach narrows the WPS agenda and neglects the significance of articulating women as agents of change in conflict and post-conflict environments, and as both rights bearers and rights-protectors in peace and security governance. They say the focus on the prevention of violence and the protection of women from violence risks diminishing the importance of the elements of the agenda that create meaningful opportunities for women’s political and social empowerment through their participation in peace and security governance.

While these criticisms have merit, it is important to recognise that the WPS ‘pillars’ are intrinsic to each other and, as the case of DRC will show, without protection, participation can become a moot point. Sexual violence in eastern DRC, for example, is widespread, systematic, and frequently weaponized by multiple different groups. As noted by Daudu and Shulika (2019) the theories that reflect the situation in DRC are that the “perpetrators

of sexual violence seek to systematically crush the essence, norms and values of people by crossing very delicate social boundaries, thereby dominating victims and their communities.” They further argue that through the act of sexual violence, armies are able to leave a long and lasting trauma on the survivors and their communities.

Protection of women from such violence is important in itself but is also important in relation to the other pillars of 1325. Women’s ability to participate is impacted by the existence of conflict related SGBV. This has clearly been demonstrated in conflict situations where women’s participation is limited due to many reasons, which include lack of income and fear of ongoing conflict. Another perspective on this linkage is offered by Zihindula, Makhubele and Muthuki (2018), who state that in order to end sexual violence against women, their full legal, socio-economic and political rights must be ensured. To support their independent voices, support and protection should be provided to ensure they are included. Albutt (2017) points out that women living in conflict and with the consequences of SGBV face many challenges which prevent them from participating. Many women have to live with shame and fear, some abandoned by their husbands and families, while others fear speaking out or seeking justice due to fear of retaliation. While women and girls continue to be sexually violated, the fact that perpetrators may go unpunished denies women’s and girls’ right to justice and creates fear. This clearly shows protection and prevention are important for the participation of women, in particular for women in conflict zones, as will be explored in the chapters to come.

A further criticism of how the participation pillar has evolved questions just how seriously the UN is prepared to hear women’s voices and take their participation seriously, especially if women refuse to conform to the ‘positive peacemaker’ stereotype

expected of them in interactions with peacebuilding. The example of two Iraqi women activists to the UN in 2003 is striking: they addressed an informal group of gender advisers, NGOs and government representatives and instead of speaking about ‘gender concerns’, the women ended up condemning the US- and UK-led invasion of Iraq, condemning Western imperialism and the UN sanctions. In this context, they experienced an exclusive reaction and the sentiment that ‘angry women’ were not welcome to participate in the UN (Gibbins 2011). Just how seriously the UN takes the voices of Congolese women will also be explored in later chapters.

Overall, Kirby and Shepherd (2016) acknowledge that the WPS Agenda is expansive and ambitious in seeking a radical reconfiguration of gendered power dynamics and global commitment to sustainable and positive peace. They further argue that more women should be appointed to senior levels and in field missions as military observers, civilian police, human rights observers and humanitarian officers. Yet, they also note that while the number of female personnel included in UN missions overall has increased, their contribution to peacekeeping and policing remains minimal. As examples, it has taken almost a decade for the percentage of female peacekeeping troops to rise by just over 1%, while the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in 2014 only deployed 492 female soldiers out of a total troop deployment of 19,567 (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016). This poses the question as to what barriers are preventing full realisation of the WPS Agenda and the participation pillar in particular. Undoubtedly, identifying those barriers will inevitably lead to an analysis of gendered power in any society seeking peace. Chapter Two will explore this issue in relation to Lederach’s (1997) peacebuilding pyramid so as to uncover how such power dynamics prevent women’s voices from being heard.

1.7 Conclusion

The UN Commissioner Michelle Bachelet emphasises that wherever there is conflict, women must be part of the solution (UN Women, 2013). This chapter has shown that there are a number of diverse reasons as to why women should be included in peace processes and peacebuilding relating to issues of justice, interest and roles. As pointed out by UN Women (2015), women and girls represent half of the world's population and so represent half of its potential. In addition, their centrality to communal life makes their inclusion in peacebuilding essential. Women and men have different experiences of violence and peace, which is why women must be allowed and encouraged to bring their unique insights and gifts to the process of peacebuilding. As demonstrated, women's participation broadens the peace process beyond the fighting parties, engaging perpetrators, victims and witnesses of violence. Although women should not always be classified solely as victims, the reality is that in most violent conflicts women and children suffer heavily. Women and girls become 'weapons of war' (Hedlund, 2016) whenever there is armed conflict through the perpetration of sexual violence and rape, a situation that has been recognised by UNSCR 1325, UNSCR 1820, UNSCR 1888 and UNSCR 1889. What cannot be overlooked is that the direct and deliberate targeting of women, through rape and sexual torture, often literally becomes the frontline of battle (Naraghi-Anderlini, 2007). Women as victims of gender-based violence who live with the negative physical, psychological and social impacts of war and conflict need to be acknowledged throughout any peace process. The presence of women at peace tables increases the chances for women's issues and experiences to be raised, as was affirmed by Bachelet (UN Women, 2013), the one thing women indisputably bring to peace

processes, given a chance, is an insistence that their priorities should be addressed in the governance, justice, security and recovery aspects of a peace agreement. Women have proven themselves to be successful peacebuilders in many countries, including Liberia and Northern Ireland, where women, basing their strategies on inclusiveness and collaboration, produced sustainable peacekeeping outcomes. In this context, it is important to draw attention to and highlight the fact that women efforts must not go unrecognised and unacknowledged.

This chapter identified a number of important arguments for including women in peacebuilding. International acknowledgement of women's importance has been traced through a number of international commitments – most obviously UNSCR 1325 and the wider WPS Agenda. However, it is also clear that in both practical and conceptual terms 1325 has not necessarily been a vehicle for ensuring women's participation. The family of Resolutions is an important normative framework, but it has yet to enable real change. Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid, which emphasises the integration of all levels of society in peace processes, would seem to further emphasise this call for women's inclusion. While Lederach calls for peace efforts to be created and interwoven at all levels of society, a reading of his pyramid from a gender perspective will reveal the barriers facing women who want their voices to be heard in peace processes. It is to this model and what it reveals about both sustainable peace and peacebuilding power dynamics that the next chapter turn.

Chapter 2

Theorising Integrated, Sustainable Peace: A Feminist Critique

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis, offering a feminist analysis of the popular approach to peacebuilding found in the work of conflict transformation theorist, Jean Paul Lederach. Participation of women in peacebuilding is key if sustainable peace is to be achieved and as discussed in the previous chapter, Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security reaffirms this aspiration, even though in practice women's participation remains very low globally. An examination of the pyramid with attention to gendered institutions and power divisions will reveal the ways in which women remain excluded from full integration in peacebuilding.

First examined are various definitions of peacebuilding by different scholars and international agencies mentioned in the previous chapter. Second, multilevel approaches to peacebuilding and approaches to conflict transformation are described, with a particular emphasis on Lederach's arguments for integrated peacebuilding and a description of his peacebuilding pyramid (Lederach, 1997) for creating sustainable peace. Third, arguments are put forward as to why it is important to consider this model from a gender perspective, reiterating the importance of involving women in peacebuilding (as detailed in Chapter 1) and exploring the impact of gendered power inequalities in preventing women's full inclusion at all levels of peacebuilding. The chapter concludes with a section which analyses how women can be integrated into peacebuilding at all levels.

2.2 Approaches to peacebuilding

Various scholars, institutions and agencies define the concept of peacebuilding differently. Influentially, former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali defined peacebuilding (UN, 1992) as the process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict. According to Call and Cousens (2008), peacebuilding refers to those actions undertaken by international or national actors to institutionalise peace, understood as the absence of armed conflict (negative peace) and a degree of participatory politics (as a component of positive peace) that can be sustained in the absence of an international peace operation; peacebuilding is therefore a mechanism for preserving and ensuring enduring peace in a society, removing the root causes of the conflict and genuinely reconciling the conflicting parties. As commented in Chapter 1, Galtung (1996) described ‘negative peace’ as the absence of direct violence and ‘positive peace’ as a stable social equilibrium in which new disputes are resolved without resort to violence or war. Before Boutros-Ghali, the focus of the international community, and especially the UN, was mainly on managing conflict through achieving and maintaining ceasefires, yet addressing the real root causes of conflicts is a requirement for sustainable peace.

Elizabeth Porter (2013) broadly defines peacebuilding as involving all democratic, inclusive and just processes that ‘build positive relationships, heal wounds, reconcile antagonistic differences, restore esteem, respect rights, meet basic needs, enhance equality, instil feelings of security [and] empower moral agency’ (p. 34). In its broadest conception then, peacebuilding can be understood as the promotion of sustainable

economic development and socio-political justice in the interest of creating a more equitable society in which alternatives to violent resolutions of conflict are sought and in which all citizens are free from both direct and structural violence (Barnett et al., 2007). Based on the different elements and causes of conflict and my focus on integrating women in peacebuilding, this broad definition of peacebuilding is more useful in that it considers the whole peacebuilding process, from early warning systems and the monitoring of instability, to ceasefires, disarmament programmes, peace talks and agreements, through to building positive peace and sustainability.

Factors such as competition over natural wealth and resources, religion and ethnicity are often root causes of conflict. The exploitation of natural resources has created economies of war where armed groups and other power brokers thrive on the instability of conflict to gain control of valuable resources and land (Rehn and Johnson, 2002). This scenario is illustrated by the war in DRC, where over five million people have been killed in the last two decades in a recurrent conflict, due to a number of factors related to identity groups, political divisions and economic competition, including in regard to the exploitation of minerals (Cockburn, 2012). Peacebuilding in DRC therefore has to include initiatives that not only halt the violent conflict itself but also address access to resources, equitable development and the reconciliation of divided communities. Another good example is the South Sudanese conflict, where divisions between peoples developed into a violent struggle between two major tribes, the Nuer and Dinka. Such conflicts are by nature lodged in longstanding relationships (Lederach, 1997). History shows us that conflict is often a deep-rooted and long-term process that needs a well-balanced strategy involving many kinds of actors to achieve peace. A holistic approach in peacebuilding is therefore essential and those at the forefront must ensure that there is balanced engagement and participation by everyone in the community, including women, men and

youth, in order to ensure a durable peace and prevent the recurrence of violence. This is a notion well developed by John Paul Lederach through his peacebuilding theory which will be elaborated in the following section.

2.3 Multilevel approach to peacebuilding

John Paul Lederach is a prominent contemporary figure in peacebuilding theory. His merit lies in the fact that his theory combines conflict management and conflict resolution theories that were the traditional dominant discourses in peacebuilding (Paffenholz, 2013), while putting forward a broad ‘transformative’ approach to peacebuilding in ways that develop the ideas referred to above. Paffenholz (2013) further argues that Lederach’s transformative approach to conflict continues to be relevant as a basis for discussions on peacebuilding internationally and that his theoretical framework is used as a focal point by many other alternative theories.

In examining the nature of contemporary armed conflicts, Lederach (1997) argues that dealing with conflicts requires new approaches in addition to traditional diplomacy in the form of conflict management and resolution. Conflict management theorists emphasise the importance of agreements between belligerent nations, (mainly) between elite protagonist leaders, with intervention by the international community to support and facilitate negotiations for ceasefire. In this approach, while war may end as a result of diplomatic processes, it does not necessarily address the real root causes of conflict. These causes arise within communities and cultures, according to Lederach, who argues that real conflict transformation requires a long-term process that encompasses facilitation by internal and external actors, before, during and after negotiations. Conflict resolution theorists adopt a more advanced approach than the conflict management school, advocating for a more inclusive approach to peacebuilding that brings together

people of different categories at the negotiation table, while also addressing the underlying root causes of conflict. However, lacking, according to Lederach, is the most critical element for a holistic peacebuilding process, which is to transform elements of conflict into longstanding components that bring communities together. Lederach's proposal is to build a long-term infrastructure for peacebuilding that involves actors from all levels of leadership in the society.

In describing conflict transformation, Lederach (2003) views peace as centred and rooted in the quality of relationships, including both face-to-face interactions and social, political, economic and cultural relationships, emphasising the need for those relationships to evolve and to continuously improve in quality. Conflict transformation is shaped by intentional efforts to address a natural tendency to human conflict through non-violent approaches that address issues in dispute and increase understanding, equality and respect in relationships (Lederach, 2003).

In my analysis of Lederach's approach to peacebuilding, I examine his theoretical framework in terms of three main parts. Firstly, I will examine the ways in which Lederach defines the features of contemporary conflicts, then how he identifies the actors in conflict/peace and their levels of leadership and finally, review his peacebuilding approach in detail.

2.3.1 Features of contemporary conflicts

Conflicts between people are inevitable although they differ according to the situations that determine the conditions and circumstances of these people. Likewise, there is no single way of ending conflict. Lederach (1997) believes that peacebuilding is intrinsically related to the nature of conflicts, which are plural.

Lederach's (2005) analysis of conflict is mainly based on his facilitation activities for peacebuilding in recent times; having observed armed conflict in different countries, he concluded that contemporary armed conflicts are primarily internal conflicts, occurring between different identity groups within a state and tending to arise within poor, developing nations, in contrast to the traditional armed conflicts that occurred between nation-states. Commenting on identity differences as root causes of conflict, Diana Batchelor (2003) describes identity in sociological terms as self-awareness and self-consciousness that lead, not only to cultural norms and group identities, but also to politics in the search to reconcile concepts of nation and communal identities; she further notes that even religion attributes a large part of one's identity to one's beliefs and that all disciplines have something to add to the discussion on identity and how it relates to conflicts. This is particularly important when looking, for example, at the recent conflict in Rwanda between Hutu and Tutsi and how this conflict was extended to eastern DRC where Rwandan Tutsi claimed to rescue DRC Tutsi (the Banyamulenge), as they believe they share a common identity.

If conflict is primarily identity-related, as Lederach argues, peacebuilding activities should consequently try to unpack the nature, sources and effects of identity as well as the elements that shape it, while considering how identities are changed in the context of transforming intractable conflicts (Kriesberg, 2003). Later I will go into more detail on how Lederach suggests peacebuilding processes should take into account identity differences as an integral part of conflict transformation.

The time factor during which conflict occurs is another element that Lederach (1997) pinpoints to describe contemporary conflicts: contemporary conflicts tend to be longstanding, corresponding to the logic of their identity-communal related

characteristics. In fact, groups living together may look at each other as enemies and be divided by factors of a psychological and emotional nature that instil deep-rooted fear in sub-group identities. These are not natural or inevitable emotions, however, but are often created by leaders, reinforcing such ideas and using them to solidify their own position and the internal cohesion of their own group (Lederach, 1997). Inspired by researcher Maire Dugan's (1996) nested foci paradigm, Lederach tries to relate the immediate issues within a conflict to larger systemic aspects, so as to provide the lenses for the bigger picture. Glaser (2005) explains paradigm in the following terms:

Issues arise within relationships, which exist within the larger context of subsystems, and ultimately society-wide systems. Dugan illustrates these contexts with the example of a school fight between black and white gangs. In responding to the conflict one can look at the issue that sparked the fight, the quality of the relationship between the groups more generally, the aspects of the school system which contributed to the conflict, and the broader problem of racism throughout society. Limiting analysis to one stage is likely to deform the understanding of the conflict. Responses based on such flawed and limited understandings will be misdirected and are likely to be ineffective or even harmful. Effective peacebuilding then must be sensitive to the nesting of issues within larger contexts (p. 60).

When trying to build peace, it is clear that, given the characteristics of contemporary conflicts (intra-state, identity-based, long-term and with multiple causes), the approach to contemporary conflict resolution cannot be the same as for traditional conflicts between nation-states. As most contemporary conflicts occur between communities and different identity groups within the same nation, peacebuilding tasks should be framed as a complexity of actions that deconstruct established rapports or relations between those groups. To illustrate, addressing only the immediate causes of conflict would be like cutting off just the visible part of an iceberg while leaving the bulk of it untouched, with the consequence that the conflict will recur, since the root causes have not been addressed. This is the reason why the traditional approach has failed in addressing

contemporary conflicts. The conflict transformation narrative that I describe below, spearheaded by Lederach, has been identified as a suitable alternative approach to addressing contemporary conflicts.

2.3.2 Actors and levels of leadership

Lederach was the first scholar who underlined the importance of incorporating all societal leadership levels in peacebuilding efforts. This is logically related to his philosophy of contemporary conflicts as described above. Since contemporary conflicts have deep-rooted causes that are related to animosity between identity groups within a community, the traditional logic of involving external diplomats from bilateral or multilateral organisations as peacebuilders results in a resolution that is not sustainable. Although the conflict resolution school does indicate the wisdom of incorporating a range of actors – individuals and communities from civil society and the grassroots – it does not specifically discuss the role and leadership level of these groups, as done by Lederach (1997) in a very innovative theoretical manner. As advocated by the conflict resolution school, Lederach believes peacebuilding activities should bring together all actors at the negotiation table, but he goes beyond this concept to classify the actors involved in peacebuilding in terms of three levels of leadership; this classification is particularly important in trying to understand the peacebuilding approach that I discuss further below. Lederach's (1997) three levels are described as follows (Figure 2.1):

- *Top leadership.* This level of leadership is composed of political, military and sometimes religious leaders. Every community has such high-level leaders who are very visible and powerful and whose position is locked to substantive issues in a conflict due to their high public profile. The fact that they are representatives of their

community means they must retain an image of strength; this leaves them with limited room for manoeuvre as it is difficult for them to accept positions contrary to their publicly stated positions (Maiese, 2003). Their power to make decisions to be implemented by the rest of the society is disproportionate to their small number.

- *Middle-range leadership.* This level is made of heads of educational and humanitarian organisations, religious and ethnic group leaders, respected business and agricultural community leaders and internationally known figures. As Lederach (1997) points out, this group is probably the most important in peacebuilding activities as leaders at this level are well known by both the other levels. With a lower public profile than the top-level leaders, their position does not depend on the latter but rather on social relations and activities, which explains why they may have pre-existing relationships with leaders on the opposing side (Glaser, 2005). Middle-range leaders are more numerous than the top leaders and have more freedom to manoeuvre, probably due to their important position in terms of social relations.
- *Grassroots leadership.* This level is composed of leaders in contact with the masses on a day-to-day basis, responding to their immediate needs for food, shelter, water and safety during armed conflicts. They are generally involved in local communities, including as members of indigenous NGOs, refugee camp officials, health workers, etc. Their work exposes them directly to the same situations of conflict as the people they support and, accordingly, they are first-hand witnesses of conflict-related hatred and animosity (Glaser, 2005).

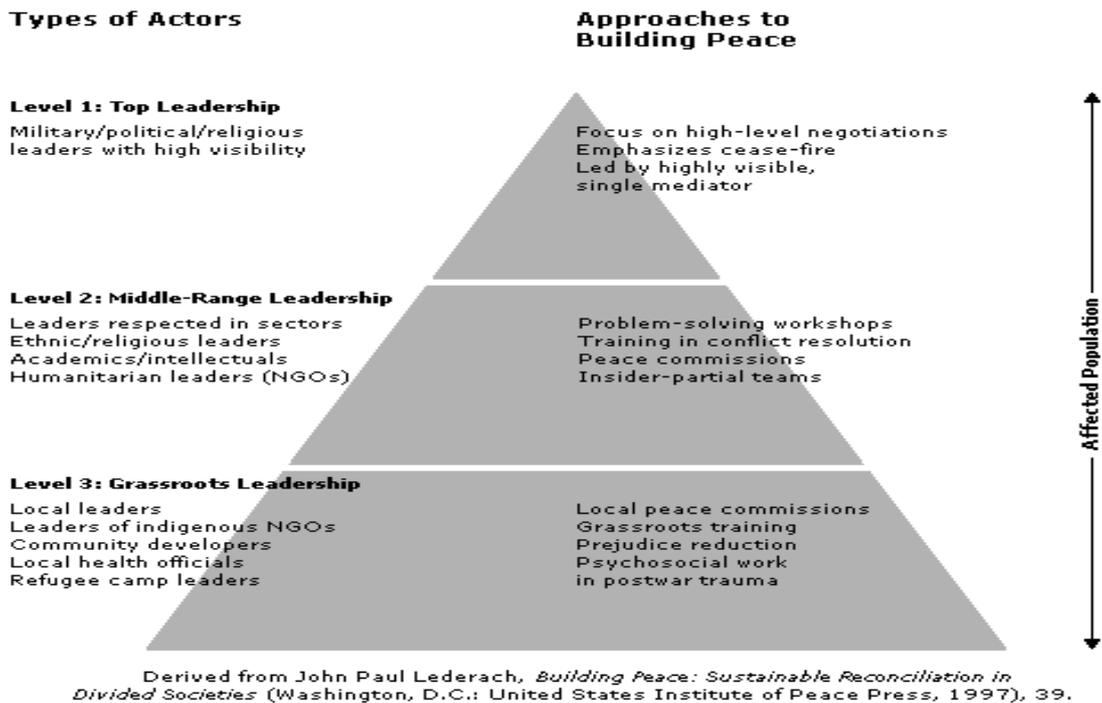


Figure 2.1. Lederach’s (1997) peacebuilding pyramid.

Each of the three levels in the hierarchy plays a unique role in peacebuilding, so conflict-handling processes must be adopted at each level. According to Lederach (1997), actions must be integrated into a comprehensive peacebuilding framework that he represents as a pyramid. This pyramid diagram representing the roles of the above-described actors responds to the question as to whether peace should be built top-down or bottom-up (Maiese, 2003).

The pyramid clearly demonstrates that peacebuilding is an integrative process that should involve and connect all the actors who are concerned with issues at all levels of society. This peacebuilding approach is now described in more detail.

2.4 Peacebuilding through conflict transformation

With a description of the nature of contemporary conflicts and the definition of the actors that should be involved in peacebuilding, the Lederach (1997) approach to ending

conflict becomes eminently logical. Lederach, who pioneered the school of conflict *transformation* (as opposed to conflict management or resolution) has been innovative in peacebuilding narratives. For Lederach, conflicts end by unpacking issues that are deeply rooted in communities, related mainly to group identities, and by involving all actors in a conflict at various leadership levels. Lederach explains his approach through his pyramid integrating various actions into a comprehensive peacebuilding framework, bearing in mind that different conflict-handling processes must be adopted at each level of the hierarchy (Miaise, 2003).

Top-level approaches to ending conflicts are mainly channelled through negotiations between belligerents, notably through ceasefires or the ending of hostilities and bargaining for new solutions or accords aimed at leading to national transition. Efforts for peace at this level are often supported by the international community helping to manage the conflict. Peacebuilding at this level often involves a step-by-step, issue-oriented process aimed at short-term achievements (Lederach, 1997). Negotiations for peace in the ongoing conflict in eastern DRC illustrate this top-level approach. As will be shown in Chapter 3, the ongoing violence in DRC suggests that early attempts at peace managed by the top leadership on the basis of a range of accords supported by the international community is failing to identify real solutions to the conflict.

In relation to middle-range leadership, if war or hostilities emerge from problems deeply rooted in the community, solutions to the conflict needs to be addressed at the community level to achieve sustainable peace. An accord for peace is not sufficient, as illustrated by DRC. This is where the role of middle-range leaders is crucial; because they have lower visibility and are connected to extensive networks that cut across the lines of conflicts, they can establish productive relationships to work through conflicts. Lederach (1997)

pinpoints three important approaches to peacebuilding at this level: problem-solving workshops, conflict-resolution training and the development of peace commissions, elaborated on by Miaese (2003) as follows:

Problem-solving workshops feature informal meetings designed to broaden participation and deepen parties' understanding of their shared problems. They also provide a forum for effective interaction as well as a politically safe space to test new ideas. Conflict-resolution training aims to raise parties' awareness about how conflict operates, and to impart skills for dealing with conflict. Middle-range leaders are often brought together in training sessions to share their perceptions of the conflict, analyse their own roles in it, and develop approaches that will promote reconciliation. Finally, these leaders often participate in peace commissions that allow for increased communication at the national, regional and local levels. These commissions bring together prominent individuals from each side of the conflict and work towards reconciliation (p. 47)

As explained by Paffenholz (2013) leaders at this level are highly respected individuals or occupy positions of leadership, prominent with particular institutions such as health, education, religious and ethnic organisations. For Lederach this level has an important part to play in peacebuilding because of middle range leaders involvement in their fields which connects them to both the top and grassroots levels and they are aware of the context and experience of people living at grassroot level. Due to this position, this level is said to have the greatest potential to sustain infrastructures for peacebuilding processes, because it has the ability to trickle up to Track I and down to Track III.

Burgess (2016) argues the efforts of grassroots leaders are necessary to ensure that middle-range actions are effective with leaders involved in local peace conferences, peace programmes and local seminars which might form part of broader community and public-health programmes dealing with post-war trauma or may participate in workshops that aim to reduce prejudice and enhance community decision-making. According to Kristimanta (2018) people involved at grassroot level are conflict survivors who have experienced violence, trauma and difficulties. Leaders at this level have experienced the

direct impact of conflict and have influence on the community, since they can identify with them. Paffenholz (2013) point out that a large number of people involved in this level and leadership are working at the local and community level, reaching and meeting basic human needs for food, safety, shelter and addressing unresolved human conflict which is a central cause of their suffering. There are important ideas and practical efforts emerging at this level, therefore discussions on ending conflict and insecurity are important at this level and peace process should be rooted here, however quite often leaders at this level, even though close to conflict, are not included in the decision-making table.

The Lederach peacebuilding pyramid, as stated earlier, represented a revolution in peacebuilding narratives that continues to inspire contemporary scholars. Lederach's nuanced approach to understanding the roots of contemporary conflicts and the need for integrated approaches to peace seems eminently logical and sensible. However, given this research's focus on the role of women in peacebuilding, it is important to question whether – in advocating integrated peacebuilding – Lederach is sensitive enough to the gendered power dynamics that affect all societies and that may, in fact, render the inclusion of women at all levels of Lederach's pyramid problematic.

Ensuring that women are integrated in all the three levels of leadership can make a huge difference in the search for sustainable peace, given the nature and importance of women's issues in contemporary conflicts and the contributions their perspectives can make to peacebuilding at every level, as argued in chapter one. However, if we examine Lederach's theory and ask, 'where are the women?', gaps appear in all the three levels of the peacebuilding pyramid, most particularly at the top leadership level, but also in terms of power and influence further down the pyramid.

In what follows, Lederach's (1997) analysis of conflict and his approach to peacebuilding will be examined from a gender perspective, leading into a discussion of the impact of these gendered power structures on conflict and peacebuilding and the potential for women's integration in the type of peacebuilding advocated by Lederach.

2.5 A gender perspective on Lederach's peacebuilding theory

As discussed above, Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding theory has the merit of addressing conflict in a holistic manner, on the understanding that conflict does not only occur, and should not only be examined, in terms of physical hostilities. The roots of conflicts, especially contemporary conflicts, are deeply embedded in all the sociocultural aspects of communities. Relations connecting people become infected by animosities that flare up into open conflict and eventually war. Closely examined, the leitmotiv is almost invariably the struggle for power. Apart from reasons of economics and international politics, gender is one of the social power systems that cause conflicts and war. For instance, the likelihood of actually going to war results from ways of performing masculinity idealised in militaries. Therefore, understanding and challenging gender relations should not just be considered as an alternative or separate action but rather as an intrinsic component of peacebuilding. In viewing war, as a social and systemic phenomenon through sociological and anthropological lenses, Cockburn (2012) argues that gender inequality is a sociocultural system that predisposes states to war, given that societies are predominantly patriarchal and celebrate ideals of militarised masculinity. This argument is further supported by Hearn (2011), who points to militarism and militaries as among the most clearly gendered of all governmental and related activities, adding that in armies, men trained to inflict violence and other forms of harm on others are the vast majority of active members and overwhelmingly dominate the higher elite

ranks. Consequently, to bring sustainable peace to communities, all the major elements of war must be tackled, to ensure more just and equal economic relations, more respectful and inclusive ethnic relations and equality for women and men.

El Jack (2003) suggests that, since most conflicts evolve around power and control over resources or contested territories, there is an intrinsic link between power and conflict, with men socialised to believe that they must be in control and maintain power and, therefore, usually the conflict or war instigators; in other words, war is waged by those who have power, which is usually men. Yet conflicts affect everyone in society, women and children as well as men, although the impact is experienced in different ways; women are often disproportionately affected as civilians, especially when they are targeted for sexual violence. Women as combatants also face high rates of sexual violence and harassment, not to mention a lack of opportunities for career advancement (Sjoberg, 2010).

In sum, conflicts evolve due to dominant gender practices (among other things) and have gendered consequences for people enduring conflict. As already stressed in chapter one, ending conflict should therefore challenge gendered social norms and take into account the voices of women as well as men. Equal participation of men and women in peacebuilding is paramount to breaking men's hegemony and pursuing paths to genuinely sustainable peace. Men continue to dominate in conflict situations and to also use their male power to rape and abduct women. The gendered driving force underpinning war and conflict needs to be recognised and this becomes an important issue to take into account in peacebuilding processes. However, the ways that gendered power and inequality militate against women's inclusion at all levels of the peacebuilding pyramid is a major hindrance to the realisation of integrated peacebuilding. Despite convincing

reasons for their inclusion, women's perspectives are not incorporated in the three levels of the peacebuilding pyramid. There is, in particular, a lack of equal representation of women with men in the middle-ranging and top leadership levels, yet, as I will argue, women's full integration at all levels is essential to sustainable peace.

2.6 Barriers to women's participation: inequalities and challenges

Lederach (1997) argues that modern peacebuilding should focus on reconciliation and on rebuilding relationships. In his description of actors and issues in conflict in terms of levels of leadership and Dugan's (1996) nested foci, he proposes that truly valid efforts to reduce the effects of war-related hostility require the repair and transformation of damaged relationships and an integrated approach to peacebuilding at all levels. However, when we look at gendered power inequalities at each level of peacebuilding pyramid it becomes obvious that women are poorly represented in comparison to men, especially in the middle and upper levels of Lederach's (1997) pyramid. As defined at the start of this thesis, gender is not only an expression of individual identity, but is also a defining and shaping feature of human institutions (Bradley, 2007). Divisions of power along gender lines are manifest in these institutions and reproduced by them. Gender inequality is imbedded in our societies and, as such, bears within it the seeds of conflicts, but this is not explicitly included as a crucial relationship component to be addressed and restored.

In the Lederach peacebuilding pyramid, crucial negotiations are done at the top level with the involvement of military, political and possibly religious leaders who are very much in the public eye and occupy the public sphere. Men are overwhelmingly represented in these groups, given that the gender hierarchy remains a major feature of patriarchal systems (Cockburn, 2008). For example, high ranking combatants are often seen as

essential persons to include in peace talks and demobilisation of armed groups is a post-conflict priority. Militaries are institutions with an engrained gender profile and division of power. Over 90% of the world's soldiers are men (Goldstein 2009) and as stated above with reference to military culture, ideals of militarised masculinity are key to the training of soldiers (Cockburn 2010). Demobilisation processes take the male soldier as norm, neglectful of the presence of many women in armed groups (Umejesi, 2014). The gendered power dynamics in militaries are therefore exclusionary of women's perspectives and participation. Similar arguments can be made about the gendered division of power in other elite institutions. Senior people in key institutions including government, diplomacy, economics and religions are men, and women are hardly involved in decision-making at this level.

Male domination at all levels of decision-making, and especially at high levels, continues to be a major challenge worldwide. As discussed in relation to UNSCR 1325 20 years on, women are still underrepresented in formal peacebuilding processes and, despite general efforts and discussions in the international arena, their participation in peacebuilding has remained globally low in the last two decades. As indicated by UN Women (2015), in recent peace negotiations, women have represented fewer than 8% of participants and fewer than 35 signatories, and no woman has ever been appointed chief or lead mediator in UN-sponsored peace talks. This high-ranking level is where women's involvement is lowest and yet it is a crucial level in terms of how peace agreements and processes are discussed, negotiated, passed and signed.

Several countries, e.g., Sweden, Ireland and Rwanda, have introduced affirmative action to address gender imbalance in political participation. In politics, affirmative action has increased women's involvement in public life. Many countries, including Ireland, have

adopted a quota system along the lines proposed by Tripp and Kang (2018), who explored the importance of quotas and highlighted the need for quota laws to be adopted; their study showed that, by 2016, around 54 countries legally required party quotas and another 23 had adopted a policy of reserved parliamentary seats for women. Addressing gender inequality and discussing gender relations of power is equally important at this high level, as women's perspectives, views and inputs are crucial. Yet, unless a formal mechanism is in place to support this, traditions and cultural practices will continue to present serious obstacles to the inclusion of women in peace processes and post-war governance. Rehn and Johnson (2002) affirm that the use of quotas is one of the most successful methods for guaranteeing a minimum percentage of women in high-ranking positions and negotiations.

Lederach (1997) argues that middle-range leadership holds the 'greatest potential for establishing an infrastructure that can sustain the peacebuilding process over the long term' (p.54). It has been argued that supporting peacebuilding potential of leaders at this level influences top level and bottom level, as their participation allows for increased communication at the national, regional and local levels which enhances agency and brings more quality into peacebuilding. As explained by Paffenholz (2013) leaders at this level are highly respected individuals or occupy positions of leadership, prominent with particular institutions such as health, education, religious and ethnic leaders, quite often head of these named institutions are men. In Russell and O'Flynn (2011) research, for example, they identified ethnic leaders as men whose ethnic interests intersected with their masculine identities and patriarchal worldviews. Likewise, religious institutions are well known sites where gendered norms are generated and gendered power divisions are on display Perales and Bouma (2019) argues that among the sources of patriarchal

religious beliefs, the doctrine of 'headship' has been a key element of faith and practice, they describe the complementarity' of genders where there are different assigned tasks, men get to lead and women to follow, men earn money, women tend to the household

In contrast to the male dominated power dynamics at elite and middle levels of peacebuilding, women's leadership in grassroots organisations is often recognised. Women play a crucial role in peace in the community, as they cannot tolerate watching their communities destroyed. In South Sudan and Liberia, for example, grassroots women are bringing communities together and are leading inter-community dialogue to promote healing and trust (Gbowee, 2015), using their voices and their experiences of war to achieve change. The peace movements in Northern Ireland (led by the NIWC) and Liberia set very good examples, as the strategies and actions applied by these grassroots women organisations clearly demonstrate their strength and capacity. The fact that women's presence is most clearly manifest at the grassroots level however is indicative of the gendered divisions of public and private power in most societies, where due to educational disadvantage, social norms and double burdens of productive and reproductive work, women are less likely to achieve power and status at other levels, Freedman (2011), highlight the important of challenging causes which are often rooted in traditional gender roles Unfortunately, despite these few good examples, when it comes to conflict negotiations and peacebuilding, the leadership of women is often overlooked and under-resourced.

Finally, returning to Lederach's (1997) theory of peace, a focus on reconciliation has to recognise that conflicts are essentially types of relationships; therefore, building and rebuilding relationships among different community members is crucial, as it rebuilds trust and brings people together to address sources of and solutions to conflict. Gender

divisions are a defining characteristic of social relationships across all societies, so peacebuilding will more effective if it is built on an understanding of how gendered identities are constructed through power relations between and among women, men, girls, boys and members of sexual and gender minorities (Myrntinen *et al.*, 2014). Resolving conflict mostly depends on the way the society is structured, the norms and values set by each society and the leadership structures. As stated by International Alert (2014):

If we are to be effective as peacebuilders, we need to respond to the power dynamics and norms that influence peace and violent conflict at the household, community, national and international levels. To do this, we need to be aware of the diversity of gender and other identities across groups of men and women. Therefore, gender analysis is key in helping us understand identity and violence, and, as a result, act effectively (p. 8).

In addressing the existing gap, gender inequality and power relations at different hierarchical levels and with different actors have to be addressed. In any effort to ensure women are involved in peacebuilding, patriarchal hegemony and gender relations of power in societal systems must be addressed. Adding a gender-aware approach and addressing structures of domination and hidden power relations can help address gender gaps at all levels of the peacebuilding pyramid and, at the same time, contribute to realising the potential of integrated peacebuilding.

While Lederach's (1997) pyramid offers a remarkable theoretical framework for sustainable peace, requiring engagement and relationship-building by actors at all social levels, when examined from a gender perspective it becomes clear that top, middle-range and even grassroots leadership in most societies, whether or not in conflict, are marked by gender inequalities. I argue that unless we address those gender inequalities as characterised by limited or no women's leadership roles, it will be difficult to achieve sustainable peace.

2.7 Conclusion

Peacebuilding is a concept defined by various scholars according to the schools they belong to, which can be grouped into three main categories – conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation – that have framed the concept into discourses that determine how conflict should be addressed and the components necessary to end hostilities and rebuild peace. Most of these scholars recognise conflict as a long-term process that requires a complexity of approaches for its eradication. While the conflict management school focuses on accords that immediately end hostilities, only top leaders are involved in negotiations, the conflict resolution discourse adopts a broader view of peacebuilding that consists of addressing root causes of conflict and involving representatives of all sectors of society in negotiations. However, in relation to contemporary conflicts, in his peacebuilding pyramid describing levels of leadership and actors, Lederach (1997) offers a symbiotic vision of those two schools that, while recognising their contributions, has resulted in a more innovative approach that requires interaction between all levels of leaderships so as to transform conflict in such a way as to ensure not only the achievement of peace but also its sustainability.

Lederach's theory of conflict transformation has been influential in developing the peacebuilding narrative. However, from a gender perspective, it is clear that women are still poorly represented as leaders in the pyramid, most especially in its top and middle-range levels. Gender analysis demonstrates that contemporary conflicts embed inequalities and masculine hegemony in many societies that treat women as second-class citizens, thereby setting barriers for women to assume leadership responsibilities. In discussing the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda in chapter one, the implementation gap between the aspiration to have women as participants in

peacebuilding and the failure to enable their presence was highlighted. For example, Kirby and Shepherd (2016), citing the low number of female personnel in UN missions point out that WPS focuses on participation targets without addressing the dynamics of gendered power. Hudson (2016) stress this further by saying peacebuilders should acknowledge the political nature of gender dynamics, given gender is a power relation and peacebuilding is gendered because it relies on the logics of gender. As indicated above affirmative actions are necessary to bridge the gap in representation of women. In exploring the gendered dynamics which inflect the levels of the peacebuilding pyramid, women's exclusion to the grassroots has been identified and analysed.

That said, despite their victimisation during conflicts, women have demonstrated themselves to be resilient and active in the reconciliation of communities and in emancipatory movements. True (2016) affirm the importance of equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, she highlights that women equal participation is a right which contributes to the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Recognising their innovations and pinpointing the barriers to women's further inclusion at all levels of Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid is therefore essential to fulfilling the potential of that model for achieving sustainable peace. In the remainder of this thesis, the theories, issues and analyses put forward in these opening chapters will be considered in relation to gendered power dynamics and peacebuilding efforts to date in Goma, capital of the North Kivu province of eastern DRC. The next chapter will set the scene by providing background information on war and peace in DRC and societal norms around gender.

Chapter 3

War and Peace in DRC Through a Gendered Lens

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the origins and current situation in relation to war, conflict and peace attempts in DRC. With reference to Lederach's (1997) theoretical framework on peacebuilding, in the previous chapter I argued that achieving sustainable peace requires determining the causes of conflict and also identifying the actors, as Lederach (1998) argues that, for peace to be achieved and sustained, all those who are involved need to be engaged. The wide range of people involved in war, conflict and violence in DRC, which particularly have a devastating impact on civilians, including women, number among them armed and rebel groups, militaries, politicians, international companies, neighbouring countries.

The chapter first examines the background of DRC, its colonial context, the migration of Rwandans to DRC, the First and Second Congo Wars and the ongoing recurring conflict. Next outlined are the origin and causes of conflict in eastern DRC and the impact: millions of people have been affected and communities and families have been destabilised, resulting in huge numbers of casualties and vast material damage. This conflict, which erupted over two decades ago, has been driven by ethnic/tribal and land disputes and the exploitation of mineral resources, further aggravated by poor governance and fuelled by political, social and economic interests of some Congolese nationals, neighbouring countries and multinational companies. In line with the analysis presented in the previous chapter, the way gendered relations of power have shaped the wars is also

discussed, and also the very negative impact on women victimised by sexual violence and used as a ‘weapon of war’. Various peace attempts and the role played by local and international actors are analysed, including the UN peacekeeping mission in the form of MONUSCO. In the final section I discuss peace-making and peacebuilding efforts in the context of Lederach peacebuilding pyramid, paying especial attention to the involvement of the different leadership levels (top, middle-range and grassroots) in efforts to date. Inflecting this analysis with a gendered lens draws attention to the contributions of women to peacebuilding to date and the barriers they face in regard to their integrated involvement.

3.2 DRC background

DRC plays a key strategic role in the world due to both its geography and geology. Situated in the heart of Africa and almost entirely landlocked, it is the second biggest country in the continent (after Algeria), with a population of approximately 80 million and a total area of 2,344,858 km² (2,267,048 km² of land and 77,810 km² of water). Its central location means that DRC has nine neighbours (see Figure 3.1) – which makes it quite a singular country – with whom it shares cultures, traditions and, in some parts, family connections that existed long before Africa was carved up by colonial powers at the Berlin Conference of 1885.



Figure 3.1. Map of DRC (Source: University of Central Arkansas).

Just to illustrate, during my scoping visit in Kinshasa, I was told by some women that they belong to the Nianga tribe and have some family members who are Ba-nianga but are citizens of the neighbouring Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville); although separated by a frontier since the 1885 Berlin Conference, they have kept their family ties.

DRC (formerly Zaire) attained independence from Belgium in 1960. The first democratically elected government, led by Patrice Lumumba, was overthrown in 1965 in a military coup by Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled for 32 years until 1997 (Nzongola, 2011). In May 1997, Laurent Kabila overthrew Mobutu Sese Seko and served as the third president of DRC until his assassination by one of his bodyguards in January 2001. His son Joseph Kabila succeeded him as president until January 2019, when Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo became the fifth president of DRC.

Kinshasa in the west is the capital of DRC, the location of all the political institutions and the central source of all political decisions. During President Mobutu's regime, DRC was divided into nine provinces, later 11 provinces when the large eastern province of Kivu was broken up into South Kivu, Maniema and (the subject of my case study) North Kivu, with its capital in Goma. President Mobutu centralised power in a national government after having muted rebellions and claims for independence by some former provincial governments immediately after independence from Belgium in 1960 (Ndaywel e Nziem, 1996). Today, under the current constitution, DRC has 26 provinces, including Kinshasa as a city-province.

If DRC has attracted the attention and interest of industrialised countries around the globe, as well as neighbouring countries, it is mainly because of its abundant natural resources. To count only the reserves most in demand by international corporations and necessary for modern technology, DRC has very high percentages of the world's reserves of the following natural resources: cobalt, copper, niobium, petroleum, diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, uranium, coal, hydropower, timber and coltan. Colette Braeckman (2004), a Belgian journalist who specialises in DRC, describes DRC as probably having the richest concentration of precious metals and minerals on earth, which largely explains why their exploitation by warring factions has fuelled the worst conflict anywhere since the Second World War. Frantz Fanon (1961) famously stated that 'Africa is shaped like a gun and Congo is the trigger. If that explosive trigger bursts, it is the whole of Africa that will explode'. Fanon was right (to an extent), as this claim has been proven by the DRC conflict, which involves, not only neighbouring countries but many other African countries (including South Africa) and international economic actors with particular interests in minerals. That conflict (encompassing the First and Second Congo

Wars) began in 1996 and is far from resolved in some parts of the country, particularly in the east, but its roots reach far back to colonial times.

3.3 The colonial context

To understand better the current conflict in eastern DRC, it is necessary to review the general historical context of the country (Ndaywel e Nziem, 1996). Prior to becoming DRC in 1997 (which is the name I will use throughout) the country had different names, including Congo Free State (1885-1908), Belgian Congo (1908-1960), Republic of the Congo (1960-1971) and the Republic of Zaire (1971-1997). DRC was formed from an amalgam of different well-organised empires, kingdoms and chiefdoms established in that central part of the African continent prior to colonisation. When, for example, the Portuguese explorer Diego Cão reached the mouth of the Congo river in 1482, he encountered the well-established Kingdom of Kongo, situated on the central west coast, which was to physically disappear after the creation of nation-states during the 1885 Berlin Conference. A historical account by Reybrouck and Garrett (2015) reports that, in 1870, Henry Morton Stanley arrived in and explored what is now the DRC. Colonisation by Belgium began in 1885, when King Leopold II founded the Congo Free State, which he ruled as a personal fiefdom, appointing Camille Jansen as the first Belgian governor-general of Congo in 1886. Leopold II built many outposts to extend the power of the state over such a vast territory, creating the Force Publique as a colonial army with white officers and black soldiers. Various Catholic and Protestant missions soon arrived with the intention of converting the local population to Christianity and, in the 1890s, a railway was built connecting Matadi (near the coast) with Stanley Pool (now called Pool Malebo or Lake Nkunda) some 500 kms into the interior.

Between 1874 and 1877, Henry Morton Stanley, on behalf of Leopold II, crossed the entire country, noting how the indigenous populations were organised as chiefdoms (grouping of villages), empires and kingdoms. Besides the powerful Kingdom of Kongo, which by then straddled three countries (Angola, Congo Free State and Congo-Brazzaville), other well-known empires were the Luba, Lunda and Kuba. Widespread murder, torture and other abuses in the colonial rubber plantations exploited by Leopold II led to international and Belgian outrage, with the result that the Belgian government took control of the region in 1908, renaming it Belgian Congo (Reybrouck and Garrett, 2015).

The 1885 Berlin Conference was the result of an agreement reached between colonial European nations and the USA to resolve and prevent conflict in relation to claims over African lands, regulate free trade and end human slavery in occupied colonies (Craven, 2015). This carving up of African land laid the basis for the current situation in DRC as a nation. As stated earlier, existing ethnic groupings were divided, leading to populations being spread over neighbouring countries. Eastern DRC, where Arabic slave traders had extended their sultanates, was no exception, as nomadic and pastoral groups from the kingdoms of Rwanda and Uganda, most especially the Tutsi and Hema, were well established with their cattle in what is now DRC prior to the Berlin Conference. The Hema are currently to be found mainly in Ituri and the Tutsi in Kivu. These were later joined by waves of Hutu and Tutsi migrants from Rwanda, brought in by the Belgian administration as labour.

In 1959, following an ethnic-political crisis in Rwanda between the Hutu and Tutsi, significant numbers of Tutsi migrated to eastern DRC to seek refuge under the aegis of the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHCR). These integrated easily because the

Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi from the former kingdom of Rwanda), with whom they shared a language and culture, were well established in the Congo. In Masisi and Rutsuru lands, for example, there are significant numbers of Banyarwanda.

The Banyarwanda in the Kivu region lived peacefully with the indigenous people who owned the land by virtue of an 1885 colonial decree. The newly created Congo Free State of Leopold II did not dispossess indigenous populations of their lands but did require them to declare what they owned to protect their rights. As landowners, they were allowed to sell or gift their property to others under the intervention of a state official (Boeleart, 1956). During my field research in Goma, descendants of the Banyarwanda reported that their ancestors were given lands by the indigenous mwamis (chiefs) in exchange for cattle or money. This establishment of Rwandan populations in Kivu facilitated a steady flow of informal migration by other Banyarwanda.

One of the reasons underpinning the ongoing conflict in eastern DRC (Prunier, 2009b) is that, in the early 1970s, president Mobutu granted Congolese citizenship to all people of Rwandan origin residing in DRC on or before January 1950, on the advice of Barthélémy Bisengimana, head of the Bureau of the Presidency and a member of the Tutsi established in DRC (Nzongola, 2011), only to revoke this decision after the dismissal of Bisengimana, thus provoking a sentiment of non-recognition and marginalisation among those affected.

3.4 Wars in Eastern DRC

Conflict in eastern DRC has centred on the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces and also affects the nearby Orientale, Maniema and northern Katanga areas. The fertile highlands of eastern DRC straddle the borders of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, along

the shores of Lake Kivu and Lake Tanganyika. Kinshasa, the national capital is located some 1,500 km from the major eastern cities of Goma, Bukavu and Uvira. Transportation is poor, with the result that most eastern cities cannot be reached by road from Kinshasa. The violence in eastern DRC has its roots in ethnic conflict dating back to the colonial era, further aggravated under the thirty-year dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko from 1965 (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018). The identity and marginalisation crisis experienced by the Banyarwanda in DRC was further exacerbated after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Prior to the genocide, Rwanda was ruled by the majority Hutu, who governed the country from the 1959 Rwandan revolution (Gourevitch, 2000) and defeat of the Tutsi. Many Tutsi went into exile in the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and DRC. The assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana from the Hutu ethnic group in April 1994 led to a massacre of Tutsi by Hutu, the latter alleging that the Tutsi had murdered the president. The Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Tutsi army-political party led by Paul Kagame in exile in Uganda, fought back against the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda and defeated the Hutu, many of whom crossed the border to seek refuge in the Kivu region of DRC. Among those who escaped, were soldiers known as the Interahamwe genocidaires (Reyntjens, 2009).

Two main civil wars between 1998 and 2002 (described further below) have destroyed the eastern DRC region and destabilised the entire country with the corresponding negative impact on the economy, peoples and communities. These wars are partly the result of Rwandan migration to eastern DRC, not only the forced migration of Hutu after the Rwandan genocide, but also – and perhaps more importantly – the preceding Banyarwanda migration, with its associated identity and marginalisation crisis. According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2018), pro-Rwandan rebels from Congolese Tutsi populations (the Banyamulenge) concentrated in the Kivu region have

clashed with the Rwandan Hutu militia – the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a politico-military group composed of Hutu refugees tied to the 1994 genocide – and with government soldiers and other rebel groups, including the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group with origins in western Uganda which later expanded into neighbouring DRC (and considered a terrorist organisation by the Ugandan government). These groups have been a target of the UN peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO, for years; the ADF, in particular, a small but potent force concealed in the Rwenzori Mountains on the Ugandan border, has remained a major threat, while a multitude of ethnic-based local militias, known as the Mai Mai, have added to the chaos with their opaque networks of shifting alliances.

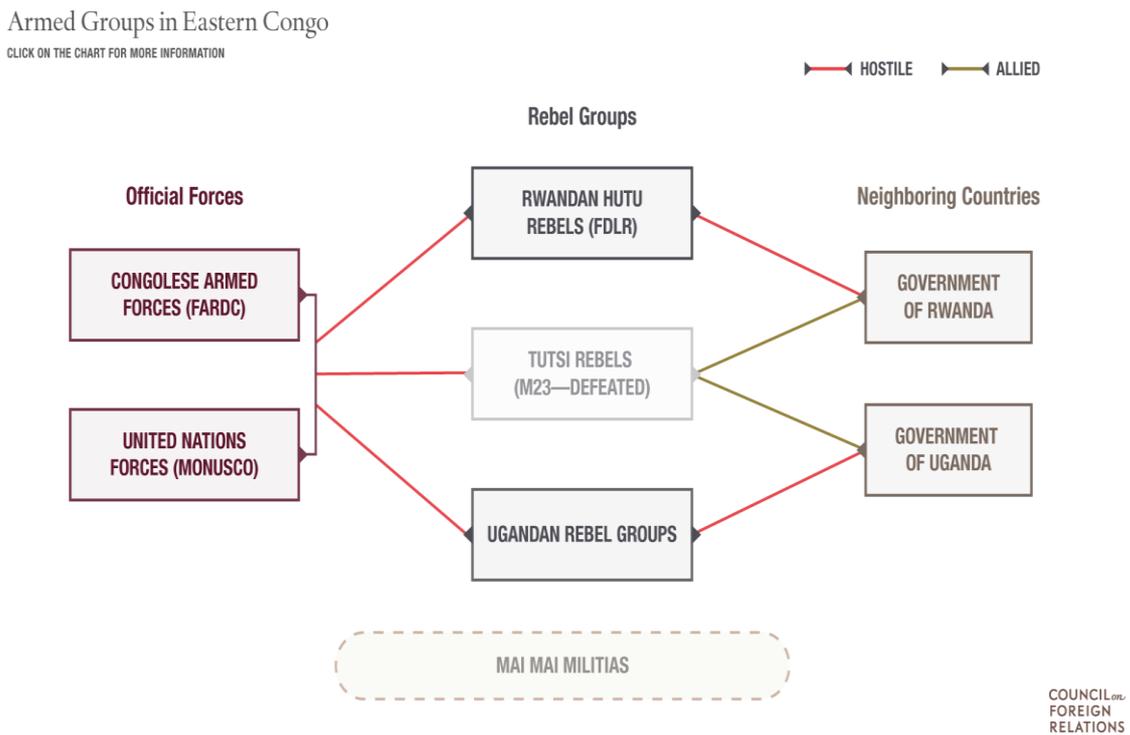


Figure 3.2. Armed groups in eastern DRC (Source: Council on Foreign Relations, 2018).

3.4.1 First Congo War

The First Congo War broke out in Kivu in October 1996 when the ruling Tutsi regime in Rwanda, with Paul Kagame as deputy president, decided to attack the Interahamwe genocidaires who were a constant threat to peace in Rwanda. Rwandan soldiers invaded the Kivu region, massively killing exiled Hutu, while trying to protect Congolese Tutsi who were already marginalised because of their identity. Surprisingly, this invasion by Rwandan forces attempting to neutralise the genocidaires into a rebellion against the corrupt regime of Mobutu, which held the majority of the population in poverty. Laurent Kabila headed this rebellion, led by the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL), backed by Rwanda, Uganda and supported by Angola, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia (Afoaku, 2002). While the invasion was initially justified on the basis of Rwandan stability and also the protection of Congolese Tutsi from attack by Hutu based in Kivu (a failure of the DRC government), Rwanda along with its AFDL ally, militarily well supported by others and stronger than the national army, started to harbour the ambition of annexing a portion of DRC and creating a greater Rwanda, on the argument that the ancient state of Rwanda included some parts of eastern DRC that rightly belonged to Rwanda (Gribbin, 2005). President Mobutu, no longer supported by western countries and physically weakened by poor health, was unable to face down a powerful rebellion against his corrupt regime. Laurent Kabila's troops, along with Rwandan soldiers and Banyamulenge warriors, were therefore easily able to take Kinshasa, seizing power in April 1997.

3.4.2 Second Congo War

The Second Congo War commenced in 1998 when Laurent Kabila decided to send Rwandan soldiers back to Rwanda, as he feared they could pose a threat to the sovereignty of DRC. As the Rwandans were fully in control of the regime in DRC (e.g., the army chief, General James Kabarebe, was a Rwandan citizen who, after returning to Rwanda, was appointed army chief by the Rwandan government), they felt humiliated and angered at the ingratitude of Kabila. Since the Banyarwanda Congolese also felt unsafe as they were considered to be Rwandan citizens by the Congolese population, they formed a rebellion group called Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) and, backed by Rwanda, they launched an attack on the Kabila regime (Prunier, 2009a). While this rebellion was mainly based in the eastern part of DRC, another rebellion erupted in the Équateur province in the west, led by the native Congolese John-Pierre Bemba and his Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) backed by the president of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The result was a country divided into three main entities, with each controlling faction using local administrations and exploiting the natural resources: the area under control of the Kabila regime, supported by Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Chad and Sudan; the eastern Kivu area controlled by the RCD in Kivu, supported by Rwanda; and the western Équateur area controlled by the MLC, backed by Uganda (International Crisis Group, 1998).

During this war, often described as the Great African War (Soderlund, 2013), DRC was completely shattered and ungovernable as a nation with no control over the exploitation of its natural resources, most importantly the coltan in eastern DRC. Numerous peace attempts failed as the belligerents were well entrenched and benefiting from the dividends of natural resources under their control. Although a peace agreement was negotiated in

2002 (the Sun City Agreement, formalised on 19 April) that formally ended the war, conflict has continued across DRC, especially in the east.

3.4.3 DRC since 2002

The peace agreement reached in 2002 under Joseph Kabila, who succeeded as president after his father's assassination in 2001, failed to bring full stability to the DRC. Instead, further rebellions erupted in the Kivu region, led first by the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) and then by the March 23 Movement (M23).

One of the important aspects of the 2002 Sun City Agreement was the integration of all the armed groups into a single national army. As a result, Laurent Nkunda Batware, the Congolese Tutsi colonel who led the RCD-Goma rebellion, was incorporated into the Armed Forces of DRC (FARDC) and promoted to general in 2004. However, during the transitional period of government, this General rebelled against the regime and retreated, with a large group of soldiers from the former RCD-Goma armed group, to North Kivu (Human Rights Watch, 2006). Although multi-party elections were held in 2006, this did not lead to an end to violence. By 2007, Nkunda, now leader of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) – a military group whose aims were to protect Congolese Tutsi from attacks by the Interahamwe genocidaires and to fight against their non-recognition and underrepresentation in the transitional political structures in DRC – took administrative control of both the Masisi and Rutshuru territories, which have large Banyarwanda populations. The DRC government alleged that Nkunda was receiving support from Rwanda (Faul, 2008), when, in 2008, in what has been referred to the North Kivu War, he fought the FARDC, the FDLR and UN troops. Nkunda's troops devastated the region, committing murder, rape and pillage and abducting children to be used as

soldiers (Amnesty International, 2006). He was usurped by Bosco Ntaganda, another Congolese Tutsi, before finally being captured in Rwanda in 2009 (IRIN, 2009).

After a peace deal was signed in March 2009, it was agreed that, in exchange for the release of prisoners, the CNDP led by Ntaganda would become a political party (AFP, March 2009). However, alleging that President Kabila cheated in the 2011 national elections (Moore, 2012), in April 2012 Ntaganda defected from the DRC government, fighting a battle with government forces in Rutshuru with 300 loyal troops (Gouby, 2012). This rebellion came to be referred to as the M23 rebellion (which took its name from the date of peace accords in 2009). M23, now led by Colonel Sultani Makenga after ousting Ntaganda, managed to subdue the FARDC and to even take control of Goma on 20 November 2012 in the presence of MONUSCO troops (Hogg, 2012). M23 ceased to exist as a politico-military movement after defeat by the FARDC and MONUSCO in 2013 (Holt, 2018). Since, for the first time since 1996 the Rwandan government no longer had an ally in eastern DRC, the end of M23 marked a lessening of outside interference in the region (Stearns, 2018).

Apart from the three main rebel groups, i.e., RCD-Goma, CNDP and M23, all formed and led by Congolese Tutsis and backed by Rwanda, many other militias have been operating within the entire region of Kivu, mainly the FDLR, Rwandan forces and Tutsi-led rebels (IRIN, 2009) and many branches of the Mai Mai, local groups claiming to protect their people and lands from foreign invasion (especially Rwanda and its affiliated groups). In addition, it is estimated that there are around 70 armed groups largely recruiting along ethnic lines (Stearns, 2015), as well as foreign groups, including the Ugandan ADF and the Nzabampema wing of the Burundian National Forces of Liberation (FNL). Based on information received from my research informants,

recruitment of young men and boys is ongoing and new groups are continuously emerging, with the result that tension and insecurity continue in the Kivu region to this day.

The above description gives an inkling of the sheer complexity of the conflict in eastern DRC. With so many different rebel and militia groups, national DRC troops are overwhelmed and simply incapable of controlling and neutralising so many armed groups, and likewise with MONUSCO, despite its large number of contingents. In the face of a weakened FARDC and, taking advantage of the crisis of identity recognition for minority groups, the belligerents are exploiting local natural resources in their own benefit and to further strengthen their position.

While the population of DRC is diverse, composed as it is of an estimated 250 tribes and speaking some 400 dialects, Lubunga (2016) notes that, even though occasional tensions between neighbouring clans or communities have arisen from time to time, nothing ever matched the magnitude of the violence of the current conflict, especially in terms of the killing and rape of women in eastern DRC.

3.5 Causes of war, conflict and violence

Brown (2012) reports that conflict has plagued the history of the DRC from 1960, when it became independent from Belgium. The causes of war in the DRC are multiple, as is evident from the previous description. The participants in my field research in North Kivu acknowledged the complexity of the situation, reflected in both intra- and inter-state conflict, driven by economic, social and political interests and fuelled by poor governance. According to most academic analyses, which are confirmed by the opinions

of the participants in my research, the major causes of the ongoing conflict and violence in DRC are mainly three: ethnicity/identity, land and mineral reserves.

The ethnicity and identity aspects of the conflict have already been described. As for land disputes, these have arisen between indigenous Congolese and the Banyamulenge of Rwandan origin who acquired land – in exchange for money or cattle – from tribal chiefs. However, land ownership by Banyamulenge has come to be questioned by local people, bringing tension and creating conflict.

The ongoing violence is especially fuelled by a ‘resource curse’ (Lee, 2016). DRC sits on untapped raw minerals estimated to be worth 24 trillion USD, including diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt, uranium, coltan and oil (Lee, 2016). According to Bentley (2017), illegal trade in coltan in particular, used in many electronic devices, is sustaining conflict. This wealth in mineral reserves has attracted the vested interest of neighbouring countries and multinational companies, not to mention of DRC politicians and other leaders. Uganda and Rwanda, for instance, dramatically increased their exports of coltan following their occupation of north-eastern DRC.

DRC is thus a wealthy country in terms of mineral resources – even though in 2017 it was ranked the poorest country in the world in GDP terms (Kouame, 2017). This wealth-poverty dichotomy (the resource curse) featured in many discussions during my field research, along with complaints of poor infrastructure, a lack of employment opportunities and overcrowded cities due to migration from rural regions and families fleeing the ongoing conflict, in particular in North Kivu. DRC should theoretically be a prosperous country whose wealth benefits all citizens, yet my research informants see this wealth of minerals as a major cause of war, conflict and poverty in DRC, arguing that unregulated mining is one of the biggest impediments to peace. Major beneficiaries

of this situation are militia and rebel groups, estimated to have raised 185 million USD from mineral exploitation in 2008 (Lee, 2016). These groups have a vested interest in ensuring continued instability.

Undoubtedly, given the resource wealth of DRC, the presence of unregulated mining operations is one of the biggest impediments to peace. The conflict-laden environment is a perfect setting for the trading of arms and minerals, fuelling a vicious circle of conflict (Ahere, 2012). While the roots of the conflict may be local, mining profits have further fuelled fighting between different militia groups over who will control the mines and their natural resources (Eichstaedt, 2012). The direct or indirect beneficiaries are DRC nationals, multinational corporations, neighbouring countries and western nations, each with their own vested, mainly economic, reasons (Ahere, 2012).

Moffett (2009) suggests that a very fragile peace is being threatened by underlying issues – including economic exploitation, ethnicity, impunity and failure to dealing with militias, demobilisation and poverty – that have not been properly addressed or inadequately tackled by either the Congolese government or the peace process.

3.6 Impact of war, conflict and violence

The impact of war, conflict and violence in DRC has been felt by the whole of society. Some 5.4 million people have lost their lives since the beginning of the 1998. In 2018, furthermore, according to Amnesty International (2018), armed groups and government forces continue to target civilians and engage in illegal exploitation of natural resources with impunity in eastern DRC; rebels burn houses, loot and pillage and perform acts of

sexual violence and women continue to be raped, particularly in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. The destruction and burning of villages lead to displacement and rural desertion. Civilians are destitute, poverty levels are extreme and people are unable to grow food or live any kind of normal life.

True and Davis (2015) argues rebel groups fight to gain control over valuable resources in a country and rape has a strong opportunistic component as well as a 'strategic' purpose. Women and even children are targeted for sexual violence. Violators are often members of militant groups or retired soldiers and as perpetrators they often go unpunished. Some women are left with destroyed organs, STDs, including HIV/AIDS and children born out of rape. Rape victims are often unfairly cast out from their families and society without much hope of reintegration, with the consequence that families are broken up by men and family members disowning women after rape (Brown, 2012).

According to the Council on Foreign Relations (2018), parts of eastern Congo have become semi-permanent tent cities housing many of the country's 4.5 million internally displaced people as well as hundreds of thousands of foreign refugees; furthermore, the continuance of armed groups in the region means that death and disruption continue, even though the ranks of the major rebel organisations have shrunk. The largest remaining rebel army, the FDLR, has been reduced to fewer than 2,000 fighters, while most other groups number in the hundreds. These continue to terrorise villagers and illegally exploit local resources, deliberately pursuing a survival strategy based on avoiding direct confrontation with UN and government soldiers (Council on Foreign Relations, 2018).

The impact of conflict, violence and war on women is especially striking. Even though the Second Civil War officially ended in 2002, ongoing violence means that women are still being raped (Refugees International, 2014). As said above, while violators of women

are often militants and rebels, there are also reports that MONUSCO peacekeepers and civilian personnel have also raped Congolese women. Nieuwenhuizen (2013), for instance, reports that women and girls in DRC have been raped, sexually exploited, impregnated and later on abandoned by soldiers attached to MONUC (i.e., MONUSCO under its previous name until 2010). The perpetrators often go unpunished because rape victims in the DRC do not have access to the justice system.



Figure 3.3. Displaced population camp in North Kivu, DRC (Source: Refugee International).

3.7 Peace attempts in DRC

Over two decades of conflict – with two civil wars and ongoing violent conflict in eastern DRC – there have been several attempts by national and international actors to reach peace agreements, install peacekeeping missions and begin broader peacebuilding. This section describes those efforts and analyses – with reference to Lederach’s (1997)

peacebuilding pyramid as discussed in Chapter 2 – why their impact to date has been so limited, particularly in eastern DRC.

3.7.1 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (1999)

After President Mobutu was removed from power and replaced by Laurent Kabila in 1997, relations with neighbouring countries' heads of state began to grow increasingly fragile (Swart, 2008). According to the International Crisis Group (1998), Kabila accused Uganda and Rwanda of aggression and exploitation of DRC minerals and, in return, rebel forces, comprising DRC soldiers, Banyamulenge, Rwandan, Ugandan and some Burundian troops, accused Kabila of being a dictator and of increasing regional instability by his support for guerrilla groups opposed to the governments of his former allies.

These disputes were addressed at the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 10 July 1999 (UN, 1999), negotiated in Lusaka (Zambia) and signed by heads of state of the countries involved in the seven-nation war in DRC, i.e., Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in addition to DRC. A Joint Military Commission headed by a neutral chairperson and composed of two representatives from each party to the conflict was appointed to investigate ceasefire violations, work out mechanisms to disarm militias and monitor the withdrawal of foreign troops and 90 military observers were deployed to the DRC (Swart, 2008). The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement aimed to ensure a ceasefire at all levels, including air, land, and sea, as well as in actions of sabotage. It also refuted any attempts to occupy new territory or to move military forces and resources from one area to any another without prior agreement between the parties. The agreement led to the establishment of the first UN mission to DRC, MONUC, later renamed MONUSCO.

The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement represented a highly ambitious vision of what was to be achieved within what was, with hindsight, a very unrealistic time frame for a highly volatile environment (Swart, 2008). According to Whitman (2006), many setbacks were encountered in regard to the original timeframe. While a neutral facilitator was supposed to be appointed within two weeks of signing of the agreement, it took six months for Sir Ketumile Masire, former president of Botswana, to be appointed. Overall, it took two years for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) to officially open. Furthermore, Perera (2017) argues that the ICD parcelled out power to different armed factions, thereby creating a political settlement, which, on the one hand, rewarded belligerency with access to power and, on the other hand, assumed that armed actors could be easily transformed into political actors. Lack of funding was another key challenge for the facilitator (Whitman, 2006).

Given the very well documented and known impact of the conflict on women in DRC (as outlined above), their exclusion from the 1999 Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was remarkable and, furthermore, there was no condemnation of violence against women nor any mention of the inclusion of women in the ICD. Whitman (2006) reports that, in choosing candidates to represent the Congolese in the ICD, which was faced by difficulties on many levels, one of the key problems was the exclusion of women from many of the selection procedures, which, conducted via first-past-the-post elections, put women at a disadvantage from the outset; of 73 delegates chosen to participate at the preparatory committee meeting in Gaborone in August 2001, only six were women and, furthermore, they were specifically instructed by their delegation heads not to promote gender-related issues.

Despite the challenges, the UN kept to the timeline in terms of deployment of the MONUC (later renamed MONUSCO), which was done in August 1999. However, the weaknesses and difficulties described above led to a resurgence of fighting against government forces, again with the involvement of Rwanda and Uganda. Swart (2008) notes that the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was largely a failure, as it did not prevent the outbreak of further violent conflict. In January 2001, the situation was destabilised further when President Laurent Kabila was assassinated, to be succeeded by his son Joseph Kabila.

3.7.2 Sun City Agreement (2002)

The Sun City Agreement was signed in April 2002 (UN, 2002) in South Africa as part of ICD initiated under the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999. The Sun City talks, attended by some 360 delegates, marked the beginning of a genuinely regional discussion, mainly on the security and economic issues at the heart of conflict (International Crisis Group, 2002). The parties to the Sun City Agreement were the DRC government, the RCD, the MLC, the political opposition, civil society, the RCD/Liberation Movement (RCD/ML), the RCD/National (RCD/N) and the Mai Mai.

With the goal of negotiating an end to the DRC's devastating civil wars (Nantulya, 2018), it was aimed to tackle the issue of Rwandan security and especially the disarmament of Hutu militia based in the DRC (International Crisis Group, 2002). Joseph Kabila was to remain president of DRC during a transition period of two years but would share power with four vice-presidents (one from each of the main armed opposition movements in DRC). Nantulya (2018) suggests that there was evidence that a culture of accountability was taking root, with the new parliament conducting rigorous oversight of the presidency

by the end of the Sun City Agreement interim period in 2006 and, by early 2009, parliamentarians had raised oral questions to government officials and state-owned firms, prompting 28 independent investigations into misconduct. Joseph Kabila, however, won the elections of 2011 and remained president to term expiry in December 2016, after which the term was further extended to December 2018. According to Arrousi (2017), while the Sun City Agreement established a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission to hear crimes and large-scale violations of human rights, it failed to investigate any cases before the end of its mandate in 2006; this was because it included representatives of armed groups known to have committed human rights violations. The ICD, which had aimed to facilitate agreement among its participants on four key issues (power-sharing, a new Congolese army, general elections, and an interim constitution and institutions for DRC during the transition period, during which transitional administration was to be inclusive) failed, as the anticipated all-inclusive agreement did not materialise and much time was committed to resolving representation issues. Rogier (2004) points to several possible reasons for the failure to stop the conflict. One of the parties to the agreement – RCD-Goma – was prevented from concluding a deal by the Rwandan government, which had given up the idea of controlling Kinshasa but not the Kivu region in eastern DRC. Kabila's renewed presidency was objected to and, accordingly, RCD-Goma continued to provide support to Rwandan Hutu extremists based in the eastern DRC. This was highlighted by a UNSC report (UN, 2016) indicating that the overall security situation in eastern DRC had not improved and various national and internally linked armed groups continued to operate there.

The fact that the constitutional court called for in the Sun City Agreement only became operational a decade later (Nantulya, 2018) allowed violence and conflict to continue to escalate in DRC, particularly in the east. The situation was further aggravated by the

delay in national elections, leading to the terrorising of civilians, destruction of properties, looting, killing and sexual violence within the region. Women were not formally included in the Sun City negotiations, but, as mentioned earlier, they made their mark by innovative actions such as theatre and song.

3.8 The role of MONUSCO

In 1999 the UNSC established MONUC with a mandate to ensure enforcement of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the disengagement of all military forces and to closely liaise with all parties. MONUC responsibilities were later expanded to include supervising implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and performing multiple additional tasks. A year later, via UNSCR 1925, MONUC was renamed MONUSCO and given a different mandate reflecting the new phase reached in the DRC (UN, 2010). The new mission was authorised to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate, which covered the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and support for the DRC government in its stabilisation and peace consolidation efforts. MONUSCO has a yearly budget of 1.5 billion USD and some 20,000 personnel representing 60 countries, with India, Bangladesh, Tanzania, South Africa, Uruguay, Nepal, Egypt, Morocco and Pakistan contributing most military personnel, MONUSCO in DRC is reported to be one of the longest running and most expensive missions in the UN's history (Perera, 2017).

While MONUSCO's role is to protect civilians, stabilise the country and support the government, the security situation remains extremely volatile, with ongoing conflict and destabilisation, especially in eastern DRC, mainly caused by armed rebels, posing a major challenge to MONUSCO in terms of achieving its mandate. Civilians continue to be

killed and 95 MONUSCO personnel have been killed, in addition to others wounded (UN, 2015). There have also been allegations that some MONUSCO personnel have been involved in sexual gender-based violence against women in the region. This criticism is supported by Duarte and Mossi (2006), who says that Congolese women have been victims of rape committed by MONUSCO troop, with some 75 allegations and around 20 cases verified in 2004. Karhakubwa (2015) further notes that children born of rape or sexual exploitation by MONUSCO staff often end up destitute, living in extreme poverty and some ending up on the street. Despite the mixed opinions about MONUSCO, Karhakubwa (2015) believes that MONUSCO's intervention is still necessary in DRC although the population may misunderstand its mandate. MONUSCO is working on stabilising DRC through the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (MONUSCO, 2019), designed to support implementation of the National Stabilization and Reconstruction Programme in DRC. The ISSSS aims to address the specific conflict dynamics of eastern DRC, reflecting an interplay of security issues, mobilisation around land and identity, natural resource exploitation and regional dynamics.

In March 2018 the UNSC extended the peacekeeping mission in DRC for a further year, making it a priority to protect civilians and provide support for the implementation of a 31 December 2016 agreement on holding elections.

In addition to bringing in international peacekeepers in eastern DRC, the Sun City peace talks attempted to implement security sector reforms in the national army and police forces. The impact has been limited, however. FARDC, established in 2003 following the Second Civil War, works in collaboration with MONUSCO to stabilise the region; in 2013, for instance, together they defeated the M23 rebel group. However, FARDC troops, supposed to protect the population, have themselves also been accused of sexually

abusing women in the Kivu region, and especially in North Kivu. A UN Secretary General report (UN, 2018) indicates that, in 2010, 42 members of FARDC and 17 members of the national police force were convicted of rape.

Worth noting are some examples of good practice where support and intervention have been implemented by DRC police, notably the establishment of a one-stop clinic in a police station in Goma that offers protection to women and children and is a focal point for specialised support to rape victims. Created in 2002 due to sexual violence incidents involving women and children, in 2014, it extended support to all victims of gender-based violence, including men. Offering protective identification of perpetrators by the victims, it provides various services, including legal assistance, using the Canadian model of a one-stop forensic centre for the whole of DRC and all the police staff (both men and women) were trained by Canadian experts and are highly competent for the job assigned to them. Agents are trained to identify sexual violence crimes, provide support and pursue justice, ensuring that perpetrators are arrested and brought to trial. The unit has helped reduce gender-based violence and intends to reshape the slogan ‘capital of rape’ into ‘world-class school for handling rape’, with its superintendent in an interview alleging that the one-stop clinic has become a model for the African region. In 2016, 241 cases of sexual violence were recorded, falling to 233 in 2017, but sexual violence is clearly under-reported. Despite this unit, based in Goma, providing support to civilians, access is a challenge for many people, especially those living in rural areas as there are few means of transport and poor roads.

Examples of good practice emerging from peacebuilding initiatives in DRC over the last years are few, however, as the persistence of violence – especially in eastern DRC – points to the failure of national-level peace agreements and measures to create the

conditions for sustainable peace in DRC as a whole. Considering the failings of attempts at peace in DRC in the context of Lederach's (1997) approach to peacebuilding gives some indications as to why this remains the case.

3.9 DRC conflict in reference to Lederach's theory

Lederach's (1997) approach to conflict analysis and peacebuilding can aid in understanding the complexity of the conflicts that have plagued DRC (the North Kivu region in particular) and the limitations of peace efforts to date.

As explained in Chapter 2, Lederach (1997) suggests that contemporary conflicts need to be understood as multi-layered and involving many actors, with root causes lying in issues such as identity politics and inequalities – undoubtedly true of the conflict in North Kivu. In their report on the conflict in North Kivu, Promundo (2014) noted that causes are linked to uncertainties related to citizenship and land rights that continue to affect people's livelihoods. The conflict involves politicians, multinational companies, many different armed and rebel groups and neighbouring countries, frequently driven solely by economic interests and with no interest in enhancing peace (if anything the opposite), whose main focus, at any price, is on acquiring and retaining wealth. Another root cause is the persistence of patriarchy and particularly the presence of a highly militarised expression of masculinity in the region perpetuating the violence.

All of these root causes would need to be addressed for sustainable peace to emerge, which however, is not yet the case. The first Congo peace talks (Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement) focused only on ceasing hostilities and peacekeeping, doing little to address wider causes, and while the second talks (Sun City Agreement) did aspire to addressing some of the root causes and adopting a broader approach to peacebuilding (security sector

reform, democratisation, etc), key issues – notably gender equality – were entirely overlooked; these defects were compounded by a lack of political will to implement the agreement.

In relation to Lederach's pyramid model, it is clear that peacebuilding efforts to date have not taken an integrated approach. The Lusaka and Sun City attempts were wholly focused on the elite levels of political and military power. Civil society and grassroots organisations were not included in either the peace talks or in post-peace initiatives. In particular, women's groups and organisation have consistently been side-lined from peace attempts. They were not represented in Lusaka and were only marginally present in Sun City, despite the obviously gendered impacts of the wars. It is clear that gendered power differentials are at play in all attempts to move from war to peace in DRC, with women's inequality leading to their exclusion from peacebuilding as currently practiced in DRC. Meanwhile, politics continues to be dominated by the government in Kinshasa, some 2,500 km from North Kivu (Promundo, 2014). Regional government offices are poorly resourced, staff are demotivated and often go unpaid for months, and infrastructure is poor, in particular roads, which renders humanitarian aid difficult and complicates women's access to support services. Local NGOs working with affected civilians are operating with limited or no resources.

3.10 Gender differences and issues in DRC

Lederach's pyramid of peace puts forward a proposal for an integrated approach, inclusive of all those impacted by conflict in peacebuilding at different societal levels. Yet, in DRC – as elsewhere – women are mainly marginalised, and if present, are represented almost exclusively at the grassroots level. Women may constitute 53% of the

DRC population, but their representation in national public life remains extremely low (Matundu, 2010). According to a gender profile report for DRC (JICA, 2017), gender inequality in DRC is significant and is reflected in a discriminatory Family Code, a lack of physical integrity, limited access to resources and assets and lack of citizenship freedoms. Traditionally, land belongs to tribes, and men and chiefs control its allocation and negotiate and make decisions pertaining to the use of agricultural land. Although women can legally inherit, they cannot own property; thus, when a husband dies, his parents and brothers take over the widow's property, often leaving her destitute. Inequality is also produced through religion. During my scoping study visit to Kinshasa in December 2015, participants highlighted the fact that the church did not support gender equality, with traditional norms such as the submission of women always put into play. The DRC Family Code enshrines many discriminatory practices in its articles, e.g., that the husband is the head of the household, that a husband can take control of his wife's property, that a wife must obey her husband, that a wife needs her husband's permission for many different activities and that the husband determines where the family resides (see Appendix 7 for a summary of the main provisions affecting women). As True and Davis (2015) state gender-based violence is informed by discriminatory societal norms around gender, including discriminatory family codes that entrench men's domination over women and children.

Women account for 70.7% of labour in agriculture and, since they have restricted access to qualified jobs, they tend to be marginalised in the employment market outside the agricultural sector. Women have less access to qualified jobs than men, and they tend to be marginalised in the employment market outside the agricultural sector (Gouzou, 2009). They tend to concentrate more in agriculture production to meet their family's food needs and frequently sell produce to compliment the household income. They also

depend on small-scale income-generating activities in trade, although most cash earned is handed over to husbands. They have limited access to the capital that would enable them to develop economic activities; not allowed to own properties, which would act as collateral, they are prevented from accessing credit (JICA, 2017). DRC has a very high rate of maternal mortality, at 730 per 100,000 live births in 2013 (JICA, 2017). Women living in rural areas face additional challenges such as early marriage and high birth rates in addition to ongoing violence. Many victims of sexual violence (including conflict-related sexual violence) end up with unwanted pregnancies, STDs and HIV/AIDS. Gender-based violence, sexual violence and violence against women generally are also used as a war tactic to humiliate and torture women and their families.

Some 8,000 women in DRC were raped in 2009 alone (International Trade Union Confederation, 2011), with roughly 60% of rape victims gang-raped in their own homes by groups of armed men or civilians. According to Robinson (2016), rape remains the predominant form of sexual and gender-based violence reported by women survivors who seek services. In many cases raped women are abandoned by their husbands and are condemned to live with permanent physical damage such as destroyed reproductive organs or HIV/AIDS. Some women suffer post-traumatic stress disorder and social stigmatisation while others have had to raise children born of violence. According to USAID (2018), many sexual violence cases are not reported to the authorities nor are claims investigated when they are reported, further indicating that the high rates of gender-based violence are the result of gender discrimination, the low social status of women and harmful cultural practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation.

The DRC constitution of 2006 prohibits all forms of violence and discrimination against women in the private and public spheres. DRC has also ratified several treaties which include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (see Appendix 6 for all ratifications of international treaties by DRC). However, domestic violence is not penalised in either the Penal Code (2006 amendments) or in the Family Code; while sexual violence was penalised in the Penal Code of 2006, spousal rape is still not recognised as a crime (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2012). Any laws in place to protect women are not always enforced effectively, allowing gender-based violence and sexual violence to thrive (UK Home Office, 2017; BBC, 2010).

While education is free according to the DRC constitution, children from poor families are not able to attend school due to the extra cost of books and sometimes the long distances involved in travelling to school without proper transport means. Furthermore, boys tend to be prioritised over girls when it comes to schooling opportunities and women have high illiteracy levels due to the fact that many girls are not able to finish school because of early pregnancy and early marriages. Schools do not allow pregnant students to attend, while boys are favoured on the assumption that girls are not worth investing in, as they will leave home after marriage, not to mention the fact that educated girls are not considered to be good wife material (JICA, 2017). The country's constitution and Family Code of 1987 stipulates that the marriage age is 15 years for women and 18 years for men. Dalmonte (2017) reports that early and forced marriages are widespread in DRC and that most women have been subjected to intimate-partner violence.

Just as in family life, Congolese women are not involved in decision-making in the public sphere. In politics and the military, men are in charge. Congolese women's representation

in politics is very low; only 8.4% of national parliamentarians are female – the lowest rate in Africa – and they rarely obtain positions of power (JICA, 2017). According to a 2010 study by Peace Women (cited in IRIN, 2011), women occupy only 7.2% of higher positions in government and parliament. The proportion of female parliamentarians is highest in Kinshasa (17%) and lowest in Équateur (5%) and South Kivu (3%). In addition, a report on gender, peacebuilding and security indicates that women are still largely underrepresented in the security forces, as only 3% of FARDC troops are women and are mainly concentrated in the capital (Gouzou, 2009).

On the ongoing conflict in DRC and its severe impact on women, many conventions and international agreements related to gender have been ratified but with little or no positive impact on women in DRC. While DRC has established laws, policies, and action plans on gender and revised its discriminatory Family Code in July 2016, implementation has been ineffective due to lack of commitment and political will. The revised Family Code includes detailed rules for the application of women's rights and gender equality and removes the need for marital authorisation for a married woman to undertake a business. It also imposes an obligation upon spouses to agree on any legal deeds containing mutual obligations, whether individual or collective. Spouses are also required to demonstrate mutual respect and consideration in their dealings, without prejudice to their other respective obligations in the management of their household and the principle of participation and concerted management of the household is upheld, in particular in relation to assets and charges (JICA, 2017).

3.11 Congolese women and peacebuilding in reference to Lederach's pyramid

As is clear from this chapter, peace talks and attempts at peacebuilding to date in DRC have been elite-led processes that have failed to incorporate voices from all levels of

society or to derive ways of addressing the complex causes of conflict. Given the gendered societal and political dynamics described above, with regard to women, and despite the gendered nature of the conflict, women have been excluded from the approach to peacebuilding adopted thus far: discussions are led by men and decisions are made without the involvement of women.

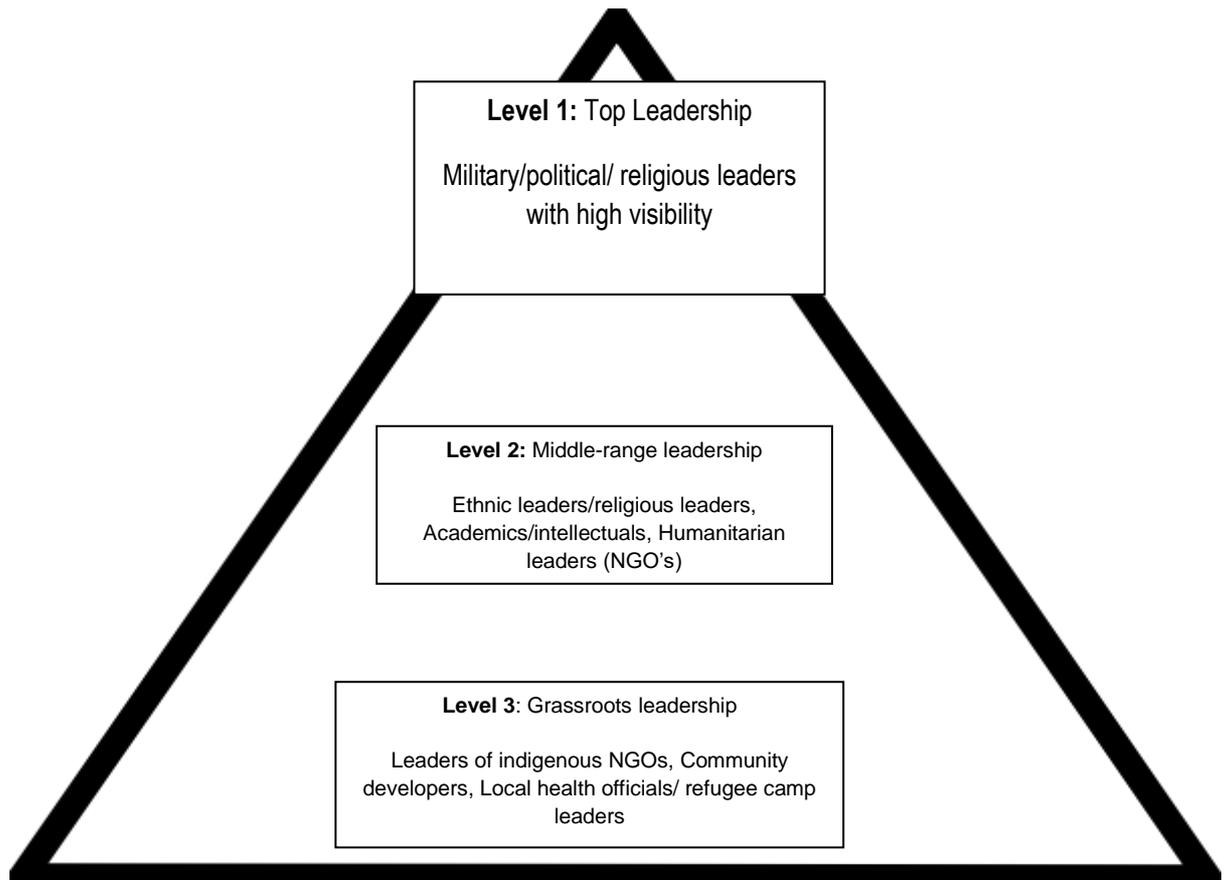


Figure 3.4. Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid.

Lederach indicates that military, political and religious leaders with high visibility typically reflect the top level. As discussed in previous chapters, these positions are mainly held by men in the DRC, who exclude women or minimise the important role women can play in peacebuilding despite their wealth of experience, while the dynamics at work in the case of DRC in general (and the Kivu region in particular) especially affect women. Exclusion of women in top level peacebuilding is noted by Mpoumou (2002).

She points out that Congolese women were practically excluded from negotiations leading up to the 1999 Lusaka Peace Agreement and only one woman was designated to participate in the preparatory meeting of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Sun City, South Africa. She demonstrates that women's efforts to participate in formal peace processes have faced various challenges with the divided and tense environment of conflict negotiations reinforcing prevailing patriarchal and other social attitudes that exclude women from power circles. This lack of women at elite level politics continues to this day. According to IPU (2020) as of December 2019 there were 64 women (12.8%) within the parliament and 23 in the senate (21.1%) in DRC.

The second level of middle-ranging actors with a wide range of leadership experience – mainly respected ethnic/religious, academic/intellectual leaders and humanitarian actors – in the case of DRC, is again occupied mainly by men, despite the fact that many women have equal leadership capacity which they demonstrate in their engagement with their communities. Lack of participation at this level is evidenced by a CEDAW (2013) report by NGOs from South and North Kivu which stated Congolese women's organisations have very little involvement in the peace negotiations and that there were no women who participated in the Kampala I or Kampala II negotiations and even in Kampala III negotiations only two women on the side of government and two on the side of the M23 took part as observers, in delegations of more than 50 people. The negotiation talks had started in December 2012 under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. It is not that there is no involvement at all of women in peace efforts – but it is clear that their involvement is always on the margins or at the grassroots. They are excluded from most formal levels of peacebuilding and grassroots organisations are not informed about or invited to negotiations. Cultural norms are a contributing factor

and women who question ongoing injustice are often under threat, which means that women leaders often feel they have to remain silent due to fear of attack and even murder, as will be shown in the upcoming chapters.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has considered the experiences of war and attempts at peacebuilding in DRC after two civil wars between 1996 and 2003 and ongoing conflict, especially in eastern DRC. The causes are multiple – identity issues and marginalisation of some communities, the resource curse and international politics. Fundamentally, however, the causes and conduct of the wars have been highly gendered. Peace attempts to date have not achieved the conflict transformation posed by Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid. Rather, a male elite dominates peace processes that fail to address underlying causes or to seek positive peace. Women in particular are side lined, confined to grassroots initiatives and prevented from full integration by persistent gender inequalities.

Having provided background, the thesis now proceeds to present and analyse fieldwork carried out in the Goma region of DRC. Through interviews and focus group discussions with women and leaders of women organisations, the potential contributions of women to peace and security will be explored, the barriers to their integration identified and recommendations made for how to include them in sustainable peace efforts.

Chapter 4

Field Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the approach to field research undertaken in Goma in the North Kivu province in eastern DRC in April 2018. The area where the research was carried out is mainly populated by women and families who have been displaced from rural to suburban neighbourhoods due to the ongoing conflict and violence. The chapter begins with a description of Goma, North Kivu and the environs, then goes on to describe the qualitative research and data collection methods used, based on focus group discussions with local women's groups and interviews with women leaders of local organisations and senior officials (men and women) from national and international NGOs.

My field research, designed to explore the position of women in relation to peacebuilding in eastern DRC, aimed to understand how conflict has affected women's peace and security, perceptions of peace, security and peacebuilding among women's groups in North Kivu, what, if any, peacebuilding processes to date have impacted on women's lives, the level of women's participation, factors that facilitate or hinder their participation and, finally, how their level of participation in peacebuilding can be enhanced in line with Lederach's ideal of integrated peacebuilding.

4.2. North Kivu geography and demographics



Figure 4.1. Map of North Kivu, DRC (European Union).

North Kivu, with its capital in Goma, is one of the 26 provinces of DRC and is located in the eastern part of the country. It borders Rwanda and Uganda to the east, and the DRC provinces of Maniema to the west, Province Orientale to the north and northwest and South Kivu to the south. It is also bordered by the three great lakes of the region: Lake Kivu to the South, Lake Edward to the east and Lake Albert to the north. North Kivu, which comprises six territories, namely Beni, Lubero, Masisi, Rutshuru, Nyiragongo and Walikale, has a population of almost six million people and has a long history of massive immigration flows, as explained in the previous chapter. The region is rich in mineral

resources, especially gold, diamonds, coltan, cassiterite, coltan, niobium, wolframite, iron, bauxite and timber (UN, 2015a, 2015b).

North Kivu has a long history of massive immigration flows, while areas such as Masisi have particularly high population densities, with many residents originally from Rwanda. As of January 2015, there were 98,000 displaced people within the region (UN, 2015b). In addition, there are an estimated 800,000 internally displaced persons and some 300,000 refugees in Nord Kivu. The persistent violence continues to displace the local population and more than 200,000 Congolese are estimated to have left their homes since August 2007. The military conflict remains a reality, while the ongoing conflict is still focused on unresolved issues of citizenship and land access.

The conflict and mass population movements have created a complex emergency and left a strong legacy of group grievances and ethnic tensions. In addition, due to the ongoing insecurity within the region, civilians, even though largely farmers, neglect their land and livelihoods. The majority of people work in the informal sector and unemployment remains extremely high, especially among youth.

4.3 Goma

Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, is located on the northern shore of Lake Kivu very close to the Rwandan city of Gisenyi. With a population of around one million, Goma has been impacted by many traumatic events, which include natural disasters, the Rwandan genocide and persistent conflict.

In 2002, Nyiragongo volcano erupted and destroyed 10–15% of Goma. The great damage to the city forced a mass evacuation of the population, while inhabitants continue to live with the threat of new lava flows and other eruptive hazards from this volcano.

As detailed in the previous chapter, Rwandan inter-ethnic violence in 1993 and the genocide of April-June 1994 led to the influx of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees to camps around Goma. The presence of the refugees and the wider conflict has meant that Goma has become a centre for national and international bodies and NGOs, with Goma hosting the logistical headquarters of around 100 international humanitarian and development organisations operating in war-affected zones around the region. These organisations have become critical to the survival strategies of civilians and have largely replaced the state in many areas of life and in providing humanitarian and emergency support. In the city of Goma, the presence of both the national army and MONUSCO is highly noticeable as this is a centre for their operations. Many local NGOs have also been working to reconstruct the social fabric destroyed by armed conflict in the region.

There are several reasons why Goma was chosen as the site for field research. Firstly, as explained in the previous chapter, despite the formal peace efforts of the last decades, eastern DRC remains impacted by ongoing conflict and is a region where the gendered impact of the conflict has been strongly felt (Promundo, 2014) There are many female-headed households in the Goma area, due to the impact of conflict and displacement of women farmers from lands in the Kivu region. The majority of people living in Goma's suburbs have migrated from rural villages within North Kivu and most of the grassroots women who participated in the research are from this population segment. Research informants were thus mainly internally displaced women from war zones who were provided with shelter in Goma and who have no wish to return to their villages.

For example, one focus group consisted of 15 women from a neighbourhood of Goma situated on the road leading to Masisi and populated only by victims of war. The women have been installed temporarily in that area, supported by international NGOs, and can only return to their homes when peace is re-established. Tensions from ongoing conflicts and violence with destructions of homes and properties have caused many families to leave their homes. For them, Goma is much safer and well-guarded, due to the high presence of MONUSCO and local military and police, giving civilians a greater sense of security. For that same reason Goma is also a relatively safe space in which to undertake field research. While I had the opportunity to meet women in Goma who were impacted by the conflict, it would also have been interesting to meet women who are daily suffering from the effects of war, notably rape, in their own villages, but unfortunately, for security reasons, areas beyond Goma remained inaccessible.

4.4 Gatekeepers

The gatekeepers of my research were Caritas Goma and Christian Aid, both locally based NGOs that are well connected to established international development organisations. They have been delivering support and development projects in the region from a community development approach for over two decades.

During the field research, I was accommodated in the Caritas Centre in Goma, located close to the MONUSCO headquarters. This well-recommended guesthouse is a first preference for national and international NGO representatives due to its location and the security it offers. The Caritas Centre is also located within the community, which allowed me to observe and interact with many people accessing the centre, some of whom were

involved in relief and humanitarian work and thus a good source of background information.

Women participating in the focus group discussions were selected from groups involved with Christian Aid, an organisation that has been working and supporting women's projects in the region in delivering training on food and nutrition, personal and life skills and income-generating activities. The organisation also works closely with the local office of the Ministry of Gender and the Family in Goma, which, although poorly resourced, works actively with several organisations that support women. Christian Aid also runs various activities on their premises in support of women, including training for women and youth in creating enterprises (e.g., pottery, sewing and tailoring, hair dressing and agriculture). Women participants in these training courses have acquired skills that they use in running small income-generating activities such as tailoring and garden vegetable and fruit businesses.

Due to their long-established community work with women and their local networks, both Caritas Goma and Christian Aid were well placed to act as gatekeepers for my research.

4.5 Field research (April 2018)

The primary approach used in the field work was a qualitative research method incorporating semi-structured oral interviews with women leaders and focus group discussions with grassroots women. The strength of this qualitative approach derives mainly from its inductive approach, with its focus on specific situations and people and its emphasis on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative research tends to capture participants' unique experiences and the meanings they extract from their

particular context. Since this study was focused on capturing the experiences of women in peacebuilding through their own voices and expressions, qualitative research was deemed the most appropriate approach.

Eight interviews were conducted with senior officials from national and international organisations and five interviews were conducted with local woman leaders. Six of the senior official interviewees were recommended by Caritas and Christian Aid based on their work and expertise in the area, while two of the interviewees were identified using the snowball method (i.e., individual interviewees recommending people whom they knew had experience and interest in the subject).

One such snowball recommendation led to an interview with the Commissioner Superintendent of the police station with a one-stop centre for women victims of sexual violence. The one-stop centre, established in 2002 due to the increased incidence of sexual violence against women and children in the region, acts as a focal point in providing specialist support, as it endeavours to investigate all cases of GBV and especially rape and to restore the rights of the victims by arresting and punishing the perpetrators. The second snowball recommendation was with a senior staff member in Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, founded in 1999 by Dr Denis Mukwege, 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner. The hospital is a general hospital but has a specialist women's reproductive health unit which provides medical assistance, psychosocial support, legal aid and social inclusion/integration support to 1,500 victims of sexual violence every year, including women and girls affected by fistula, often caused by rape. These interviews gave particular insights into the impact of conflict on the women of the region and an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing women and girl victims of sexual violence.

Five interviews were held with local civil society women leaders, mainly heading local organisations and presenting their issues at local, regional, national and sometimes international level.

Finally, eight focus group discussions were also held with eight grassroots women organisations.

Details of the interviews and focus group discussions are provided in Appendix 2. While original guidelines were prepared, the approach was open and semi-structured. In my encounters, therefore, I used issues raised by groups and individuals to reshape questions for subsequent groups and individuals, in order to pull in more information from the participants.

While language can potentially be a barrier to social research abroad, as a speaker of both Swahili and English, this was not an issue in my field work. While the women participating in the focus group discussions were from various ethnicities and religious backgrounds, they all shared a common language, Swahili, which was the main language used for discussion. For interviews with local woman leaders and senior officials I used both Swahili and English.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Oral interviews, conducted by me personally in Swahili and English, were used to gather qualitative data (Appendix 3). Respondents were asked questions about the causes of conflict, women's contribution to peacebuilding and reconciliation and strategies used to ensure women's participation. The interviewing process began with the interviewee being informed about the study and then being asked some general questions. This helped the respondents to relax and established their authority and confidence as experts in the field of study. This initial process was important because, as possessors of relevant

knowledge, they needed to feel in control of the interaction. I then moved to core questions relevant to the study. The open-ended structure of the questions permitted me to pose supplementary questions whenever unanticipated patterns emerged, although the focus of the study was maintained throughout the whole interviewing process.

In some interview sessions, interviewees were quite talkative; this worked to my advantage as more information was revealed with no interruptions that extensively covered almost all relevant issues. Such freely and plainly spoken responses also created openings for further questioning. At times, some of the interviewees spoke with deep feeling, particularly in recalling unpleasant conflict experiences. Responses and other observations relevant to the study were written down, given that field notetaking is an essential aspect of qualitative social research (Bogdan, 1992) in order to capture what one hears, sees, experiences and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on information. I also used a digital recorder to record the conversation with the participants, as a recording made it possible to capture information left out during notetaking. After the interviews, recordings were fully transcribed.

4.5.2 Senior officials

The purpose of interviewing senior officials was to capture the views and experience of individuals, both men and women, who had in-depth knowledge of the prevailing situation in the region and to record their different perceptions and perspectives on the subject. As mentioned, interviewees were selected through recommendations of Christian Aid and Caritas and snowball sampling. Five representatives from national organisations and three representatives from international NGOs were interviewed, aged mainly

between 30-55 years. The organisations were International Alert/Rescue, Tearfund, Dynamique Des Femmes Juristes, Maison de la Femme (Ministry of Gender and the Family), Caritas, Interchurch Medical Assistance World Health, Panzi Hospital and the police, represented by the Commissioner Superintendent. Information was sent to potential interviewees and if they agreed to be interviewed, their consent was verbally sought and agreed before interviews. All interviews were carried out face-to-face and were recorded.

4.5.3 Local women leaders

The purpose of interviewing local woman leaders was to explore in depth the level of women's engagement in grassroots and civil society activism in the area and to capture and supplement information by talking to women with a broad perspective on the conflict. The interviewees – all local women – were selected on the recommendations of Christian Aid, given its work in the region and knowledge of leadership roles within the organisations. Five interviews were held with women leaders from the Association Des Femmes Juristes, CAFED, Marche Mondial, PIAF and Sauti ya Mama mu Congamani (an association of Congolese women). Two women leaders were in their early sixties while the other three were aged 30-60 years. Some of the younger women interviewed had studied abroad and three of the women ran projects supported by international donors. Two of the women in particular, founders of their organisations, had a long history of activism in the area.

4.5.4 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions lead to a sense of shared experiences and provide insights into specific and sometimes unique situations or challenges faced by people as the setting is one in which participants feel comfortable about sharing their views (Nigel, 1997). My focus group discussions with grassroots women helped gather information on the contributions of women to peacebuilding. All the organisations involved were recommended by Christian Aid and all the women lived in or near Goma. Most of these women had been forced to migrate from rural areas, mainly from villages in North Kivu, abandoning their farms and other properties due to insecurity. Formerly agriculturists, their lifestyle has changed hugely in the city, as they no longer have land to farm. I contacted the women leaders of the grassroots women's organisations, who passed on messages to the women to inform them of the agreed date for the meeting. These leaders also organised the venues for meetings, which were carried out in a central location, mainly community meeting rooms in the Goma suburbs. One group was of women living in an internally displaced persons camp and other groups were in Munigi and Mugunga (6 km and 10 km from Goma centre, respectively). Each group had up to 15 participants, aged 30-60 years old. With the consent of the participants, the discussions, which lasted for a maximum of two and a half hours, were audio-recorded. At the beginning of each meeting, I introduced myself and the topic of my thesis and used pre-prepared questions to guide the focus group discussions. To ensure everyone in the group had an opportunity to make their contribution and to avoid a few women dominating the discussion, I agreed with the participants that hands would be raised when a woman wanted to make a point. During the focus group discussions even though I was financially limited as a researcher,

I made small contributions to support small enterprises by grassroots women formed in groups and with a giteta.¹

4.6 Research ethics

The Trinity College School of Religion Research Ethics Committee approved the field research proposal in November 2017. As the focus of my research was women's local activism for peace in a region beset by complex conflict, it was a requirement to apply for research ethics approval due to the insecurity of the context and the potential vulnerability of the research participants. Since the focus of the research was on women's activism and interest in peacebuilding, there was a risk that the interviews and focus group discussions might impinge on difficulties related to traumatic war-related and conflict-related experiences in eastern DRC.

With such concerns in mind, an ethical way forward was devised, based on working very closely with local gatekeepers and the provision of support networks for study participants. In response to a request by the Research Ethics Committee, a letter of gatekeeper ethical compliance was provided by Caritas, which endorsed this research and offered support for any distress occasioned in or by interviews and focus groups discussions.

In terms of informed consent, at the beginning of each focus group discussion or interview, the research and its purpose were explained to the participants and their consent was sought. While most of the focus group women were illiterate because they had missed out on education due to the conflict, they did have excellent verbal communication skills. Being aware of this situation in applying for ethical approval, it

¹ A merry-go-round group for saving money organised by women. Every month when they meet, they can ask to borrow from the group to improve their business and for any other purpose. They then repay the borrowings by an agreed time.

was agreed that consent for participation could be audio-recorded. The participants were also assured of anonymity; no woman participating was identified by name during the focus group discussions and the interviewees' names were all kept anonymous in that their names were not recorded in transcripts and they are referred to by a code in this thesis. All participants were assured that they could withdraw from the research without penalty at any time.

In terms of data storage, all transcribed interviews and focus group discussions were stored on a password-protected hard drive, to which only I have access, and will be destroyed after five years.

A copy of the submission to the Research Ethics Committee is included in this thesis as Appendix 1.

4.7 Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis involves the careful search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns. Making sense of the data started in the field as I was recording and then transcribing it. On return from the field site, recordings were fully transcribed, and content analysis was used to organise the data, generate categories, themes and patterns and code the data. The process also involved corroborating documentary films and archival material from e.g., CAFED end of the year report 2018 and with verbal data to account for external and internal criticism.

Neuendorf (2002) describes content analysis as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of the characteristics of a message, involving the thorough examination of any piece of written or visual human communication such as those that appear in magazines, newspapers, television commercials, paintings, speeches, novels etc. Similarly, Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) view content analysis as a technique that enables researchers to study

human behaviour in an indirect way, i.e., through an analysis of their communications. Ultimately, therefore, the purpose of content analysis is to study the communication of humans in an unobtrusive manner. Neuendorf (2002) further argues that content analysis allows the researcher to study social behaviour without influencing it and the methodology, instead of presenting the details of a message set, allows a researcher to generate conclusions that can be generalised to other situations.

Coding refers to data reduction through the process of sorting raw data into categories (Suter, 2012). Therefore, to code the data, it was reviewed with the goal of identifying and highlighting strong quotations (marking statements with highlighter pen). A thematic and chronological approach was adopted to the data analysis, i.e., the data was checked in relation to who said what, who said different things and how often. After sorting the data into categories, the contents were used to descriptively represent a bigger picture of the study. Documentary sources also formed an important component of this study, i.e., documents and archival sources were text analysed. Texts were read and re-read to gain an overall sense of the contents, which were then sorted into several categories. In analysing the content, text was transferred to index cards and coded and analysed together with other generated data. Data gathered from the written documents and oral interviews were interpreted and analysed within the theoretical framework and study objectives.

4.8 Reflexivity

My personal interest for undertaking research in this area emerged from my many years of experience working with women affected by violence and conflict. Given this fact, I was very much aware of how personal views, opinions and beliefs could influence my experiences during the course of the field research. As a woman activist, I continue to work with and support many women victims of gender-based violence. In previous

research with women from armed conflict circumstances living in Ireland (Wezesha, 2016), listening to their stories and encounters was emotionally difficult and I often felt very overwhelmed. In this research I was very much aware of my own subjectivity and was therefore cautious regarding my own reactions and interpretations before and during interviews and focus group discussions.

During my research in Goma, many women disclosed personal stories and experiences of sexual violence that raised strong emotions and sometimes anger during the interviews and focus group discussions. I found myself empathising and encouraging the women to keep strong, and their openness helped me achieve an in-depth understanding of the general situation of women in North Kivu. This, together with my own personal feelings and experience of insecurity, enabled me to put myself in their shoes.

Despite the challenges they face, the articulate women of North Kivu have many suggestions as to how peace and security can be enhanced and I hope my research will offer insights into how women can be meaningfully integrated into all levels of decision-making and peacebuilding processes.

The field research period was a very difficult time for me. The insecurity in the region meant I had to be very vigilant all the times. During the focus group discussions, the women also corroborated that insecurity in the region is very high and some of the participants have had loved ones kidnapped and held captive by armed groups. The sense of insecurity was palpable, in fact, and brought strong emotions, most especially fear. I personally kept close contact with my supervisor, who was a great source of encouragement for me, and I also received important emotional support from Caritas.

4.9 Research scope and limitations

Although the situation of women and the conflict in DRC has been documented and featured globally, this study focused only on the participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma in the North Kivu province. Given the extent of the insecurity in this region, reaching out to actual victims could sometimes be problematic. During this field research, I managed to meet an adequate sample of women, bearing in mind the insecure scenario. For data collection purposes, I interviewed and held focus group discussions with participants, using open and semi-structured guide questions. During encounters with participants, I used learning from discussions and issues raised by one group or individual to reshape questions for subsequent encounters so as to pull in more information from the participants. Keeping the focus at a certain level of structure was challenging given the nature and the magnitude of the insecurity in the area during the period of the study visit. For example, the interview with women in an internally displaced persons camp had to be done in a rush, as the men became hostile and the best option was to leave the place, both for my own safety and that of the women. For instance, most of those women were running small income-generating activities (selling vegetables and other food products) and their husbands were not happy that the women were neglecting their business, while other men complained that all support was being directed at the women, yet the men were also suffering. In such circumstances, the time spent with the group had to be reduced. Two women in another focus group also faced the hostility of their husbands for closing their small business to attend the meeting, so I had to cancel for my own security and that of the women. While such limitations related to time and security did impact on the research, close cooperation with gatekeepers enabled the successful conduct of a substantial amount of research.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the context of the case study in Goma and explained the research methods and ethical considerations that governed the project. To gather qualitative data the field research focused on individual interviews with some experts and local women leaders of civil society and grassroots movements and also focus group discussions with grassroots women whose lives have been badly impacted by the conflict. The data was transcribed and coded to check the adequacy and consistency of the themes. The data was then classified into several categories and themes in relation to the research premises. Coding was applied in order reduce repetition and categories were used to sort the descriptive data. During the data analysis the researcher read and re-read the transcripts, marking out important points and ideas, and looking for emerging patterns and connections. After sorting the data into categories, contents were used to descriptively represent the bigger picture of the study. Data gathered from the written documents and oral interviews were interpreted and finally analysed within the context of the theoretical framework of the study. The next chapter will outline the findings of the field research described above in terms of the responses and views of the research participants.

Chapter 5

Research Findings: Women's Participation in Peacebuilding in Goma

5.1 Introduction

Women play important roles in peacebuilding processes, therefore including them in a broad range of peace and security meetings is not only important to ensuring a successful negotiation, but also for ensuring that women's interests are being addressed. UNSCR 1325 urges states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict (UN 2000). Having explained the research approach in Chapter 4, this chapter reports on my key findings in the field in Goma. The findings are aligned under the three key objectives of the study, which are, 1) to explore the roles that women play in peacebuilding in Goma, 2) to identify the barriers they face in relation to their full integration in peacebuilding efforts and 3) the way their contributions can be enhanced. The chapter includes direct quotes from the participants, from interviews held with five local women leaders (LWL), focus group discussions held with eight grassroots women's groups (GW) and interviews with five senior officials (SO). Quotes under each category are recorded using numbers to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

5.2 The role of women in peacebuilding in Goma

The ongoing conflicts in eastern DRC are distinct and complex, leading to displacement and generating humanitarian crises particularly in North Kivu region. Congolese women have been active organising the community, working on different programmes all aiming to empower women and addressing ongoing conflict. In Goma there are many international and national NGOs supporting the community. A report from a meeting held in 2014 on Congolese women participating in the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict, noted that there is a critical mass of women led groups effectively working together to advance women's rights and social justice, to address the sexual violence crisis and to bring peace to the region (International Campaign 2014). In seeking to meet basic needs and address violence in their communities, women can be seen to be doing the work of peacebuilding.

The importance of the work and input of grassroots women is supported by McKay (2002), where she argues that grassroots processes for peace building done by women involve building relationships, meeting basic needs, forgiveness, non-violence, and the process of reconciliation. According to a UN (2018) documentary on the importance of women's participation in peace processes and focusing on DRC, there are countless examples of success on women leading local peace processes. Yet, as indicated in the earlier gendered power analysis of Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid, they remain largely excluded from formal negotiations. As was noted by one of the women participating in the field study,

Our role in peace processes to date has been confined to awareness raising, providing support and services, we are very active here on the ground but our work is not been recognised, we should be included to participate in a meaningful way in facilitation, negotiation, advocacy and politics (LWL1).

From the discussions held during the field study it becomes very clear that in Goma, the role of women in peacebuilding is limited to community activism and their participation in meetings (whether at civil society, domestic elite or international levels) has been informal. Participants during the field study said formal participation in peacebuilding in the region has been dominated by men and that its men organising for these meetings and choosing the people to participate.

We are not included while these meetings are been organised, we just hear there are meeting sometimes from CAFED, men here are incharge of everything, women are completely left out, the men choose the people they want to speak and participate, they arrange for meetings and make all the decision without involving women (LWL3)

Selebogo (2020) confirm this view by saying formal roles allocated and played in the peacebuilding processes are dominated by men. As was clear from the field research, participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma has therefore been limited to three forms at grassroots level; providing services to conflict affected communities; advocacy and informal participation; and setting up local security committees.

5.2.1 Women as providers of service to conflict affected communities

Many of the efforts made to sustain peace and security in countries faced by conflict are undertaken by grassroots organisations, often formed by those whose lives are most directly and significantly affected by the conflict. In Goma local women leaders are providing very important services at grassroots level which include training and skills development, provision for psychological and moral support, community support for women and children abandoned due to rape and providing access to justice for victims of conflict related sexual violence. Paffenholz (2013) affirms their important roles in these

areas and points out that leaders involved at the grassroots level are reaching and meeting basic human needs, for food, safety, shelter and addressing unresolved human conflict. Local women leaders are actively providing valuable support and services in the midst of the conflict,

We have many women organisations here, my organisation is supporting women to report cases of violence and get support, we provide this service free even though it is expensive, women here are poor, they are trying to cope with the reality of conflict especially those arriving from the villages after attack, most of them are in very bad form, we refer them for counselling too (LWL1).

Women's groups are noted to be very effective in working to meet such needs and bridging existing divides. McKay points out that women's involvement at grassroots level involves support for victims of sexual violence with access to justice and psychological support and that they work to bring changes (McKay 2002). The local women's groups are organising meetings with participants from different faiths and ethnic origins. One such group has been organising for health and wellbeing and screening for women and children, bringing resourceful speakers to facilitate such meetings. One local women leader had this to say,

Here our work with women involves all women, we do not select or look at our differences, we are working together to bring change to our society, we hold these meetings regularly, here in this group we have members of different faith groups and people from different tribes, the conflict affects all of us, we are united by our experience and must look for a solution together (LWL3)

Health support for women is key, especially because most often women have different health needs that include reproductive health, with access quite often affected during conflict. Some of the women's groups in Goma are providing health services support specifically to women. Although they are poorly resourced, in these clinics they provide information on women's reproductive health and other related health issues.

We established this information centre here to encourage women to come forward for information, everything is expensive here and travelling to public health is sometimes difficult for the women, they don't have money for transport and others fear to face long queues waiting to be attended or seeing by the doctor, we need support to improve this clinic so that we can provide better service for women which include contraceptive and clinics for pregnant mothers, we are just trying our level best (LWL5)

Women are also supporting victims of conflict related sexual violence by providing services and refuges to women and girls abandoned by their families due to rape. In these homes girls and women give birth to children born out of rape, they are supported with counselling and maternal health. Other women's groups in Goma are providing support and services to women victims of violence through training, psycho-social support and small loans to establish small businesses, which include selling of fruit, vegetables and other supplies. This enables women recovering from violence to rebuild their lives, giving them hope.

In this refuge we provide full accommodation and food for women apart from this we try to build their confidence and skills, we deliver literacy classes, women learn calculations and art skills such as sewing, skills that they can use when they leave so that they can integrate well with the community, we also give them counselling (LWL3)

The Federation of Women Lawyers in Goma (FIDA) is supporting women victims of sexual violence to access justice, free of charge. Sometimes these women receive threats (both victims and those supporting them) from the perpetrators, however they are providing a great service even though poorly resourced. Gizelis (2011) acknowledges the role of grassroots women by pointing out that such women are involved in many different peacebuilding initiatives at the community level which include day-to-day and emergency support for their communities. The women in Goma are committed to address the issues affecting their community and are working hard to meet the needs of the

community even though with difficulties. One of the participants working with victims of sexual violence had this to say:

We have many groups and organisations supporting the very vulnerable including children, the wounded and sexually abused, sometimes we struggle to provide support, our resources are limited, like my organisation we have been supporting women and girls from the rural area who have been abandoned by their families after rape. This organisation is their home, we take them to the hospital, feed them and after they deliver their babies, we support them, some of them do not want to see these children, it is very hard here (LWL4).

As indicated above LWL have been delivering support and needed service within the region, some of them for a long time. These interventions respond to the social, economic, sexual, and psychological impacts of violence on women, aiming to support resilience and development for women, families, and community in the context of conflict. However, they felt ignored and excluded when it comes to formal meetings in the region or anytime there are meetings to discuss the conflict situation in North Kivu. They were of the opinion that they can be supported better by the international NGOs working in the region since some of them have been known to them for a long time, they believe they have much to contribute to the discussions from their direct experience of the violence and their on-going community work. As one of the women leaders who have been very active for over 20 years remarked,

We know the issues very well here; I have, for example, been working in my organisation for the last 21 years, I am so much aware of what is going on. Sometimes you fear to say exactly what is happening, there are people benefiting from the misery of this place, the community is suffering. They make all the decisions and talk about what is happening here and then the information is shared in Kinshasa. There is, however, not much support and no one to really represent our issues and problems properly. We could present ourselves if we were allowed, there are many people here who know what is happening (LWL2).

Despite these challenges, there have been attempts among the existing community-based women's organisations to come together and form an umbrella group, the Collective of Women's Associations for Development (CAFED) in order to coordinate their activities, share learnings and support each other's work. CAFED is also attempting to ensure women are heard in formal peacebuilding arenas, however, as will be shown in the next section, their presence remains on the periphery.

5.2.2 Informal Participation of women in peacebuilding meetings

The Collective of Women's Associations for Development (CAFED) to date has helped women in Goma to share their work experience and learnings, as well as coordinate their activities. This umbrella organisation which is a coalition of grassroots movements has been able to receive some small funding which has enabled members to participate in meetings at different levels and to progress their work. CAFED was established in 1993 and has a membership of 34 women's groups within the Kivu region, most of them based in Goma. As mentioned above, each group is providing much needed support, in areas of health, economic empowerment and psychosocial support. In their report in 2018 CAFED outlined some of their activities which include the coordination of activities and monitoring peace and security, as well as challenging the impact of the ongoing conflict and violence in the region (CAFED, 2018).

Since 1993 CAFED has been organising meetings, documenting the situation in North Kivu, and sharing with the international community. In 1999 even though they were not included in peace negotiations in Lusaka, members of CAFED were able to put their concerns together and circulate them during the meeting. They were read and posted to all participants of the meeting and in July 2013 the members participated in a conference

in Bujumbura on peace and security organized by Mary Robinson, the special envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa (CAFED 2018).

This work of CAFED is in line with other initiatives taken by Congolese women, who have been organising themselves and, although usually uninvited, have succeeded in attending some of the official, elite level, peacebuilding meetings. In 2003 Congolese women organised themselves and were supported to attend discussions on the peace agreement in Sun City, South Africa. Whiteman (2007) pointed out the important role played by women in Sun City when they rose from their seats and formed a human chain to block the exits to the committee room. They demanded that the men would not leave until they signed the agreements before them. These women succeeded and the agreement was signed (Whitman, 2006). Local women leaders from Goma has been attending many meetings at local, regional, national and international level, mainly through the support of CAFED. In these meetings, they are not accorded the status of participants and only attend in the audience. However, they sometimes get the opportunity to speak during discussions and they have been able to raise concerns and issues affecting the community. This same dynamic has also been evident at the international level. One leader recounted this example,

With support by CAFED three of us travelled to New York in March 2018 [to attend the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women] with next to no support from the government or international community. While our presence in New York did not open up opportunities to address the meeting or give input, with support from other women we organised and participated in a side event and during the meeting presented our views and documents regarding our work and the situation in North Kivu (LWL1).

These women's experience in New York is reminiscent of the experiences of other women community leaders who found their lived experience of conflict is not listened to at the UN, or indeed is considered too disruptive to be given space Gibbings (2011)

Grassroots women participating in the study regretted that there has been no attempt to involve them in any such meetings, as they believe they have much to say from the perspective of their own experiences. LWL working with grassroots women who have been affected directly or indirectly by the conflict and war are always keen to take any opportunity available. Through CAFED, the LWL are informed of these opportunities and representatives are selected to represent the organisation. In February 2019 while attending a “Gender is my Agenda” campaign meeting at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, I met one of the LWL who had participated in the field study, she sat with others in the audience, however during discussions she raised concerns on sexual violence and other challenges facing women in Goma.

From the above quotes its very evident that women are pushing their way to participate in peacebuilding meetings at different levels, quite often as representatives of their group but with no accesses to having their voices heard at the meeting table. Naraghi-Anderlini (2007) identifies the important role of women in peacebuilding and the need to have them on the negotiation table to ensure the voices of victims are heard. Gbowee (2015) supports this view and notes that women’s involvement makes a measurable difference in the quality of peace negotiations, which include raising key economic and social issues that include health, education and justice. She noted a place on the table for the women represents an opportunity to challenge and change existing structures, as well as an opportunity to achieve justice. The women interviewed for this study share these views about the importance that their voices should be heard.

Women organisations in Goma are using UNSCR 1325 to push for participation and frame the demands specific to the contexts in which they work. CAFED members interviewed, for example, are aware of Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security and

referred to DRC's first NAP produced in 2010. The International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), for example, has been delivering training to grassroots women on inheritance and access to justice and they are providing legal assistance to women who have been sexually violated, using the NAP under the UNSCR 1325 protection pillar (UN 2000) which addresses the protection of women including zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse of local populations. Otto (2010), noting the importance of UNSCR 1325 argues the Resolution creates leverage that can be utilised by women's peace activists to insist on their participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and it opens new opportunities for promoting women's equality. For LWL in Goma, their understanding of UNSCR 1325 is that it is their right to participate in decision-making and peacebuilding activities and this has empowered some of them to seek support from international NGOs working in the region. Sometimes they give them a once-off support and even if it is not consistent, they are able to maintain their ongoing support to grassroots women.

We have been applying UNSCR 1325 in our work to achieve justice for women. To bring the perpetrators forward, we work with affected women, supporting them with free legal aid. Impunity is, however, a huge problem and must be addressed as well, to ensure that all perpetrators of sexual violence are brought before the law and judged, regardless of their status within society. Sometimes women do not receive justice or fail to report their cases for fear of being attacked again or withdraw their cases for fear of subsequent attacks. The systems here are yet to protect women fully from intimidation, to provide this support we need resources. Sometimes international NGOs support our services (LWL3).

Many participants were therefore familiar with the term 'peacebuilding' and have been applying UNSCR 1325 as a tool for bringing peace, but they acknowledged the difficulties of engaging in peacebuilding activities and indicated that this can only happen if there is security. Local woman leaders described peacebuilding as a process that builds lasting peace and in which all people in society should be involved. The women related

peacebuilding to forgiveness, dialogue, and recovery in order to build trust, reconciliation and new relationships, however security and freedom from violence were paramount concerns for all interviewees. For them, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure peace and security for citizens and they blame politicians and high-ranking officials for not addressing the insecurity problems within the region. While DRC has adopted two National Action Plans (in 2010 and 2018), the first one did not specify a time frame or period of implementation. The second National Action Plan has four main goals of increasing women's participation, prevention, protection, and recovery in the implementation of Resolution 1325 (UN Women 2018) and the National Action Plan aims to address intersectional challenges, such as the particular vulnerability of women who are disabled, and young women. A study in 2020 revealed that in North Kivu, almost three out of four women who lived with a disability experienced some type of intimate partner violence, as compared to the government's rate of one in two. That study recommends further programming targeting women with disabilities and their partners (Scolese *et al.*, 2020). However, there are long and lasting problems that have been raised with the implementation of the NAP and women's participation. As argued by Aroussi (2017) the National Action Plan is implemented through the DRC's Ministry of Gender, Family and the Child (MFGE), which mainly directs donor assistance to the DRC, and has very little operating power and as of 2018, the MFGE had no budget, and no operating power to actually affect the changes that NAP II lays out. The plan also aims to increase women's participation in civic life and elected office, which hovered around 11% at the time of the drafting of NAP II. However, the MFGE has no legal authority, and the legal framework for quotas designed to require 30% of women to hold elected office was never implemented (Aroussi, 2017). This second plan is to be implemented for the period of 2019-2022, despite not setting a budget for its implementation. The government is not

engaging organisations on the ground. Women's groups and organisations are however making use of the plan to raise awareness and advance their work in regard to women, peace and security.

Research participants insisted the government has to show more interest and provide leadership in implementation of the plan and as well commit funding for implementation:

UNSCR 1325 is a powerful and good resource if well implemented, as it can bring peace, but unfortunately there is no commitment and responsibility to implementation by the government. Women's groups and local organisations are trying to use UNSCR 1325 to sensitise women but are doing this without any support. We need finance and the government should back up our efforts, as no change will take place if our own government does not see the importance of supporting and working with us. It must provide resources and leadership to make it effective (LWL5).

In this context of an unimplemented and under-resourced National Action Plan on 1325, women's formal participation in peace building efforts at the elite and civil society levels of the peacebuilding pyramid remains unrealised and women remain on the periphery in Goma.

5.2.3 Women and security committees

The sections above demonstrate that women in Goma are participating in grassroots work for peace and joining informally to peace processes. A third manifestation of women's grassroots work in peacebuilding is their efforts to promote local security. It is striking to observe how women organise themselves even when heavily affected by the conflict. In the absence of reliable governance, the grassroots women explained how they have developed actions to ensure their own security and that of the community. In one of the groups, they described how they called a meeting at the village level and requested each family to register one member for the formation of a security committee to guard the

village against rebel attacks at night (GW5). Taking turns on different nights, those on duty stay awake and stroll around the village to ensure safety. Women also take part, representing families which have no male. Even though they are only armed with simple machetes, they consider this has been enough to deter attackers. Their major concern has been the ongoing violence, as looting and kidnapping have created much fear with these attacks happening during day and night. According to the women, the armed rebels seem to have taken control of the whole region. They appealed to the responsibility of the government to defeat the rebellions and establish peace and security in their villages, but this has not happened and they have therefore taken the lead in establishing this security committee. They also continue to hold community level women-led meetings of the security committee on a weekly basis.

Women in this village gathered up to discuss on the insecurity here, even though during the day the rebels still attack us its worse at night while everyone is supposed to be sleeping, we are attacked unexpectedly, we came up with the idea that if each house is represented by one person, we can form night guard for each day which will help us to be prepared and if the rebels come those guarding will act and as well wake everyone up to fight them back, this has been working, some of us are involved in these night guard, they involve men and women but as women of this village we came up with the idea. (GW2)

This shows women's innovation and courage to support their families and community. It is also interesting to see here that women's contribution during conflict is not limited to care and other related provision, but relates as well to been involved into developing strategies that provide solution which include enhancing security, Lederach (1997) point out that leaders at this level who provide local protection and facilitation initiatives are often effective in ensuring peace and security and as well saving lives. Grassroots women in Goma are providing security on top of other support to their family and community.

Interestingly, for these grassroots women, participating in peace talks was not a primary concern, even though they emphasised that they should be invited so they could share and report on the insecurity they experience. Their priority is physical security, which they said is first needed, as without security women and girls' lives are threatened and hinder their participation.

It's difficult here to plan or do anything we cannot carry on with our lives without fear of being attacked, it has been made normal - women and girls are being attacked, forced into sex and sometimes taken by the the armed group. We fear going to the market or fetch water, we need to feel secure, this will help us to carry on with life normally. We need security before anything else, it's important for any progress here (GW6).

5.2.4 Participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma in reference to Lederach's Pyramid

As the research above has shown, women in Goma are actively participating in peacebuilding through community activism, psycho-social support, security initiatives and informal attendance at peace consultations. From the field study it is clear that these women fully understand recurring conflict, abuses and suffering experienced by the people on the ground and they also have extensive knowledge of local politics, they know the local leaders of government and causes of the conflict.

Women in Goma are providing support services and are organising themselves in order to strengthen their voices, even though they are rarely invited to formal meetings they communicate their concern through writing letters, reports and circulating where these meetings are held. Through the support of CAFED, members are able to attend meetings at local, regional national and international level representing their groups but their presence at the negotiation table is limited. Based on Lederach's pyramid of peace,

women in Goma are definitely playing a crucial role in grassroots peacebuilding but it is harder for them to integrate their insights from community life to the other levels of the pyramid. The examples here demonstrate women have been present at other levels - a good example is the women who attended the meeting in New York and those in Addis Ababa at African Union Headquarters with the support of CAFED. But in both these cases, the women's voices were not centre stage in the discussions of peace and security.

It is clear that there are many challenges hindering meaningful participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma at all levels of the pyramid of peace as indicated by Lederach. These barriers will be explained in depth in the next section.

5.3 Barriers to women's participation in Goma

There are many barriers hindering women's participation and their voices being heard in peacebuilding and negotiations in Goma and beyond. The overlapping conflict in North Kivu region remains a huge threat to women with prevalence of rape and sexual assault generating fear, psychological and physical impacts. The region has been a theatre of violence for the past two decades, starting with the ethnic conflict that preceded the First Congo War in 1996. This section will outline the barriers as presented by the field study participants. These are organised under the following headings: Insecurity and Armed Groups; Sexual Violence, Lack of Access to Resources, Political Exclusion, Patriarchy and Male Domination.

5.3.1 Insecurity and armed groups

Armed conflict and violence are major challenges affecting the region, creating fear and insecurity among the civilians and this was identified by field study participants as one

of the biggest hindrances to women's participation. Armed groups are using weapons to attack and force women into rape which results in pregnancy, sexual transmitted diseases, physical wounds and damage and psychological impacts. According to UN Women (2012), DRC is dominated by a series of violent conflicts characterised by internal and external actors fighting over territory particularly in areas rich in natural resources. Brown (2012) argues that conflict in DRC is as a result of vast amount of rare and valuable natural resources with incredible reserves, such as diamonds, gold, coltan, and cassiterite, which is one of the primary reasons many of the ethnic militias continue to fight in Kivu region. Brown further point out that "access to resources means the ability to buy arms and reward troops thus securing political power which in turn guarantees access to land and resources" (Brown, 2012). This is supported by Perera (2017) who states that armed groups serve as a proxy for their state and a mechanism through which state actors can access power and control and that most of the influential politicians in the DRC come from an armed group background.

This analysis of the ongoing roots of the violence was supported by field study participants. They said the region is very rich in minerals and, together with other underlying factors which have not been addressed, conflict continues to escalate. They pointed out that the root of the conflict which is causing this insecurity is not being addressed, and particularly mineral exploitation is a major driving force behind the ongoing conflict and violence. One grassroots participant (GW2) stated that there are many multinational companies in the region, visible especially in the large trucks carrying minerals, and that everyone seems to have interest in the exploitation of these minerals, including armed groups, politicians and government agents, who are all benefiting from the sale of minerals in high demand for modern technology. Another

participant (LWL4) said that armed rebel groups are the ones mainly creating social disorder, by attacking civilians so that they can continue to exploit minerals:

There are more than 120 rebel groups here, some are small and others are large in numbers. Politicians and high-ranking individuals in the government are engaged in the business and most of them want to retain their political rank; they are the ones recruiting and maintaining these rebel groups in order to retain their positions and interest in exploiting minerals. People here continue to live in an economic war that only benefits a few but is causing instability and insecurity to many civilians (LWL4).

Women consistently reported on the insecurity in their localities, especially in agricultural regions. Militia and even regular soldiers from the national army (underpaid by the ruling government) remain a constant threat to the population. In particular, peasant women and girls are no longer able to access their farms that are their main source of income and means to provide food for their families. Brown (2012) argues conflict in DRC has created dire circumstances within the country and this has also perpetuated the existence of rape as a wartime weapon. This has widespread effects leading to poverty and creating a culture of desperation with the burden of survival falling upon women, as they struggle to keep not only themselves but also the rest of their families alive while they lack economic infrastructure and social development.

Every day we are living in fear, the rebel are armed and can attack anytime, sometimes I just lock myself in the house with the children, I do not want to get out, sometimes there are groups here trying to help, they ask us to meet them but we fear a lot, like me I have witnessed attack on my family, my husband was beaten and killed and the rebel took everything we had, it is very hard to survive we have no land to cultivate here, we have become poor and desperate (GW2)

I personally witnessed high levels of tension in the region, especially when crossing zones labelled as red zones, where there was a visible presence of troops and weapons. Government delay in organising presidential and national elections, planned for December 2016 but still not held when I was conducting my fieldwork, also created anger

and even panic in the population, politicians and armed groups, and further contributed to increasing the existing feelings of insecurity. According to Amnesty International (2018), vicious attacks continue to affect civilians, in particular in Beni: houses are burned down, civilians are killed, bodies of young children and women are mutilated by armed groups and thousands of people are displaced. Women are most concerned about their safety and that of their family. Grassroots women spoke of properties and homes being set on fire by armed men. They said when gangs enter a village, they kill and rape and loot homes to plunder money and valuables. Families are often caught unawares and in trying to escape they are attacked with machetes, with many having to abandon everything to save their lives. Their villages become deserted and they have to establish a new life in poverty and unable to feed their families:

The only thing you see is the flames, the whole village is on fire, our houses, all household contents, crops and animals are destroyed, you are running away to save your life, sometimes separated from children and left destitute, you run without knowing where you will end. This has been our lives. It happens frequently in the villages (GW7).

Conflicts in North Kivu region have led people to live with fear regarding their own lives, the lives of their loved ones and the fear of losing control of their economic destiny. Additionally, armed conflicts have also created conditions for some family members to never return to their homes, thus breaking family links and social bonds (UN 2012). One woman described how she was wounded and lost a leg during an attack by rebels. She ended up in a refugee camp and refused to go back to the village, fearing more attacks and violence. She said she was lucky to survive the first time, as she saw how other people died, and she felt safer in the camp rather than in the village:

I am lucky to be alive, I lost one of my legs when I was running away when our village was set on fire, I have been living here for six years now. Life is very unpredictable in the village, these armed groups have no respect for anyone, they

kill people like they have no feelings at all. I can never go back. I feel safer here (GW6).

Women explained how conflict and violence within the region has created fear and contributed to the break-up of families. When a village is attacked, people lose everything, as individuals from the same family run to different locations to seek refuge. As previously mentioned, women in particular suffer because rebels target them to humiliate the enemy. A woman's rejection by her husband and family because of rape typically leads to the dismantlement of the family. Given the important role that women play in the home, i.e., caring for, rearing and educating children, in the absence of the mother, a family becomes dysfunctional. Grassroots women viewed the woman as the backbone of the family, without whom the family will become dysfunctional. Because of broken families, many children are found loitering around and are recruited to join the rebel groups. One woman explained how the role of the mother is important in keeping the family together:

If a mother is missing in a family, there is nothing left. As a mother, a woman offers emotional support and ensures everything is running in order. Mothers run after everyone, making sure children go to school, are fed and taken care of and they play a huge role in harmonising the family too (LWL1).

Senior officials (SO3) view the ongoing conflict and violence as very complex, as having become normalised within the region and as continuing to affect social and economic infrastructures. Agricultural prospects of acquiring sustenance or generating an income have become restricted, as farms are neglected and many people have abandoned their villages for safer locations. The senior officials highlighted the fact that crimes are committed day and night and that women are especially targeted when in the field cultivating, going to the market and even in their homes. Reaching out to affected communities has also remained problematic due to high levels of insecurity, with the

organisations delivering humanitarian aid having to sometimes be escorted by peacekeeping troops.

Reporting on conflict and environmental insecurity in the North Kivu, Koko (2010), identifies land acquisition and tenure systems as another root cause of the conflict, with many Hutu farmers in the region losing land. This was confirmed by field study participants who said the struggle in North Kivu has escalated because of unresolved issues pertaining to longstanding land disputes. This was reaffirmed by one of the interviewed officials, who explained the situation as originating with Rwandan refugees who began to settle in Goma from 1959. Initially these people were well integrated in the community, acquiring lands that they either bought with money or cattle from village chiefs and eventually becoming naturalised Congolese citizens. However, cohabitation was not always exempt from conflict. The interviewee mentioned a crisis that emerged between native Congolese villagers and Rwandan refugees that led to open war in 1963 and the deaths of many Rwandans. The main crisis occurred in 1992-1993, however, when Rwandan refugees claimed lands that Congolese indigenous were reluctant to acknowledge as their property. The land issue has never been properly resolved. After many years of living in Kivu, Rwandan refugees feel frustrated that land they bought with money or cattle has been denied to them by native Congolese, many of whom simply changed their minds and wanted their land back.

Land issues are major causes of conflict within this region. The law stipulates that land belongs to the state, but according to still valid custom law, ownership is attributed to native villagers under the responsibility of their chief, who can donate or protect the land. The confusion between both state and custom laws regarding land has led to contradictory interpretations and ongoing disputes. While 80% of the conflict is based on land heritage, Rwandan farmers are being denied the ownership of land their ancestors or parents bought from village chiefs. For the indigenous Congolese, such land concessions were a mistake and Rwandans should not be landowners (SO4).

As described above a basic barrier to women's participation in Goma is the ongoing violence and insecurity and particularly the way this impacts on women as core to families and breadwinners. In situations where women cannot even safely leave the house – as recounted by the woman in GW2 above – the chances for participation in the public realm are almost impossible. In addition, sexual violence in particular has and continues to impact on the lives of women and girls in the Kivu region. The following section discusses how conflict related sexual violence affects women and girls and further complicates their participation in peacebuilding work.

5.3.2 Sexual violence

According to UN report Sexual violence and rape are commonly used as a weapon of war in Eastern DRC by all armed groups and government forces and women are a prime target of both rebels and government troops for sexual violence and rape, which are used as a weapon of revenge against the enemy by all combatant forces. Thus, sexual violence has become an instrument of terror and sexual slavery (UN 2012). Zihindula, Makhubele and Muthuki (2018) argue that armies and armed groups use sexual violence as a devastating tactic of war. UNSCR 1325 recognises conflict-related sexual violence as a tactic of war and threat to international peace and security and through the second pillar calls for protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations (UN, 2000).

Field study participants said that widespread sexual violence is a tragedy that will have a long-term effect within the region. They said women are attacked while they are on their way to the market, farming or fetching water and that rape is so frequent it has become a

common practice, even within the community. Field study participants said it is dangerous for women and girls to travel freely to different places, and this hinders their participation in group meetings or even sometimes to access any support for women who have been subjected to sexual violence. A report put together by the participants of International Campaign (2014) to Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict by Congolese women indicated that many victims of sexual violence do not report incidents for fear of retaliation by the perpetrator, and stigmatisation by the families and community. Moreover, victims have little faith in the judicial system marred with corruption and a serious lack of capacity. There is also considerable pressure by the community to settle cases of sexual violence out-of-court, sometimes ending in forced marriage between the victim and the perpetrator. Local woman leaders participating in the field study said they are working with the women to help them achieve justice; however, it can take a long time and, in some cases, women withdraw from pursuing justice due to fear of being attacked again by perpetrators:

Every day you hear stories of women who have been raped on their way to fetch water or to the market. My organisation has tried to help women, as we provide them with legal assistance and we always accompany them for hearings. However, most of them live in fear, threats from rapists are real and we have seen women suffering from depression, while others are very secretive, as they don't want their families or husbands to know, because once raped they are rejected. It is very hard for women here (LWL3).

One of the interviewed senior officials (from the special police unit with the one-stop centre for victims of sexual violence) asserted that while rape was endemic, the police were managing to eradicate the practice through law enforcement and severe punishment of perpetrators; however, research participants were not of the same view. Grassroots women and local woman leaders explained that the abuse of women and girls, and rape in particular, remain a huge problem within the region. Grassroots women referred

constantly to the insecurity within the region and how it was a matter of concern for women, as most of them have witnessed or experienced sexual violence. Women participants in this research consistently cited rape and the targeting of women and girls as a key issue within the region and highlighted the failure to mitigate or resolve the problem. They were of the opinion that raping of women and girls has been normalised at society level,

The community now seem to accept rape as normal, there is no value for women and girls here, we are at risk, always living in fear of attack and rape from the same people we are living with in this community (GW 6)

As indicated by an IRIN report, sexual violence against women during conflict often becomes the accepted norm, as militarisation and increased access to weapons result in high levels of brutality and impunity (IRIN, 2004, p.11). One of the senior officials interviewed, who reported that there were 241 sexual violence cases in Goma in 2016, said that rapists are often brutal and has no mercy for their victims. A one-stop clinic has dealt with rape cases of children as young as 3 years and as old as 90 years. In 2017, 151 perpetrators were arrested for sexually violating minors. The numbers, however, do not give anywhere near an accurate account of rape incidents, since most victims do not report to the authorities to avoid stigmatisation:

Many women when raped keep silent and don't want their families to know for fear of alienation and rejection by husbands (SO2).

One participant explained how her neighbour's teenage daughter had been abducted when armed rebels raided their house, saying that women are fearful of their lives and of those of their children:

No one of us is safe here, women and girls of all ages are targeted for rape even baby girls, we live in fear day and night, we do not feel safe (GW3).

One of the local woman leaders said rape is used by the rebels and armed groups in a strategic and systematic way to humiliate opponents and that perpetrators are committing this crime without fear or shame. As one of those leaders explained, a woman is targeted because she is the one that holds the family together and when you break a woman, you destroy the whole family (LWL4.). When a woman is raped, the husband and his family often disown her. Zihindula, Makhubele and Muthuki (2018) point out that rape negatively affects the survivors in all aspects of their lives, with the physical impact of rape leaving the survivors unable to conduct their normal day-to-day activities. Many women have suffered damaged organs, trauma and mental health problems.

Local women leaders have tried to campaign on this issue and support victims, but they also come under threat;

It is very hard to speak out due to fear of threats. A few months ago, I denounced the rape of girls in school here only to be faced with messages of attack. I was told to shut up or else they would kill me. In my role as head of my organisation I have spoken about and challenged the ongoing sexual violence here, but what I get in return is threatening messages and my home and office have been raided (LWL5).

International Campaign Report (2014) on Congolese women in North Kivu region noted women human rights defenders face intimidation, death threats, arbitrary detentions, ill-treatment, and unlawful killings. Their families also become targets of threats and attacks. The consequence is a climate of fear and silence among human rights organizations, and of fear in victims and witnesses who wish to report abuses, including sexual violence.

Another participant who have been providing services for a long time had this to say,

I have received threatening messages because of supporting women who come to my organisation, it's now over 20 years since I have been doing this work, supporting women but sometimes it is very difficult when you get people sending

you threatening messages, it creates fear. I like helping women, sometimes I feel like am risking my life, but I have to keep doing what I do. (LWL3)

Volunteers and other people who have been involved in poverty relief projects have also been victims of the ongoing atrocities in the region. The fact that they are constantly attacked and abused by armed groups has a negative psychological impact on them and their humanitarian actions. Women, girls and children are the most frequently targeted for sexual violence and are obliged to move to different places for safety. A woman reported how she lost everything, her children, husband and family home, when houses were destroyed. Rape used as a weapon of war has led to women's alienation, rejection by husbands and family and exclusion by the community. It is not just physical insecurity and threats around sexual violence which prevent women's participation in the region but also the psycho-social impact of these expressions of violence. Women victims carry stigma from sexual violence - as the LWL quoted above reinforced, stigma around sexual violence silences women 'as they don't want their families or husbands to know, because once raped they are rejected'. Moreover, forced abductions also impact on women's sense of self depriving them of full participation in community and social life:

Women have been victimised by war, they are captured by rebels and armed gangs to cook, clean and satisfy them, they are held captive, they lose their own identity. (LWL1).

Grassroots women discussed children born of rape and how some mothers are reluctant to keep those children because their presence would always remind them of their traumatic experience and so offer them for adoption. The fact that the children grow up with the knowledge of their rape-related birth can be traumatising, especially if the mother was a married woman with other children who lost her family because of what happened. A report put together by the participants of International Campaign (2014) to

Stop Rape & Gender Violence in Conflict by Congolese women noted children born out of rape often lack official papers, and are effectively without citizenship. They do not have official access to education, health services and other resources. Facing high levels of stigmatization and intolerance, they are particularly vulnerable to recruitment as child soldiers. One local woman leader reported that children born of rape typically live in poverty and most often grow up in social isolation. She also gave an example of how a raped mother died during the child's birth and how no one from her family wanted to keep the child. One NGO in particular has been supporting these rejected women and their children, including orphans, by reintegrating them in society through education and economic empowerment activities:

Kaki's mother, from a Masisi village, was raped when the village was looted and ended up pregnant. She stayed with us here and we took care of her until the time for delivery, unfortunately she died in the hospital and when we asked her family to take the child they refused, saying that they did not feel connected to the baby and that they were poor themselves and constantly live in insecurity (LWL2).

Daley (2006) noted that women have been subjected to rape, mutilation and death, and many have contracted sexually transmitted diseases and faced social rejection. Rape also leaves permanent marks in women's lives. The high level of transmission of STDs and HIV/AIDS resulting from rape were highlighted as endemic in the region throughout the research and this is supported by UN report in 2012 which says high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Kivu region is due to the widespread use of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war, and the presence of combatant troops from countries with high HIV prevalence rates (UN 2012). According to one senior official, humanitarian NGOs provide support to sexual assault victims, as STD and HIV transmission can be prevented within 72 hours if assessment and medication is provided. Unfortunately, many women and girls are not aware of the existence of such a support service and those living in rural

areas are unable to access these services within the limited time period because of poor road infrastructure and the lack of adequate transport services:

Sexual violence is a reality in this region, and we have witnessed it in this hospital, which led to the establishment of a specific unit dealing with the issue. The unit has treated many women over the years, however, for the victims of rape to avoid contracting an STD including HIV, they have to receive medical attention within 72 hours. A lot of women and girls are, however, not able to access this support, in particular those living in key affected areas where there is ongoing conflict. To help raise awareness and give support to women living in remote areas we have started mobile clinics to ensure more women and girls are aware of this service (SO5).

Grassroots women reported the abduction of girls for marriage by armed groups operating in the region; with many of these girls made wives by force at an early age, destroying their future prospects in life. According to a Free the Slaves report (2013), rape and kidnapping are forms of forced marriage in DRC. One of the senior officials who provided legal and medical support to both women and girls explained as follows:

We see a lot of young girls in our clinic who have suffered, some becoming pregnant even though they are not biologically ready. They are used as objects and end up with severe damage to their organs, giving birth early and some developing fistula and other health problems for the rest of their lives (SO5).

Focus group participants said the perpetrators are everywhere in the region, naming members of the armed forces, rebel groups, the UN peacekeeping force and some Congolese civilians as perpetrators. Grassroots women and local woman leaders reported on the impact of the conflict on women from their own experience and understanding. They stated that they have been living in fear in the past two decades, and that being a woman or girl is difficult, as men and even boys are targeting them. The research participants were of the view that the ongoing conflict and violence have major consequences, not only on the directly affected victims, but also on the overall

community. One woman more generally captured the disastrous impact of the conflict on family life:

This ongoing conflict and violence is destroying families, peace should start at home, many children are ending up in the street and young boys are being recruited to join armed groups. The same children we give birth to and bring up are raping us, we are consistently living in fear (LWL3).

5.3.3 Lack of access to resources for participating in peacebuilding

On top of the personal insecurity connected to the violence, the wars have caused a deterioration of living conditions and increased deprivation. According to the UN report for North Kivu armed conflict in the region has caused a deterioration of living conditions and has increased economic vulnerability of households and the negative effects of conflicts on women have far-reaching effects on the economy and society as a whole (UN 2012). Local woman leaders said poverty has impacted harshly on their lives, made worse by the ongoing conflict and violence within the region. Grassroots women spoke of how many had run away from their farms and so could no longer cultivate the land which was their main source of feeding their family and getting income from the sale of farm products. They spoke of how their participation and ability to attend women's group meetings is affected by lack of money to travel. Quite often women representing the group have very limited funding and sometimes have to skip meals, as well taking up unsuitable accommodation when they travel,

We are happy representing our organisation and participation in the discussions even though there are so many people who want to speak, our chances are limited, but if we don't go no one will communicate our challenges, the money is very little and the meetings held outside Goma are expensive with travel and accommodation, sometimes we take only two meals and look for cheap accommodation, we have to manage, it's a sacrifice (LWL3)

Obstacles to women's participation are noted by Freedman (2011) and are said to include lack of economic resources and persistent stereotypes concerning women's role in society. While looking at the intersections between gender, poverty and violence, Fiske and Shacke (2014) argue that social construction of women as second class citizens belonging to the private sphere leads to their having less access to economic, political and other material resources and poverty and violence entrench these inequalities. Such experiences were indeed reflected in the lives of the interviewees. Sometimes they said they find it hard to make ends meet for their family or themselves as women:

This conflict has made our lives miserable. I used to cultivate and grow vegetables, we had food in my family, and I could also take some and sell in the market. Now we are living in this camp, there is nothing we can do here. I received support from one of the organisations visiting us here and tried setting up a small vegetable and cassava flour business, but the business has gone down because we also had to eat from that stock. I have five children, my priority now is my children (GW4).

Women also reported that the hostile and insecure environment has increased poverty levels by affecting the productivity of agriculture. Brown (2012) argues widespread effects of war has led to poverty and has created a culture of desperation with the burden of survival falling upon women, as they struggle to keep not only themselves but also the rest of their families alive while they lack economic infrastructure and social development. While women have been the main driving force behind the subsistence economy within the region, farms have been neglected and this has resulted in a shortage of food for families and women's ability to produce food for both their family and for sale has been severely curtailed. As one woman explained:

I used to be able to buy books for my children and feed them no problem, now I have to sit here every day doing nothing since I left my farm where I was growing vegetables and had chickens. Sometimes I feel angry, seeing my children hungry. I am no longer able to buy food, it is expensive here, sometimes we get help but

I get very sad when I remember what I have left behind, we were not poor but we have been made to suffer (GW3).

Local woman leaders reported on how they are struggling to keep their organisations functioning and that their role in supporting women has been very much challenged by limited resources. They also highlighted the fact that women in the area are often discriminated against in trying to access employment and that many women, even when well educated, are unable to access employment. As for those who manage to get jobs, they said, they are often poorly paid and exploited. Local woman leaders said they would need financial support to be able to travel even to Kinshasa for meetings or at regional level, as it involves a flight of several hours and can be expensive:

Generally speaking, women are very poor here, they have run away from conflict and still we do not have security. There are difficulties in getting jobs, and sometimes even the manual jobs of cleaning or taking care of other people's houses that women can get brings problems. Even after spending hours cleaning or cultivating for others for money, sometimes the husband is waiting for that money and the women are left with nothing. Here in my organisation, we used to have an organisation from America giving us some funding, but no more. I was able to attend meetings, but I can no longer do that as I cannot travel to participate in these meetings, I just try to do my best to improve things here (LWL3).

Both grassroots women and local woman leaders said financial support for women with small businesses could help them to expand or add stock, but they were also concerned about the sustainability of those businesses; the demands of their families in terms of needs which include food, school and other daily costs leave them with no savings. They are however of the belief that if their work is financially supported, they can work towards building the capacity of women that they work with in a meaningful way and even enable them to engage in meetings at national and regional level.

Participants also noted that illiteracy and lack of skills prevent women from participating and having their voice heard. Local woman leaders explained how themes discussed

during meetings, including language and technical tools used, are beyond grassroots women's capacity for full participation, while meeting formats are tailored to a very high-level discourse that naturally targets only the elite or middle-class participants. The facilitators of discussions sometimes use language and information which is beyond the grassroots women's level of understanding. In such a context, the grassroots women were of the opinion that they would not be able to keep up with the language and discussion in the meetings held and organised by "Big Offices", referring to meetings organised by leaders from Kinshasa or big NGOs from Goma region:

The organization that has been supporting us told us of the meeting in Goma town, and I feel there is need to attend such a meeting if they support me with money to travel, but I fear because I don't have good way of expressing myself, sometimes I fear people may laugh at me (GW6)

Most of the grassroots women participating in the research said they have not received a good education, as the majority only attended primary school. Both grassroots women and local woman leaders said most women in the region are illiterate, got married early or were forced to leave school because of war and conflict.

I got married at 16 years, my life in the village was to look after my family, all through we have been consistently in conflict. Sometimes you cannot even send children to school, as you want to keep them safe. There is also no school nearby, children have to walk long distances, you fear for the girls, so it is better to keep them home in case they are attacked when out there, it is not safe. Three weeks ago, the rebels abducted a three-year-old girl, no one is safe even small children (GW8).

They also said that, due to poverty, and even after resettlement or relocation back to their village, the priority is to educate boys.

Caring roles and time constraints are further major hindrances to women's participation. Local woman leaders explained how women are perceived primarily in their reproductive and maternal roles, as society assigns them the primary role of caring for their families.

They said that while men are busy in employment and dealing with organisation and development of society, women perform with vigilance the care due to children: nursing, feeding, supporting their schoolwork, ensuring clinic and school appointments are kept, etc. The economic and developmental role of grassroots women in their families is equally important. They provide or contribute to the family income through their agricultural work and small income-generating activities and they are also often responsible for caring for the sick and people with disabilities, an added burden that impedes their participation in politics and decision-making. Research participants emphasised the need to provide structural support for women, including economic incentives, which enable their full participation in societal decisions, given their invaluable experience of managing families as the basic cell of the society:

There are many groups and organisations here, they are asking us to participate in programmes and meetings, but it is very difficult for me; I have seven children, my family depends on me to put food on the table, my little one also has homework. If I do not go to sell vegetables in my small kabana, I will have no money to buy food to feed them. Attending those meetings means I have to close my business the whole day (GW7).

Local woman leaders said many organisations, both national and international, do not take into account factors that are inhibiting women's participation. They added that the main preoccupation of these organisations is only to meet the objectives of their programmes, so they thus fail to recognise and respond to the needs of women who are also expected to provide and take care of their families. Grassroots women said they would participate more and contribute to the work of organisations, but those organisations would need to take their needs and demands into consideration:

Sometimes I have to pay for travel to the meeting place and often when I get back home, I have to do the work that I could have done if I did not attend these meetings. The children will not cook, there is no food, and as a mother I am expected to do all this, put food on the table, clean the house and cultivate for

others to get money to meet the needs of my family. If these groups or organisations gave us even a little money to compensate our time, we could organise our homes before we leave for meetings. Now they are just expecting us to come for these meetings, every week there is a meeting (GW3).

Women living in rural area are particularly marginalised. Field study participants said the marginalisation of women is evident at community level, especially in rural areas where most of the atrocities of the conflict occur. Infrastructures are poor and communication is sometimes impossible with women in rural areas. Local women leaders said that these women are rarely contacted due to inaccessibility and they are not informed about what is happening. All they see is war and the insecurity to which they are constantly exposed. Grassroots women prefer to keep themselves within their own families and watch out for their families as a protective measure against the prevailing insecurity, which means they lose out on their engagement with the community, this marginalisation make them more vulnerable.

In the village the roads are very poor, when women get attacked there, they are not able to seek help or support, there are no services. At least here in Goma there are a lot of groups to help and women can participate in local group meetings here organised for women, when I was in the village before the rebels came to attack us, there was no support at all, no opportunities to meet and share with other women, you are consistently living in fear (GW7)

A lack of resources and time is a key reason why grassroots women find it so hard to participate in discussions on peace in their region. Women said they lack support to fulfil their core roles and responsibilities for their children and families. Grassroots women said that many organisations calling meetings fail to understand that women have to leave their families and daily obligations to attend these meetings. These women said that incentives in terms of improving their economic development would be helpful, e.g., support and help to access small loans and technical support on running and maintaining

small businesses. Building their capacity could significantly improve their interest and participation in peacebuilding discussions.

5.3.4. Political exclusion

Women in Goma are second class citizens when it comes to political participation. The interviewees were well able to offer a trenchant critique of the political elites at local, national and international level in relation to poor governance and benefiting from conflict. But women themselves are not accorded political voice or taken seriously.

Participants of the research cited poor leadership as a worrying factor. They said that elected politicians do not actually represent their needs, while some of them are simply interested in the exploitation of minerals. The state has been unable to control the rebellions and is incapable of sustaining strong security and has been unable to provide public services despite the country's natural resources (UN 2012). Field study participants echoed the voices of the poor and of victims excluded from the country's wealth, which politicians are confiscating for their own benefit. Women spoke of how their lives and those of society as a whole would be improved if leaders took into account the needs of everyone. They feel that leadership is weak and those ruling the country take no responsibility or actions that would improve livelihoods and protect people, and especially women who quite often bear the burden and scars of sexual violence. Research participants ultimately blamed government officials for the recurring conflict in the region, accusing them of earning money from mineral exploitation by multinational companies and of being solely interested in maintaining their own comfortable lifestyles, while the people they represent are being terrorised, raped, live in poverty and with poor infrastructure:

This conflict and violence can be ended, but the government is not interested, every one of them is so comfortable but we are the ones who are suffering; we are the ones who elect them, perhaps we should all now decide on who we vote for, and that person should be one who understands our struggle. Without good leadership this war will never end (LWL1).

From the discussions it was very clear that local woman leaders had a good understanding of conflict and peacebuilding dynamics in the region. They were much aware of peace attempts and asserted that many meetings to discuss the ongoing conflict in the region have been organised in Goma and Kinshasa in the last two decades, with senior representatives from the UN and international organisations, church leaders, state leaders from neighbouring countries and leaders of rebel and armed groups. However, the women emphasised a lack of understanding of the local and current context of the ongoing violence by those involved in such discussions. They argued that the distance between Kinshasa and Goma prevented people in Kinshasa from understanding the complexities of the situation on the ground, yet those are the ones leading the peace negotiations, excluding local people and especially women from full participation in the discussions. According to them, representatives from local, national and international organisations, supposed to support and work on peacebuilding, have vested interests in politics and natural resources in the region, which, in turn, are contributing factors and major causes of the conflict. This has therefore made it difficult for peace and security to be achieved. Women were of the opinion that those involved in the peace talk are ignoring the root causes of the problem and have allowed the conflict to continue in the region creating unrest and high levels of insecurity. Therefore, women were of the view that they are been ignored and not invited to participate in the meetings because those who are involved do not want to address the actual problem due to vested interests:

They all have interest in minerals and some of the politicians have also engaged armed rebels to protect their interest. They are supposed to be representing us, but

they do not do that. How can they contribute to meaningful discussions of peace and security within the area if they are benefiting from the natural resources that fuel the conflict? It is very important that the major causes of ongoing conflict are discussed; we live here and we know the truth if we get the opportunity to participate as speakers, we can raise some of these concerns and let people know how the conflict is affecting us, here in Goma (LWL4).

Women from Goma have been excluded from formal negotiations and while they make efforts to attend as participants, they find themselves not able to get opportunities to give proper presentations of what is exactly happening on the ground and sometimes their efforts are undermined by some delegates from their same country. The women from Goma attending the 62nd session of the UN in New York mentioned earlier said they were warned by a government delegate from Kinshasa from embarrassing the government with their narrative of the situation in Goma, such as the atrocity of sexual violence which the region is commonly known for,

The representatives from the government do not understand our sufferings, we are living with the violence, it affects us poorly. Every day we hear, witness and support a good number of women who have been raped. We have to talk about these things, this is our huge concern, we need to be protected from these ongoing and rape of women must be addressed. But in New York they were trying to stop us from sharing the reality on the ground, we shared our concerns during the side events organised by NGOs, they can't stop us (LWL2).

Formal representation to these meeting has been by government delegates mainly from Kinshasa, and the state just wants to give positive account of their work, for example on the implementation of the 1325 National Action Plan. Similar experience is highlighted by Gibbings (2011) where she gives an example of two Iraqi women who were denied permission to speak in front of the Security Council. Women's NGOs at the UN arranged for the two to participate in an informal meeting attended by gender officers of the UN agencies. However, the two women were considered embarrassing when they condemned the invasion by the USA and UK as imperialist and critiqued the UN for its sanctions and lack of support. The women had been expected to speak positively about women's efforts

in the reconstruction of Iraq and the role the UN could play (Gibbings 2011) and the UN system reacted negatively against women speaking awkward truths.

Lack of information and support are two major challenges that affect women participation. Both grassroots women and local woman leaders consistently reported that they rarely get informed about meetings on security and peacebuilding taking place in the Goma area. Grassroot women said they often only hear about meetings when they are announced through the media or when the meetings have already taken place.

I was listening to the radio and they were talking about people from Kinshasa and other countries coming to Goma to talk about the violence here, these people from Kinshasa do not know our lives here, how we never sleep due to fear. We need to be at these meetings or have the women who are directly supporting us there to tell them about our lived experiences (GW1).

They were of the opinion that they would make good contribution if they are approached given their experience of the conflict. They questioned who the people are who are involved in planning these meetings and how they select the participants, who mainly come from other countries or Kinshasa, which is the capital city and many miles far away from Goma. One of the participants had this to say,

We have no information of what is happening here. We just see authorities around and hear that they are discussing means to establish peace without even involving us. We speak among ourselves about the insecurity here and look for ways to support ourselves. We have people from organisations and groups coming here to check on us, sometimes they come unannounced. We have this group, and we talk how we can keep ourselves and our families safe. Going outside the village is difficult, you need money. Sometimes you fear something will go wrong if you leave, we only know about our lives here, sometimes we hear on the radio of ongoing violence (GW2).

Women spoke of how they are always left out, with decision on participation often being made by men. Despite the 1325 agenda and the NAP, they said that they rarely receive

information or invitations to attend formal meetings discussing peace within the region or to represent their organisations or the women they are working with. As Luchsinger (2010) points out, when this happens and women are excluded from the process of designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks, the result is insufficient attention to redressing gender inequalities and women's insecurity.

5.3.5 Patriarchy and male domination

Patriarchy is an ideology and belief system which asserts the superiority of all males to all females, Hines (2008) argues patriarchy create inequality and hierarchy which continue to privilege men at the expense of women and even while women constitute half of the world's population, they continue to be denied the opportunity to actively participate in peacebuilding. Naraghi-Anderlini (2007) points out that patriarchy is the ultimate cause of all abuses of women's rights including inadequate participation in peacebuilding processes and McKay (2002) points out that peacebuilding is not easy because of dominance of men in the public sphere. Speake (2013) notes that men continue to dominate the formal roles in the peacebuilding processes and that women's participation in formal peace processes remains low and their activism and contributions are consistently devalued.

Women participating in the field study said men has taken control and are dominating all levels of decision-making in DRC. Grassroots women spoke of how men have been holding meetings to talk about security at the community level that exclude women, even though some of the women have been involved in ensuring security or guarding their village at night. Some women said they did not want to wait for the men to organise security in their village, and instead organised security and invited the men. While their

leadership was noted by the village leader, most of the meetings at the village level are still organised and chaired by men:

We were tired of staying up at night due to the attacks. Sometimes when there was an attack in the village, we were not equipped to face it. We had to act. My husband is working in the mines, while I am here with the children alone. Many women here are strong and sometimes when it is your turn and there is no man in your household, you have to stay up. However, when they call for meetings to discuss what needs to be done, they often do not call us, we just hear it from people (GW4).

Grassroots women and local woman leaders said men's roles in society are clearly defined and that men want to dictate everything and be the ones leading at community level. The women said men are making all the decisions and have most of the good jobs. They said that the lives of women are very controlled and hindered by men dominating and having control of everything. Even for meetings the men decide on the people they want to attend:

It is impossible here for women to attend or be part of anything, including meetings. Men here decide everything, they control everything, we can never move a step forward due to the men's selfishness, they look for men to attend meetings and give jobs to men, sometimes through friendship. Women are looked down upon here, and they do not consider us at all (GW1).

Local woman leaders said women are not considered in family decision-making and that schools, churches and faith-based organisations are all controlled and run by men. Some of the local woman leaders said they hear about the meetings or organised activities, but only after the organisers have selected a few women in high jobs or positions to attend and represent issues. They said meetings are quite often organised in Kinshasa, the capital city with some of the international and national NGOs but information is rarely shared with women on the ground or local women groups working directly with survivors:

Men are often organising these meetings, sometimes we hear from the national organisations about the plans for this meeting, but without invitation we cannot

just go, sometimes we write reports and one of us go along to circulate, while our participation is important because of the work we do with displaced families and victims of rape we don't get invitation to share what is going on (LWL 4).

As well as gender norms, women participants of the study said that other cultural and religious norms are major hindering factors to their participation. Local women leaders spoke of how male religious leaders tend to condemn outspoken women, especially women who challenge male behaviours, including sexual violence. The women lawyers also highlighted the issue of rape during marriage and explained that the church does not agree that this is a crime. They additionally said that the meetings to discuss peace and security are sometimes organised by the church and also fail to invite women. Their views were that religious leaders could help to reduce sexual violence and also encourage women's participation since the faith leaders are very influential in the society and they are respected by people and are listened to. Unfortunately, however, local woman leaders said the Bible is used to talk about how a woman should be submissive and this will not help reduce gender-based violence or encourage their leadership and participation in meetings. They said this makes them feels demotivated,

It is very hard for women to speak out freely about sexual violence and issues affecting women here without being shut down. Even in marriage, there is also rape going on, but the church has refused to open a discussion on this or to support women. Here we give them advice, we support women to speak about it and seek justice, but they are told it is the right of their husbands. Rape within marriage is an issue here that we are trying to address in addition to the ongoing sexual violence in the region (LWL5).

Despite these criticisms of the church, women did say it is one institution which gives them hope for a better future. Although men are the leaders in church, it is an appreciated forum for this reason:

We meet and share our problems here in our local church. I am safe in the church, where I sing, pray and meet other people, the pastor is good. In church we pray

and sing together, songs of hope that one day we will get peace and go back to our normal lives. Men are the one leading. There are women in the church helping but their role is limited (GW8).

Barriers identified by the participants are many. This section has detailed the barriers experienced by the women in Goma which relate to the impact of violence, especially sexual violence; the lack of time, resources and skills; the political exclusions women encounter; and the persistence of patriarchy. However, women in Goma are very much determined to address challenges facing them and the community. Despite threats and abuse they continue to stand strong with many local women NGOs leading key and vital services and support. The next section will focus on the third research objective of this thesis – how women’s participation in Goma can be enhanced.

5.4 Enhancing women’s participation in peacebuilding

Although the women interviewed for this thesis want to participate in creating security and peace, it’s clear that women continue to be denied a voice even though their contributions to the society are immense. The factors outlined above contribute to an invisibility of women as public actors and constitutes a negation of their rights to equal participation, perpetuating male dominated decision-making processes which are less likely to represent women’s interests. Section one and two of this chapter clearly describe efforts made by women in Goma. Against a background of the ongoing violence, women prove themselves capable of engaging at community level and doing their level best to address the issues facing their communities. Yet, they face many obstacles that hinder meaningful participation. This section therefore explores what factors can contribute to meaningful participation of women in Goma, as discussed during the field study.

5.4.1 Restoring peace and ensure women's security

Given the ongoing conflict which creates deep insecurity, women's safety and security is the most important factor that can enhance their participation. Having a normal life where there is no conflict will help improve their livelihoods and lifestyles. Living a normal life is the wish of every human being. For the case of Goma, peace can be restored through addressing the root causes and factors contributing to the conflict, which includes regulation of minerals, getting rid of rebels, decommissioning small arms and integrating demobilised soldiers. UN (2012) argues that finding solutions to the conflicts in the DRC requires addressing the root causes of conflicts not only to bring an end to existing instability, but also to prevent new cycles of conflicts. As discussed in the previous section, illegal extraction of minerals is fuelling insecurity, with minerals constituting the major cause of conflict in the region with women been targeted for rape. Brown (2012) argues that rape is used as a weapon of war and to ease the suffering of women and girls and enable them participate in the healing and reconstruction of the families, communities, and country the war itself must be brought to an end. According to a documentary by Jones (2012) called Mineral Rape in the DRC, the military is stealing minerals to sell to the Western world, forcing workers to work at gun point. Security is not expected and civilians cry for order to be established. Additionally, RT documentary (2017) noted that Congo's richness in natural resources has brought nothing but misery and the riches leave only a trail of death, destruction and poverty. Both grassroots women and local woman leaders repeatedly insisted that their situation can change significantly if the extraction of mineral within the region is legally regulated, and profits channelled and directed toward development and creating infrastructures:

To help us live normal lives again, the government need to regulate mineral. If this is done then things will be better. Rebels used to protect interest and those

extracting the minerals illegally will cease to be here. The government should be transparent and should use the money coming from these minerals to help with roads and build infrastructure here and as well support activities for women and young people. (LWL3).

Rebels and armed groups pose threats to security for women with the use of illegal arms. Research participants said there was far too many weapons within the region and men including young boys joining rebel groups have guns that they use for looting, harassing civilians, and raping women:

It was late afternoon and the three young men entered our neighbour's house, where she has a small shop, they demanded all the money, she was shaking. She has been trying to run a small business to feed her family but the rebels are attacking and taking away everything. They had guns, which we heard they get from retired soldiers, they pay them for using those guns, but they are creating fear for us. Women are not able to go to market, you fear walking out even during the day, it has become very bad here (GW2).

Availability and use of arms creates threats and fear for the women. They are intimidated by rebels with these weapons. Participants in the research said that state officials should investigate to find out who is selling or supplying guns to all armed groups and the rebels and should work towards restricting access and use of guns, in particular illegal guns. They insisted on the importance of eliminating armed groups and rebels. Grassroots women said that armed groups are operating freely in the region and have sectors that they control entirely, unchallenged by the national army. They pointed out that the official army soldiers stationed in the field are not well resourced and, ironically, depend on rebels to provide them with food, money and other basic needs:

The local soldiers are always complaining they go for months without pay, they have families and they have to meet the needs of their children and wives. They are not very much interested to protect civilians, sometimes the rebels are giving them money to keep them quiet. It is easier for them to neglect their work, after all they are not paid for many months (GW2).

Grassroots women and local woman leaders were very articulate in saying that the eradication of armed groups depends solely on the government's willingness and effort. In addition to the MONUSCO troops' presence in the region, strong measures should be put into place by the government which might help to bring order, but the women do not see any evidence of this happening:

We have a large number of MONUSCO troops, you see many of them in cars patrolling, moving around in numbers. If they joined together with the local army, they could surely get rid of all these rebels and armed groups. They are not working together, sometimes it is hard to understand why they are here, surely in the name of protecting us? But we are still living in fear, we cannot sleep at night, sometimes the attacks are taking place during the day, something needs to be done to get rid of these rebel groups (GW1).

Demobilised soldiers even though no longer active are exchanging guns for pay. They are poor with no source of income and some have become violent to their wives and community too. The importance of reintegrating former combatants is noted by UN (2012) report where they suggest this can be achieved by developing a program on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) to facilitate social integration of the ex-combatants by alleviating the grievances and resentment of the receiving community. The field study participants were of the opinion that to reduce arms and guns trading, the demobilised soldiers should return the guns when they retire and as well, they should be facilitated to reintegrate into the society. Local woman leaders and senior officials said the situation of demobilised soldiers is very bad as most of them, after demobilisation, live in a state of isolation and poverty, having lost their income, even if very small. The research participants related their positions to that of powerlessness, claiming that those who do not return guns are renting them to rebels in exchange for money:

The retired soldiers have no way of earning a living and they too have families and children to look after, so they are making use of the guns that they do not give back after demobilisation. Sometimes you see them wandering recklessly around.

They are abusive and giving guns for rent to men and youth, women and girls are exposed to danger posed by these retired combatants, they need support for our security (LWL4).

A senior official indicated that while some NGOs are trying to provide support to demobilised soldiers, their help is insufficient, but in any case, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that consistent and substantial support and structures are provided to manage war veterans who may pose a permanent threat for the security of the community:

These people served our country, they were poorly paid and sometimes worked without pay, now they are back in the community with no job or income; this lowers their self-esteem and sense of hope, so they must be facilitated to ensure they reintegrate fully into the community, perhaps with activities that keep them busy if not they will continue to be a threat to our community (SO2).

Insecurities caused by rebel and armed groups create fear and insecurity especially in the way they target women and girls for rape. Perpetrators often get away with it since women and girl victims cannot identify perpetrators due to the fear of attack or retaliation, therefore access to justice, alongside demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants is another important element of empowering women to be participants in peacebuilding.

5.4.2 Ensuring access to justice

Access to justice for women victim of abuse reassures them of support and creates confidence in reporting and encouraging others to do the same. This also sends a clear message to the society about the consequences of gender-based violence. The research participants stated that rape must be treated as a crime, in order to protect the women and girls and the community at large. Kirby and Shepherd (2016) argue the UN Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960, could secure immediate assistance for victims of sexual violence; ensure women's full participation in all peace related

processes, including those related to justice; and promote the longer-term goals of reparations by providing legal structures to combat impunity. Field study participants said that access to justice and protection of women will give women courage and confidence to speak out and even participate fully knowing they are safe and supported. They added that more emphasis should be placed on education and raising awareness about rape and its impact on families and communities in order to eradicate this widespread phenomenon. Having support from public representatives and police available and intervening without delay when an incident happens also gives women courage to speak and reduces stress:

Sometimes the police are not even available; there are very few here and when an attack happens, they take a long time to come. Our government is not strong, we are far from the capital, we don't see those who are supposed to be representing us coming here and yet they know that things are bad, from constant news reporting of rape, looting and kidnapping, but they are not bothered (GW6).

Regardless of their political status or position in the society, perpetrators of sexual violence should not be allowed to get away with it. UNSCR 2242 recommends 'reparation for victims as appropriate', placing strongest emphasis on ending impunity and incorporating conflict related sexual violence as a trigger for the Council's sanctions mechanisms (Kirby and Shepherd 2016), additionally the UN Secretary General's Report (2019) called for the armed and security forces to be adequately vetted and trained, and for a policy of zero tolerance of conflict-related sexual violence to be upheld by bringing offenders to justice, irrespective of rank, and ensuring that victims are protected and receive adequate reparations.

As women, we continue to face many difficulties in this country. For a long time, we have been campaigning for gender equality through a review and modification of the constitution and ensuring effective laws. For many years now, young girls are married off to very old men, and in this day and age, women and girls continue to live in fear, they are attacked and many are raped, and the perpetrators are

allowed to get away with committing these serious crimes. Perpetrators should be made accountable for their actions regardless of their position. There is no justice for women here, this should be a priority (LWL3).

5.4.3 Education for transformation

Education is important in broadening knowledge and understanding of the world and in giving people the skills and confidence needed for engagement with the wider world. Access to education is an important foundation for girls to have the confidence and skills to see themselves as potential leaders and to be seen as credible by others. In this regard, local woman leaders suggested concrete actions, such as access to scholarships and mentorship for girls and to ensure equal opportunities. High participation rates of girls in formal education can help in enhancing future participation of women in all public spheres, yet in Goma many girls are out of school or they drop out without even finishing primary level education:

Look, you will see there are many girls in the street in Goma town, some have ended up here from the village due to conflict, they are not able to go to school, sometimes parents are not able to keep them in school due to the demands imposed by associated school costs. When this happens, the girl is kept at home to help mind children or the mother. When they end up in the street, they are abused by men who take advantage of them. If support was granted to young girls, many would stay and finish education, that way they can have ability to stand up for themselves and to take up good positions in the society (LWL1).

The field study participants pointed out that education should be mandatory for all children. The lack of schools in some rural areas was cited as problematic, especially by the grassroots women. In addition to the school fees many parents are not able to afford other related school costs such as buying uniforms, desks or books. Free and accessible education for all which also supports students can help improve the situation especially of girls. As asserted by the women, more support should be given to girls because boys

are always prioritised and offered the first opportunity to access education, while girls are expected to stay at home, look after their siblings and perform all the domestic chores. Many girls as well miss the opportunity for education, since they spend most of the time taking care of their siblings and some families are not able to keep them in school due poverty:

We come from a village with no schools nearby, so my children have to walk very long distances, sometimes it is not safe for my children, I fear for my girls. We are asked to buy book or desk; we don't have that money. Girls here drop out of school early, sometimes the parent lack means of keeping them in schools, school should be free, the associated cost make it difficult and of course girls are the one who often misses (GW5).

Exploitation of girls was highlighted by local woman leaders, explaining that some of the girls who access education are not treated equally by teachers; they tend to be exploited to look after the teachers' chores, e.g., cleaning their houses, cooking meals or fetching water. Girls in formal education are also often victims of sexual abuse by teachers; some end up pregnant and, consequently, have to leave school early to become mothers:

Sometimes, some teachers target girls, using them as their house helpers, during class time they select a girl to go and clean for them or mind their children, and this means these girls miss lessons. Others are impregnated by teachers. This kind of teacher should not be in school and should be prosecuted for child labour and abuse. Many parents trust their children to be safe at school, but unfortunately, they learn about these kinds of abuses, prevalent in the whole region. I brought a case to a school committee of a young girl who had been asked to fetch water and clean house for the teacher during school hours, and now I keep getting threatening messages because I raised the issue. Education legislation, rules and regulations must be tightened to protect children and in particular girls (LWL1).

Curriculum design is also important. The introduction of discussions on peace, security and conflict should be included to help students understand and engage in resolving underlying problems. Gender issues, addressing stereotypes and roles assigned to boys and girls, if introduced in school can improve communication and gender dynamics.

Classes for women who missed school should be organised to help them learn skills and gain knowledge through adult education. As indicated earlier in the previous section, many women who migrated from the villages to Goma town are illiterate and lack skills and confidence to engage, but if women are to participate in peacebuilding, they must have the courage and confidence to participate. This is supported by Speake (2013) who says even if the participation of women is encouraged, they can be marginalised if they do not have the education and training necessary to fully participate. Providing them with trainings to build their skills and knowledge around various issues will help build their capacity. Local woman leaders said that the future of women's participation in peacebuilding will depend very much on providing girls with better education options and rejecting cultural practices that push girls into vulnerability. Local woman leaders suggested that, for a transformation process to occur, reaching out to the whole community and raising awareness of violations and the impact they have on the community at large may help. A bottom-up approach could be used, starting with young people in schools and colleges and progressing to the village and the community levels, as well as reaching out to officials and frontline service providers. Society, they stated, has a responsibility to work together to bring change, but for this change to happen, they insist that everyone has to be included. Education both formal and informal was identified by field study participants as fundamental for the participation of women and the prevention of violence against women.

5.4.4 Promoting women's participation through economic empowerment measures

Economic empowerment of women is crucial for their involvement at all levels of the society. Being economically viable helps women grow, improves their livelihoods and

enables engagement in activities that are important to their family and community. According to Andrae and Priscoi (2018) economic security increases life choices and economic empowerment provides women with a stronger position to participate in influencing development and shaping society. Many women in Goma have lost their major means of earning income, having left their agricultural land. However, they can work on small enterprises which they can improve with time. More support is needed to help boost or establish income-generating activities. Enhancing their economic capacity would allow them to travel and attend meetings in different locations while also guaranteeing the care and sustenance of their families while absent from home:

I have been running my small grocery shop for five years, I do not have enough stock and no money to boost my business. I buy food and educate my children from the profit I get from this shop. If I was supported to add stock, I could employ a helper on the day there are meetings, that way I would not have to close my shop to attend the meeting (GW1).

Other grassroots women without small businesses argued they should be supported to learn skills and to develop and manage small enterprises, this would help improve their future prospects and their livelihood in general and also give them the time and resources to participate more in community life.

5.4.5 Challenging gender norms

Traditional attitudes and beliefs about women's role in society continue to prejudice both men's and women's preconceptions regarding women's ability to participate fully in public life. George (2019) argues gender norms undermine women's roles in public life and prompts resistance to women's political leadership. These norms also shape how people vote and how women should spend their time and behave, generating practical constraints to their participation in public and political life. Changes in family relations and in attitudes to women's roles and responsibilities are therefore important to women's

ability to take on public responsibilities. Discussion with senior officials during the scoping study for this research, indicated that norms and values embedded in Congolese society tend to undermine women. This culture has remained in the Congolese people's mindset and been passed on from generation to generations. Transformation of the society regarding how men treat women, as well how boys and girls are socialised, must be targeted at all levels of the society. Local woman leaders said that community has a poor perceptions and views of women and that they are always viewed as less and as properties of men. Grassroots women confirmed this with reference to the experiences of women and girls who have so often been targeted for abduction, abuse and exploitation. As pointed out by Speake (2013) it is crucial to challenge the social and cultural norms and their dictates about women and the importance of considering how masculine socialisation and norms are linked to the use of violence. Negative perceptions and considering women as inferior to men create big gaps at family and societal level:

There is no respect for women and girls at all here even young boys are engaging in abusing women and girls, every day you hear of abduction, rape and domestic violence. A lot of girls are out of school, you see them in the park here they came from the village due to conflict there but their parent don't have money to take them back to school, men sometimes are targeting them and abusing them even though they have suffered, they continue to suffer more (LWL5)

Local woman leaders highlighted the need for cultural shifts. For instance, the way children are brought up at home and educated at school should include avoiding the assignment of specific and different chores to girls and boys; furthermore, awareness raising should be delivered at all levels: family, school, community and society. Local woman leaders reported that stereotypes and perceptions of women and girls in DRC are negative; women, essentially, are seen as men's properties. Research participants said societal transformation and changing minds should be done through raising awareness and promoting social norms and human rights values.

Respect for women's rights and gender equality can enhance women's participation. DRC even though is a signatory to various conventions is yet to ensure women's rights are upheld, this is very evident based on the high incidence of sexual violence in DRC. Additionally, local woman leaders pointed out that Congolese legislation in the form of the Family Code of 1987 is discriminatory and undermines gender equality. This code impacts on women by limiting their role in decision-making even at the level of the household, children and family. One example is the treatment of widows. Article 444 of this code clearly indicates that a male family member should be the head of the household and that when the husband dies, the wife will manage the household, but can only do so together with the relatives of the husband (Mbambi and Faray-Kele, 2010). A senior official confirmed the reality of abuse experienced by widows after the death of their husbands, as they are not allowed to inherit lands or properties, which are taken from them by the husband's family:

In our organisation, we try to help women widows by providing free legal advice. After the death of their husbands, most of the time everything is taken from them, the women do not know about their rights and they fear threats from the husband's family. Most of them do not have money to pay a lawyer to help them. Even with this, our laws need to be amended as that is the only way women can be supported. Women here are treated very badly (SO5).

Women complained of not being treated as equal human beings and described how men lack total consideration for them, they feel undermined and not respected. This is translated in men's attitudes when referring to matters that affect everybody in the community, e.g., no allusion or attention is paid to women to check on their views. For men, women's roles should be confined to those determined by the patriarchal system, strongly in force in DRC. Selebogo (2020) point out that unequal distribution of power between men and women often leaves most women without a voice in local, national, regional and global decision-making processes. Grassroots women criticised these

attitudes, saying that the non-involvement of women in discussions addressing insecurity and violence was clear evidence that their views do not matter, even when they are most directly affected. Some of the local woman leaders spoke of how sometimes they are undermined by men during meetings and how this reduces interest in attending these meetings:

We were only three women in the meeting with 25 men. It was very hard to get an opportunity to say anything and even when I managed to do so, one of the men started to question me and to put me down, that what I was saying were lies and inconsistent (LWL2).

The women were of the opinion that the government and international NGOs should support them by involving them in formal meetings. Lack of interest from the government to acknowledge their contribution demotivates. Local woman leaders reported that women in the Kivu region have been struggling to find ways of achieving involvement in decision-making as they believe their views are important and should not be overlooked. They stated that many groups led by women are reaching out to grassroots women within the region, supporting their needs and listening to them. Additionally, many national and international organisations have been working with dedicated women making valuable contributions, despite the fact that they are not always treated in accordance with their skills and competences:

The government here should be happy we are doing all the work and providing more needed support. We listen to women and families affected and give them hope, we are all in this together but, despite this and our experience, we are not recognised or considered when it comes to actual discussions, meetings are held without us, we want to be involved, they should include us (LWL1)

5.4.6. Challenging traditional power structures

Local woman leaders said the discussions should start at community level and ensure that everyone is involved – women, men and youth. They added that, as a first and prior step

to the overall conflict transformation process, government must establish support mechanisms and structures that will allow people on the ground to initiate dialogues and deal with the conflicts that tear their communities apart:

Conflict here can never be resolved without involving everyone in the community. The youth here are involved in all sorts of crime, they are easy targets for recruitment by armed groups, so, to ensure we are addressing the root cause of the problem, we must involve the youth too. Mainly you find it is all men in these discussions, some of the people causing problems are well known but people in the community fear to name them. We need to come together, bringing people of all ages, women and men, together to discuss the way forward, and the government and local authorities need to help us without hesitation (GW7).

The research participants said there is a reproduction and normalisation of situations that maintain the conflict and that do not favour peace. They further said that the domination of state authorities has left those who are marginalised and vulnerable permanently in conditions of oppression and poverty. Grassroots women and local woman leaders were of the opinion that all the opportunities and privileges benefit only those in power and their families and friends. They argued that even their children who manage to finish colleges are unable to get jobs and that opportunities are offered to those who have connections:

In this place young people cannot find jobs, as it also depends on those who are in high positions who are only on the lookout for their family and sometimes friends, who get favours from them. There are not many job opportunities here and any available ones are mainly given to friends and family of leaders of organisations or groups. Many young graduates are without work in this area (LWL1).

Local woman leaders said that social protection remains fragile for those who do not have connections. Instead, they remain poor and it is difficult for them to escape from poverty, as they have no access to work. They suggested that the status quo can be challenged through strong leadership and transparency:

Here it depends on who you know, jobs are given to relatives or friend of those already in authority, many youths who finish college find it difficult to find jobs, they are struggling and many turns to illegal deals and armed gangs. Our leaders and those representing us must embrace everyone and be transparent in recruitment to ensure everyone is given the same opportunity (LWL8).

The women also described how men view the ongoing conflict as a male issue and as such see it as an issue for them to solve. They further reported how chiefs and heads of the villages are failing to consider women's experiences both as victims and survivors of conflict, whose inputs as witnesses or victims of conflict could help improve the situation. The general view among the participants was that the government has a role to play in bringing everyone, including women, together to share experiences and determine solutions, this they said can only happen if the government has respect for women, they can then set a good example for the rest of the society:

Our leaders can set a good example by ensuring women are involved, if we get a new government which respects women, they can set a good example by involving women and showing the rest of the society both women and men are important in progressing our country, the problem we have is these leaders are hungry of power and they do not consider women, we have many capable women here (LWL8)

Field study participants pointed out that it is important to appoint strong government leaders, with women included as well and selected by the people through fair and transparent elections. They said such leaders must not only work to protect the people who elected them, but also have the qualities and capacity to address challenges that prevent the development of the region especially the ongoing conflict. The important of including and involving women in decision-making is vital:

Women here has tried to engage in political participation, it is very difficult, even at local level we face many challenges, we can help with advice as leaders of our own organisations, mothers and members of the society who are experiencing abuse and attack, even though we protect our family and support our community, we continue to be ignored however we can contribute, given our experience, our

views can help make difference, the government must consider us and involve women especially from this region to help address conflict and other issues facing our community (LWL1)

The grassroots women and local woman leaders were of the opinion that if local governance structures are strengthened and improved to ensure women's involvement and participation their situation can improve. They said local community structures could play a key role. For example, as villages chiefs are respected within the community, women should also be considered and appointed in these roles. Their contribution as noted previously, especially on setting up security at community level, shows their capability to address issues:

These chiefs play an important role in the pacification of the region, as crises often emerge from hidden long-term conflict between members in a community. Some years ago, the chiefs and village elders used to have much power and respect in the community, they were listened to and people always depended on them to address difficult issues if they arose, for the community to function properly, these leaders are needed, they are important to help us decide on cases and resolve conflicts, women must also be considered in these positions (LWL5)

Women participation at all levels can be enhanced by ensuring there is gender balance when planning for meetings. Field study participants addressing male domination were of the views that the situation for women in Goma and nationally can only be improved if a range of measures are put into place. Local woman leaders said that the best way of promoting women's participation in peacebuilding negotiations is to develop and implement positive measures of inclusivity. They suggested setting seats aside for women in all decision-making processes, as the most effective approach, since men do not want to voluntarily give chances to women. They further suggested that international organisations could help in advocating for women's participation by nominating women and advocating for their participation since most of them are supporting national NGOs

operating in the region and know the work of women organisations. They pointed out that all the meetings in the region are organised by men and so they make all the decisions:

Decisions and preparations of all high-level meetings are mainly done by men here. I know this because one time I was called to attend a meeting in Goma where they were discussing peace and security. A man, one of the organisers, invited me, but we were only three women out of 26 people. In that meeting, I was asked to represent my organisation as a community-based group not as a woman activist. I think if women are to be involved, the government will have to come up with a strategy that will ensure women are involved, maybe insist that any important meeting has to have eight or ten women representatives. Women in this region have a lot to offer given their experience and the work they do (LWL4).

Grassroots women and local woman leaders expressed anger and disappointment; in particular, local woman leaders said that, although they are investing huge efforts to reach out and support victims of violence in villages and rural areas, this work is being disregarded. In sum, the experience they have gained through this work is not even remotely considered as a reasonable motive for allowing their participation.

5.5 Conclusion

From the field investigation, it was clear that women's lives are being profoundly shaped by the protracted violent conflicts in the Goma region. What was also evident is that women in Goma are investing great effort in peacebuilding, despite being poorly resourced and completely undermined in terms of their representation at formal peacebuilding meetings held at the local, regional, national and international levels. The important role that women play in peacebuilding has been discussed in chapter one and two. To reaffirm this role UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security emphasises the importance of having greater participation of women in decision-making, in national, regional and international institutions, as well their involvement in peacekeeping, field

operations, mission consultation and peace negotiations (UN 2000). Otto (2010) points out that the resolution opens new opportunities for promoting women's equality and challenging militarist orchestrations of international peace and security. According to True, women's equal participation is a right which contributes to the prevention and resolution of conflicts (True, 2016). Chapter two, using Lederach's pyramid of peace suggested that sustainable peacebuilding requires the integration of actors across and between all social levels. However as noted from the findings of the field study, women's participation in peacebuilding in Goma is mainly confined to the grassroots level and they continue to fight for access to participate and be at the table during peacebuilding and negotiation meetings. Grassroots women and women leaders are providing support through different activities, such as providing basic needs for the community, psychological healing, advocating and lobbying for human rights and gender issues. They are trying their level best to attend and participate in meetings discussing peace and security but their access is only informal, since quite often they are not officially invited and attend as audience participants.

As discussed in this chapter, there are many barriers hindering women from participation, preventing their voices from being heard in peacebuilding processes in Goma. Insecurity created by ongoing conflict leads to abuse and attacks on civilians by rebels, armed groups and men in the community, often leaving women with the consequences of sexual violence. Conflict exacerbates poverty within the community and in particular among women because their properties are destroyed and they have to leave their homes for safety. As noted by Zihindula, Makhubele and Muthuki (2018) loss of a sustainable way of life is a major factor that influences women's livelihood coping strategies negatively and women often find themselves in dire economic situations. Perceptions of women,

their role and responsibility within the society is also a huge obstacle towards women's empowerment. Speake (2013) highlights the importance of considering how masculine socialisation and norms are linked to the use of violence since they have traits that are easily linked with violent behaviour, such as aggression and domination, while girls and women are expected to be soft and submissive. These result in gender relations of power between men and women that deepens inequalities between men and women which worsen during conflict. In support of this view Puechguirbal (2010) argues women become more vulnerable during war because of pre-existing inequalities originating from gender power hierarchies.

The role of women in Goma can be enhanced since – as the fieldwork has shown – women are already very active agents of change. Goetz and Jenkins (2016) argue that in order to increase women's participation in peacebuilding, provision of specific resources and opportunities to make it possible have to be put into place. They additionally point out that the UNSCR 1889 adopted in October 2009 urges member states to support women's engagement in decision making by investing in women's education, health, livelihoods, security and physical security (UN 2009). The findings from the women in Goma provide support for the importance of these points.

The next chapter will present an analysis of the research findings in terms of Lederach's integrated peacebuilding pyramid (1997). A gender analysis of the peacebuilding pyramid using the findings of this field research will demonstrate how gendered power dynamics limit the potential for implementing this model in practice. The barriers to participation will also be used to further a critical analysis of the UN's current approach to promoting women's participation in the WPS agenda. Nonetheless, the analysis will

demonstrate how the pyramid can be strategically useful in identifying how women can be integrated into peacebuilding and in aiding the realisation of the WPS Agenda.

Chapter 6

Building integrated peace: Gender barriers and possibilities

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse findings from chapter 5 and will focus on how gendered power inequalities and violence work against the realisation of integrated peacebuilding, as envisaged in Lederach's pyramid model. Women remain excluded from the upper levels and marginalised within the grassroots. I begin with a discussion on what the findings demonstrate about why the involvement of women in peacebuilding matters, then look into gendering the peacebuilding pyramid - identifying the barriers to participation. This analysis will then be used to contribute to the critical discussions (introduced in Chapter 2) on the implementation of the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325, arguing that lessons from this analysis need to be taken on board for those promoting this pillar of 1325. The chapter concludes with discussion on moving towards women's participation, asking where this analysis leads us as a precursor to the final chapter.

6.2 Why include women in peacebuilding?

In the first chapter of this thesis, several theoretical arguments were introduced as to why including women in peace processes and peacebuilding matters. and these can now be related to the situation of women in Goma on the basis of the findings in chapter 5.

Using Russell and O'Flynn (2011), the arguments were made that women's participation might be advocated for on grounds of nature, justice, equality or creating role models. None of these arguments are without their drawbacks, especially as they tend to treat women as a homogenous group, yet the point was taken that positive peace, that aims for more than the absence of war and aims to achieve just, equitable, transformed societies must be informed by analysis of the gendered impacts of conflict and the aspiration for women's inclusion. The point was also made that many women around the world are doing the work of peacebuilding in their communities and understand what is needed to address conflict dynamics and reconcile relationships (Porter 2007). Gizelis (2011) affirms the important of involving women in peacebuilding and argues that grassroots women are involved in many different peacebuilding initiatives at the community level which include day-to-day and emergency support for their communities.

The field study demonstrates how women in Goma, even though not participating in official discussions about peace in the region, have championed local initiatives to combat insecurity, promote gender justice for victims of SGBV and protect family livelihoods for recovery and to address conflict. Their engagement is driven by their primary role of facilitating family life and trying to reconcile their broken communities. This is seen in the actions of grassroots women and local women leaders who have been delivering support, awareness and education and continue to motivate women and girls. The ingenious and creative ways that women survivors of the horrors of war rebuild their war-torn societies merits documentation and celebration. For example, as noted by Rehn and Johnson (2002) in Bosnia, women established mobile health clinics to provide gynaecological and psychosocial care to women survivors of rape and assault, most of whom had never seen a doctor or a counsellor before, while in Serbia, the Women in Black movement staged tireless public campaigns to bring an end to war. Similar peace

work by women is evident from this field study. Women in Goma have set up health clinics, they are providing free legal services and support for women victims of sexual violence, they are also facilitating discussions and setting up of security guards at community level. Participation of women in peacebuilding for women in Goma is therefore of added value given their multiple contributions. The evidence also shows that women in Goma have the first-hand experience of conflict which includes the impact of sexual violence, they have the advantage of working within the community where they exactly understand the dynamics of the many conflicts and parties involved.

Translated from the grassroots community level, women's peace work has the potential to help establish a wider positive peace. Nobel Peace Laureate, Leymah Gbowee (2015) is of the same view, pointing out that women makes a measurable difference in the quality of peace negotiations, for example, raising key economic and social issues that include health, education and justice. For women, the peace table represents an opportunity to challenge and change existing structures, as well as an opportunity to achieve justice. She argues that at the negotiation table, women can tackle fundamental inequalities and contest social norms and they can also ensure that the voices of victims are heard. From the field study its very evident that women's organisations in Goma would hope to promote such visions of peace based on their lived experiences of violence and insecurity. Local women leaders, for example, have great understanding and good relationships with community on the ground and if they are involved to participate, they can make valuable contributions. As True (2016) affirms, women's equal participation is a right which could contribute to the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Berwind-Dart (2012), recognises that men and women have different qualities and that both these qualities can be used in order to ensure better peace results, women for example can shift the conversation to include overlooked issues that could be key to the adding-up process in a peace agenda.

Then interviews conducted with local woman leaders in North Kivu clearly confirm their willingness and capacity to participate at all levels of peacebuilding discussions because of their knowledge of the situation in the region, their experience as victims and supporters of victims and, most importantly, their initiatives and experiences in addressing security in their communities.

Women's inclusion in peacebuilding clearly matters, but they are facing barriers to participation which can be revealed in gender analysis of the peacebuilding pyramid. In the theoretical framework, I discussed why analysing gender is important in peacebuilding processes. To explain this, I revisited the definition of gender by Risman which discusses gender as a social structure involving social norms, attitudes, and activities that societies deem more appropriate to men or women (Risman, 2004). The participation of women in all public spheres greatly depends on the set up and structures that already exist in the society, in many society men's contributions are seen as more valuable than those of women. A revisiting of the peacebuilding pyramid through an analysis of the gendered power dynamics surrounding the women in Goma who participated in this research, will reveal the many barriers to their participation.

6.3 Gendering the Peacebuilding Pyramid - barriers to participation

Even though the UNSCR 1325 calls for equal participation of women in peace and security negotiations and policy making, the under-representation of women at the peace table continues to be a huge problem. Diaz (2010) argues that women's participation remains a largely unfulfilled target of UNSCR 1325. This observation has been confirmed by the field study which reveals that although Congolese women living in Goma actively participate in restoring, protecting and uniting their broken community, they remain absent at the middle and upper levels of the peacebuilding pyramid. Even

though the international community has committed to women's greater participation at all levels, through UN 1325, women's voices are not nurtured or taken seriously – as evidenced by the experience of Congolese women at the United Nations cited in chapter five. Nevertheless, the women continue to work for security and peace with valued initiatives and projects at local level, while still struggling to attend and be present in meetings, discussing peace or negotiation at local, regional and international levels even though they receive less or no recognition. For their meaningful participation and in order to integrate women into peacebuilding in North Kivu region, as voiced by the field study participants from Goma, there are key steps that need to be taken. Firstly, an understanding of the gender relations of power in the peacebuilding pyramid that prohibit women's participation needs to be developed and addressed. Some of these issues which will be analysed and discussed in this chapter include the need to address hegemonic masculinity and militarism, because aggressive violent behaviour and access to arms are used to terrorise and attack civilians and are instrumental in marginalising women. In particular, the use of rape on women as a weapon of war (to humiliate the enemy) in Kivu region must be understood in relation to both social constructs of masculinity and the politics of exploitation that have shaped much of DRC. In effect, patriarchy and associated violence in Goma serves as a social construct that remains a key obstacle to women's participation in peace arenas. In addition, women's socially constructed roles deprive them of time, resources and voice to be part of peacebuilding.

According to Lederach, peace is a dynamic social construct. He stresses the need to rebuild destroyed relationships, mainly focusing on reconciliation within society and strengthening its peacebuilding potential (Lederach (1997)). At the outset of this thesis, the argument was made that taking a feminist perspective on the three levels represented in Lederach's (1997) peacebuilding pyramid would reveal the gender inequalities in

peacebuilding efforts. In DRC, the actors and leaders at all levels of the pyramid are often men from military, political, religious, academic and community development entities. At the top level, mainly where negotiations are held and agreements are signed, women are often absent. In DRC this has been noted, in a shadow report for CEDAW (CCEDEF, 2013), in which NGOs pointed out that the participation of women in public life and their representation at senior decision-making levels continues to remain very low. Leaders at the middle level of the pyramid (local politicians, religious leaders, academics etc.) are involved in local peace conferences, peace programs, and local seminars. In Goma the leaders at this level are mainly men, working in systems which are inherently patriarchal, such as churches and traditional governance structures. As Russel and O’Flynn (2011) argue ethnic leaders are generally men whose ethnic interests and identities are patriarchal, and the role of women in religious institutions remains marginal. They are mainly pushed to provision of support and services without leadership or representation roles. Women’s input is therefore missed at this level which Lederach say holds the ‘greatest potential for establishing an infrastructure that can sustain the peacebuilding process over the long term’ (Lederach 1997). In Goma, as shown in the field research, women’s peace activities are concentrated at the grassroots level due to gendered divisions of power, most of these activities are delivered by civil society organisations, mainly led by women some of them for many years.

6.3.1 The realities of patriarchy in DRC and Goma

Patriarchy sets roles, behaviours and attitudes that societies define as appropriate for women and men, shape their position in society and contribute to the consequence and mechanisms of power relations, from the intimate sphere of the household to the highest

levels of political decision-making. Selebogo (2020) points out that in DRC patriarchal ideology rooted in cultural practices influences discrimination against women and limits their participation in the socio-economic and political activities of their society. Men own properties and are in control of resources, they are the major decision makers and quite often women and girls are targeted by men for sexual violence and exploitation. This is the reality, clearly seen in the women's lives as recounted in chapter five, which must be read against the peacebuilding pyramid and its ideal of creating an integrated, inclusive peace. The gendered system of power excludes women at the middle and upper levels and marginalises their voices at the grassroots.

In Goma male dominance is rooted and embedded in the family and the community and at all levels of society. As one of the local woman leaders explained, boys are learning harmful behaviours and are now joining rebel groups to terrorise civilians by looting and destroying properties, committing rape and abducting young girls and women to sexually abuse them and retain them by force. Hamber (2015) notes that masculinities are deeply entangled with systems of power that shape gender relations and that men and masculinity are privileged with superior agency in patriarchal cultures.

Importantly, with respect to the pyramid of peace seen through gendered lenses, this research also shows that, even at the middle and grassroots level, men still hold leadership and decision-making power. This was strongly confirmed by both grassroots women and local woman leaders during the field research. Male domination of local institutions is noted by Paffenholz (2013), who argues that religion, education and other factors influence members almost from birth to death in families, schools and parishes, temples or associations. Due to their influence and power, men in these institutions, such as schools and businesses, are able to retain their leadership positions from generation to

generation. Women's leadership roles and participation therefore continue to be blocked at all three levels of the peacebuilding pyramid (Lederach, 1997) because of a recurring cycle of marginalisation and discrimination. This was well illustrated by research participants who reported that, despite women's strong commitment to church life, the hierarchy is always male-dominated and the role of women is limited to that of giving moral support, counselling, cleaning and organising for services (LWL3). Decisions are largely made by church and faith leaders who are mainly men. Even local woman leaders making a difference in North Kivu, whose leadership at the local level could benefit the whole of society, are excluded from formal meetings organised at the community level. At the bottom level of the pyramid, they have limited opportunities for participation and so remain trapped at this grassroots level. This analysis of the situation in North Kivu implies that if the participation pillar of 1325 is to be realised, then measures designed to overcome gendered power hierarchies are necessary and protection of women from violence is integral to enabling participation.

Feedback from the research participants indicate that women in North Kivu are very marginalised and subject to a continuum of violence from interpersonal violence to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. Their participation in meetings and discussions related to peace and security is almost non-existent because of the hierarchies and institutionalised structures of power and cultural processes.

The general patriarchal division of power is compounded by the insecurity of ongoing conflict between rebels and armed groups, which often involves the targeting of women for sexual violation, further hampering women's participation in Goma. Puechguirbal (2010) argues women become more vulnerable during war because of pre-existing inequalities originating from gender power hierarchies. In Goma, a hegemonic form of

masculinity with many men using aggressive and abusive behaviours is evident. Gibson (2011) points out that without addressing the fundamental power dynamics and imbalances which are at the root of violence, a sustainable and 'positive' peace for both men and women cannot be established.

Hudson (2016) argues that despite lip service to UNSCR 1325 and National Action Plans, WPS has done little to challenge the structural or root causes and power hierarchies that perpetuate women's inequality and insecurity. The agenda does not consider the structural factors that prevent the effective participation of women in peacebuilding which include gendered violence and poverty, with women as victims of violence and displacement taking on the role of head of household. These factors were echoed by the field research participants, and it was clear that for women in Goma, the social, cultural, economic and political context hinders their participation. Pratt and Richter (2011) highlight the multiple inequalities and injustices at the local, national and international levels that shape women's experiences of insecurity and argues in order to construct peaceful and just societies it is necessary to address sources of inequality that include, women's access to decision-making institutions and processes of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. They point out that UNSCR 1325 and the family of Women, Peace and Security resolutions promote women's participation, without considering these gender and other social categories and structures which create oppression, marginalization and violence and so prevent representation (Pratt and Richter 2011). According to Hudson (2016), concentration should therefore be more on long-term shifts in gendered power relations directed at changing cultural, structural and behavioural patriarchal patterns, paying attention to the complexity of women and men's multiple

identities and roles in the design of the peace process. This way analysis of conflict and how it has impacted on both men and women will help inform intervention.

Achieving long term shifts in gendered power relations to enable participation requires structural change. For example, the SNV (2010) documentary ‘Make Women Count for Peace’ pointed out the need to harmonise national laws to comply with international commitments, especially the DRC family code which in some cases discriminates against women, for instance preventing them from filing claims against perpetrators of CRSV. Women in rural areas and working at grassroot level experience locally grounded inequalities too. As explained by local woman leaders they have been working for their NGOs based in Goma for many years, as heads of their organisations and decision-makers at the organisational level, and so have built a reputation and are known by international NGOs for their work. However, even with their expertise they are not invited to meetings to discuss peace or security within the region; men organise and issues invitations. Sometimes women are invited to participate as part of civil society, but others only hear about such meetings when they are finished. Their leadership at grassroot level is also not recognised, which clearly highlights the need to address inequalities at all the levels of the pyramid. Women at the grassroots level, although highly active, are hindered from participation and from taking leadership roles due to male dominance. Even initiatives started by grassroots women – such as the village security committees mentioned in Chapter 5 – eventually become male-dominated; grassroots women articulated that even though they devised the security initiative of guarding the village at night, it is the men who gather to share updates and their guard experiences. Sometimes the women who are doing their turn on behalf of their families are not contacted, only for them to know about it when it is too late, with the result that meetings are held without them. In effect for women’s participation to become possible, the Congolese government

must develop and sustain action against gender inequality in order to transform social norms. At the local level in Goma, interventions carried out there must be based on a suitable gender analysis to ensure that traditional patterns are not reinforced and that violence against women is addressed properly.

Paffenholz (2013) insists that peacebuilding requires changes at the personal, structural and relational levels, affecting different systems. For this to happen, it is crucial that the whole community reconnects after war and after conflict fragments the social fabric. The research findings reveal the frustrations of women who note their deliberate exclusion, the fact that DRC is using a top-down approach to addressing the current situation and that meetings representing international allies, religious organisations, national government and rebel groups negotiate and discuss the ongoing conflict. The use of this top-down approach may mean that conflict is never resolved in the region. Indeed, Lederach indicates very clearly that at the top level, actors are more concerned with ceasefire and ending war through agreements, and not so much with building peace; thus, the real issues affecting communities and stability and sustainable peace are not discussed at length. All the DRC peace agreements discussed in this thesis confirm Lederach's assertion: they referred to ceasefires and appointed a national government composed of all the belligerents sharing power, but never addressed the real issues affecting people at the community level, including insecurities and exclusions rooted in gender inequalities and relations of power. It is only by integrating women at all levels of security and peace that these issues can be addressed.

It is clear that the general patriarchal nature of power across DRC and in Goma in particular is a major barrier to women's participation. In addition to this the widespread

insecurity for women caused by the prevalence of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence compounds women's inability to participate.

6.3.2 Insecurity and gender-based violence

Rebels and armed groups remain the most dangerous and key obstacle to women's peace in Kivu region. They have destabilised peace within the region and women continue to suffer as a result. The insecurities caused by GBV are a major hinderance to women's participation. Even though protection pillar of the UNSCR 1325 clearly affirms the need to protect women, with SCR 1820 in particular calling for armed actors to end the practice of using sexual violence against civilians and for all parties to counter impunity and provide effective protection for civilians (UN, 2008), women in Goma continue to be sexually abused and, as was also discussed in chapter 5 they cannot access justice. The grassroots women noted that violence within the region is experienced at the individual level and in institutional structures as a result of the recurring and ongoing conflict. Violence is mainly perpetuated because of the rigid gendered stereotypes, social pressures and taboos. At the society level, men are expected to provide protection and economic security for dependent women and children. Violence, taken for granted in North Kivu, leads men and boys to express their masculinity by taking up arms. Men and boys use aggression and violence, bolstered by weapons, to prove their masculinity. This has been highlighted in *Masculinities and New War: The Gendered Dynamics of Contemporary Armed Conflict*, where the author David Duriesmith (2016) argues for the need for gendered analyses of how militarised masculinities are constructed and change over the time, using examples from Sierra Leone and South Sudan. He suggests that the

‘new war’ theory is uniquely appropriate, due to its emphasis on identity in contemporary conflict, yet has been remarkably impartial to the crucial component of gender identity.

In DRC, male aggression is common. The research participants cited men and young boys recruited to join rebel groups behaving in stereotypical ways, using their physical strength and aggression to loot and to sexually violate women and girls. The interviewed police superintendent supported this claim:

My office has dealt with cases of girls as young as three years old and women as old as 80 years old who have been raped. The many rebel groups in this region are using guns to rape and kill mercilessly; sometimes when they attack a village, they destroy everything. Here we deal with perpetrators some of them very young men (SO7).

In North Kivu, sexual violence is widespread and is committed by armed groups but also by civilians as a crime of opportunity, using weapons to attack and terrorise their victims. The situation is well described by Aroussi (2016), who asserts that the conflict in North Kivu has impacted on women negatively – they are marked by psychological trauma, threat to life, displacement, loss of loved ones, hardship and lack of access to basic services – as sexual violence is committed by all armed groups, including government forces, as a way of intimidating and punishing communities for their perceived or real collaborations with the opposing armed factions. A UN report on DRC noted that in 2018, the intensified activity by non-state armed actors, as well as the military operations in response thereto, contributed to an increase in the number of documented cases of conflict-related sexual violence. Non-State armed groups, using sexual violence to enforce control over illicit economic activities, including the exploitation of natural resources, were responsible for most cases.

It can be concluded that hyper-masculinity in North Kivu has resulted in continuous and ongoing insecurity, which is constantly reflected in acute violence on women and their

exclusion from peacebuilding. It's clear that women's participation in peacebuilding needs to be intimately linked to greater protection from sexual violence, to ensure that they can access public space without fear.

6.3.3 Gendered power and resources - burden of care, households, resources

Enabling women's participation requires addressing patriarchal power across the pyramid and protecting women from sexual violence. However, women's participation is also hampered by the burdens placed on them in their productive and reproductive roles, depriving them of the time and resources for peace actions. Gichuru (2014) states that women's bargaining power in households can determine their ability to participate in peacebuilding activities. Unfortunately, women are amongst the world's poorest, while bargaining power emerges for economically empowered individuals. The reality in DRC, as is in many countries and cultures, is that women do not own properties; some cultivate lands that they cannot own and have to hand over profits from selling domestic produce to their husbands. For Gichuru (2014), such cultures and practices explain the poverty trap for women: they do not own resources and so are usually dependent on their husbands, who then control them. Men, therefore, retain all the power through their ownership of properties and resources in the community. Grassroot women affirmed this view during the field study. Agriculture has been the main source of food supply to their families but as well source of income for many families, but even when the women spend all their time and efforts in the field men have the control of usage and earnings made from sales. Women do not have legal right to own land or property and this has been a major challenge,

We work hard in the fields cultivating to ensure we are able to provide food as well surplus for sale to enable us to provide for other needs such as our children's

education. I have been working in our farm before the conflict. We were doing very well but my husband was in control of everything. Even after selling goods in the market I had to give him all the money and then he makes decision of how that money will be spent. It is the money of the family but I contribute more in order to get it, my husband has the overall say, sometime he fights me to surrender all the money (GW5).

For many women in Goma the strains on them are also increased by the loss of husbands, Numerous women are the heads of their households after losing husbands in the ongoing conflict or when the husband is working away from home, usually in the mines. The role of these women has changed in that they are taking up responsibilities which are seen as male, in educating and protecting their children and making decisions on behalf of their families.

A DRC NGO shadow report for CEDAW (CCEDEF, 2013) indicates that customs and traditions limit the role of women to housework and childbearing and also notes the low level of education and limited participation of women in decision-making bodies. One of the major limitations to women's participation in peacebuilding mainly arises from their caring roles, they have to first meet the needs of their family. It is common for men not to help with household chores or care work in the Kivu region and this behaviour is reinforced by stereotypes that restrict and affirm these roles as women's roles. These cultural beliefs and practices are perpetuated through generations: girls are taught to prepare food, clean, care for their young siblings and are expected to become good wives, whereas boys are expected to become tough and independent. Women in North Kivu are expected to fulfil the reproductive role of bearing and raising children, to care for other family members and to undertake household management and home-based production, carried through to agriculture, i.e., growing and selling produce to supplement the husband's income. Men are expected to go out to work and bring money home to support their families. A man who does not go out to work in North Kivu is viewed as weak and

effeminate, and because of this, many men may have no choice but to work in the mines far away from their homes. Women stay at home or otherwise work near their homes. Gender roles, stereotypes and norms have long been established, building structural inequalities in DRC, and resulting in limitations on women's involvement and inclusion in all aspects of society, including in peacebuilding. In addition, there are other specific barriers to women's participation with social, economic, and cultural factors weighing against them. Time constraints are a major barrier to women, as their reproductive role (Richardson, 2008) and care obligations prevent them from participating as their family and children are their priority. Women in North Kivu indicated that their role as caregivers and support for their family were priorities for them. They would therefore have to balance family with any other obligations. Local woman leaders also said they also sacrificed their free time and limited resources in order to keep their initiatives underway. Moreover, less access to education and lack of adequate skills take away women's confidence especially when high level political discussions are held. As noted, many local woman leaders have achieved a good level of education some however still lack skills to negotiate, express and argue their views, they also lack confidence and support, especially during meetings which are male-dominated and when they face intimidation during meetings.

One underlying challenge therefore in addressing the engagement and involvement of women in peacebuilding in DRC is the unequal distribution of power, which especially creates inequalities between women and men. Power plays a key role in sexual relations and in control over money and resources. Men have power at all levels. At household level, they determine budgets and spending and have the final say on family matters. The DRC Family Code Mbambi and Faray-Kele (2010), although revised over the years, continues to clearly affirm the power, control and privileges of men. Attempts to

challenge the prevailing gendered power systems have provoked hostility, however. For example, support for women to establish small enterprises has been challenged by men, some of whom feel threatened by the economic empowerment of women. In some families, this has also resulted in violence. This was very much confirmed during the field research. In three out of the eight grassroots group meetings when some men attended, they voiced the feeling that women were being empowered by NGO donor interventions, but men were being left behind. They further reported that this situation has created challenges in families where ‘women have become ‘big heads’ and tend to think they are above the man in the house’ (GW5). Women also recognised this fact and were of the opinion that strategies must be put in place to create employment for men who have lost everything during the conflict. They felt that if men feel neglected, women will not achieve peace, as there will be increased violence at the family level. For instance, they said some men will beat the women to get the money gained from the small businesses they have established:

Men do not understand why it is only women receiving support to establish small businesses. We lost everything in the village, our house was burned, now here I am able to run a small business through the help of Christian Aid, but my husband is not happy. He stays at home, there is nothing for him to do, even though our children need to be taken care of. We have to buy uniforms and provide food, sometimes he is very angry with me for no reason, even when I am the one providing financially for this family. He feels bad not to be able to provide, sometimes he wants to fight. For the sake of peace at home and for the woman to move forward, men should also be supported so as to reduce the sense of threat, it is like he feels he is not a man anymore (GW6).

In the three subsections above – on patriarchy, violence and divisions of labour – it’s clear that gendered power inequalities are rife at all levels of the pyramid and women’s marginalisation is compounded by violence and insecurity. During the interviews and discussions there was consensus among the participants that gendered relations of power need to change, but this should be done with awareness of how women and men’s lives

are related to each other. All this raises critical questions for the promotion of WPS, especially the ‘participation pillar’.

6.4 Implementation of participation pillar of UNSCR 1325

According to the WPS Global Study review in 2015, while the WPS agenda had contributed to significant changes in international norms surrounding women’s political leadership and decision-making on peace and security, its effect on the lives of women at local levels has been limited (UN 2015). This remains unchanged even as we mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and despite the passing of additional resolutions intended to strengthen the participation pillar such as Resolution 1889 (2009). Marking the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, the UN (2020) admitted that much remains to be done even though there have been some gains made to strengthen women’s participation with more women involved in UN peacekeeping or women leading peace processes in their own country. It is still the case that, in many conflicted societies, women’s voices are excluded at all levels of peace processes and peacebuilding, with the UN itself conceding that the inclusion of women in peacebuilding is still far from a reality UN (2020). While reporting on women’s meaningful participation in peace processes, UN Women noted that women continue to be largely excluded from negotiating peace and that in 2018, out of six active UN-led or co-led processes, women were included in 14 out of 19 delegations and between 1992 and 2018, women constituted 13 per cent of negotiators, 3 per cent of mediators and only 4 per cent of signatories in major peace processes UN Women (2020). According to Pratt and Ritcher-Devroe (2013) women are being integrated into the existing peace and security agenda without any transformation occurring and that, there is a danger that the international community is actually

undermining women's local peacebuilding efforts. Sometimes women are being included in tokenistic ways in UN sponsored peace efforts but when they raise critical voices in international forums, their ideas are dismissed. Such was the experience of Iraqi women at the UN, Gibbings (2011) and of women from DRC in New York, as mentioned in chapter 5.

Academic critical engagement with WPS has suggested that the participation pillar has suffered relative neglect in relation to the 'protection' pillar, which governments and NGOs have fastened onto over the last decades. Otto (2007), for example, argues that the strong-minded focus of WPS advocates and states on the issue of sexual violence in conflict situations indicates that 'the Security Council portray women as mainly in need of protection, rather than treating them as equal participants in peacebuilding'. Kirby and Shepard (2016) also criticise the narrowing of the WPS agenda to a sole focus on the prevention of violence and the protection of women from violence, which they say risks diminishing the importance of the elements of the agenda that create meaningful opportunities for women's political and social empowerment through their participation in peace and security governance. Participation of women in peacebuilding in conflict has to go hand in hand with protection.

In many respects the field study in this thesis confirms that women's participation is not possible without transformation – particularly efforts to tackle the gendered inequalities of power which lead to exclusion from the levels of the peacebuilding pyramid. However, what this field study also reveals is that the dichotomy between participation and protection is a false one. CRSV is one of the major barriers to women's participation in Goma. Therefore, the participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma can only be

enhanced by addressing gender relations of power and the insecurities caused by conflict related sexual violence.

6.4.1 Participation cannot happen separate from protection from SGBV

The intrinsic connection between ‘protection’ and ‘participation’ is obvious from the field study. In Goma, gender-based violence has been largely noted as problematic in relation to peacebuilding, as noted by a senior official:

The high level of sexual violence within this region is worrying, it makes it hard to bring in discussions on peacebuilding when rape has become so common. There is also a high incidence of domestic violence. In my organisation we have been trying to address these issues, but sexual violence and domestic violence is a subject that will need to be discussed at the community level and the law should be applied to help combat this problem. Perpetrators are just let go after committing crimes (SO4).

Participants of the field study have clearly outlined how women and girls in North Kivu region continue to be targets of war and are regularly subjected to sexual and gender-based violence and enslavement as part of the strategy of combatants. Personal insecurity was obviously very strongly experienced by the women in the Focus Groups, leading to their displacement and their desire to establish security committees in their new settlements.

Despite the adoption of several WPS resolutions focusing on the protection of women, they remain to be realised. UNSCR 1820 focuses on protection of women from sexualized violence in conflict and zero tolerance of sexualized abuse and exploitation perpetrated by UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations personnel (UN 2008). However, as evident by the field study many women in Goma are still victims of this

violence and are unable to access justice due to fear of retaliation by the perpetrators. Women's participation is therefore hindered by fear and quite often intimidation by men. Local women leaders have been intimidated and threatened by men because of speaking out and supporting victims. Grassroot women in Goma continue to suffer from the consequences of the conflict by being targeted by armed rebels, army and those who are supposed to protect them. Women leaders are also facing intimidation and threat because of standing up and exposing perpetrators. For example, the founder of *Synergie des Femmes*, an organisation which was created in 2002 to combat sexual and gender-based violence and a coalition of 35 Congolese women's and human rights organisations providing medical, psycho-social, and legal aid to victims of sexual violence in war-torn North Kivu province, has received many threats due to her challenging stance on speaking out about injustice and violation of human rights in DRC. In 2010, she was threatened with arrest by the Goma Military Prosecutor's Department for denouncing human rights violations committed in eastern DRC. In effect, the prevalence of CRSV further undermines women's voices.

As stated by McKay, women's empowerment aims to reduce and prevent violence by shaping an environment in which women, men, and children can live in situations of non-violence, justice, equity and upholding human rights (McKay 2002). The protection pillar of WPS acknowledges wars and armed conflicts have gendered aspects and urges states to protect women's rights which include guarding women and girls from gender-based violence (UN 2000). In 2008 Security Council Resolution 1820 was adopted this was the first resolution to recognize conflict-related sexual violence as a matter of international peace and security. Even though the resolution calls for armed actors to end the practice of using sexual violence against civilians and for all parties to counter impunity and provide effective protection for civilians, women in North Kivu continue to suffer with

no access to justice and perpetrators are let to go without having to face consequences for their abuse. This resolution will need to be implemented in DRC with more focus been put on training of personnel, deployment of more women to peace operations, enforcement of zero-tolerance policies and strengthening capacities of national institutions (UN 2008). While the UN Women Peace and Security agenda treats protection and participation as separate pillars, the experience of women in Goma reveals that the latter cannot be achieved without the former. Strong measures including national measures and international instruments which aim to protect women and highlight their specific needs both during and after a conflict urgently need to be applied in DRC, for example recommendation 30 from the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This was approved in 2013 and covers issues such as the participation of women in all areas including peace processes, access and upholding of all their rights, and active participation in conflict prevention. State must eliminate discriminatory laws and practices and then we can encourage women participation at the highest possible level.

6.4.2 Participation cannot happen without context-specific analysis and action

As noted from the field study and analysed above, gender inequality is present in all levels of society in DRC and these inequalities and the corresponding injustices are reinforced by the social and legal structures in place. The local experiences of gender inequality experienced by the research participants, is affirmed by various gender-specific country profile reports. Congolese women lack equality of participation and opportunities in many areas and, even when men and women have the same qualifications and competences in different fields, men are always favoured in access to employment and pay. Women also take the main responsibility for care work, looking after the family; and

those who do find jobs outside home have to come home to family chores after completing their paid work. Lorber (2010) asserts that gender inequality takes many different forms, depending on the economic structure and social organisation of a particular society and on the culture of any particular group within that society, and identifies sexual exploitation and violence against women as part of gender inequality. A 2014 country gender profile report (Swedish Embassy-Kinshasa *et al.*, 2014) indicates that women and girls in DRC are not valued like men and boys and that gender inequality is translated into deeply discriminatory social norms and values in all spheres of life. This inequality manifests itself in the uneven access by women to education, health, decision-making, ownership and inheritance, as affirmed by a 2017 country gender profile report which says that gender relations in the DRC are determined by strongly male-dominant gender norms (JICA, 2017). Mbambi and Faray-Kele (2010) have noted that, in DRC, 61.2% of women compared to 51.3% of men live below the poverty threshold and that, in terms of employment, women constitute only 2.8% of state-salaried employment/activities against 12% of men, even though the right to employment is constitutionally recognised for all in DRC. The right to inherit for women and limited access to education by girls have been described as especially oppressive in preventing the advancement of women and girls. The rate of schooling for girls remains low, as has been confirmed by a report from NGOs to CEDAW (CCEDEF, 2013); the percentage of girls in education is 52% in primary schools but falls to 39% in secondary schools and to 20% in universities. In terms of decision-making and political participation, Congolese women are not effectively represented and have never participated in governance of the country since independence in 1960. Additionally, no woman has ever been a head of state, head of government nor even head of an armed group (Mbambi and Faray-Kele, 2010).

According to George (2019) there is need to challenge cultural norms and beliefs towards men and women and to change the beliefs and expectations about gender roles and capabilities that are the main barrier to women's empowerment and to gender equality. Women in Goma lives are threatened by men who often uses weapon and aggressive sexual behaviour to violate them and their participation in social political and economic life is hampered by exclusion, where men are often dominating as the leaders and decision makers. Cockburn (2008) argues that gender is a driving force in conflict and war; and that social norms depict genders as complementary but unequal, with certain qualities such as strength and confidence allocated to men but deformed into tools for domination, and other qualities like tenderness and care allocated to women but deformed into a badge of submission. Against this general context, research participants were able to point out the challenges that women continue to face due to ongoing inequalities at the individual, family and societal levels. At the family level, grassroots women said that girls are often forced into marriage at an early age and (mainly in North Kivu) are targeted by rebels who make slaves of them and abuse them after abduction. True and Davis (2015) argue that the social environment of armed groups is a gendered construction that shapes perpetrators attitude, values beliefs and interest. They argue that in order to eradicate sexual violence, fostering equality and building gender-responsive institutions are central. They point out the need to address the significance of gendered inequalities and discriminatory practices in societies and the important of having gender analysis to help explain widespread and systematic SGBV which is crucial for prevention at the point of escalating violence and in peacebuilding.

Pratt and Richter (2011) point out the need to address sources of inequality that include, women's access to decision-making institutions and processes of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As noted by Solhjell (2013) this can be done by addressing the

gendered roles within communities. George (2019) urges the need to work in addressing cultural norms and beliefs towards men and women through education, training, set up role models, men supporting women and by targeting everyone in the community with training and awareness raising to change the beliefs and expectations about gender roles and capabilities that are the main barrier to women's empowerment and to gender equality. Exclusion of women from participating in the society must be addressed by recognising gender power relations. The dynamics of male power and women's subordination are very clearly the major cause of women's exclusion from peacebuilding in the Goma region.

6.4.3 Promoters of 1325 need to take women's voices more seriously

As described above the broader gender order and the specific gender dynamics around the ongoing conflict in the Goma area create a situation where women are not considered legitimate participants in the public sphere. This general exclusion and inequality is reinforced in the context of any formal attempts at peace talks or peacebuilding initiatives at local regional or international level, as was made clear by the participants in the research findings. The field study in North Kivu shows clearly that women's participation in peacebuilding is marginalised and their voices are not heard. Ironically, the very institution which seeks to promote their participation can be part of this dynamic, especially when women raise issues which challenge dominant peacebuilding narratives. Gibbins (2011), for example, notes how women struggle to be heard at the UN. She argues that the UN and its speech norms around gender are a space of inclusion but also exclusion since the cultural norms of the UN require issues to be framed in a positive manner and certain narratives are sanctioned while others are discouraged. She illustrates this with the example of two Iraq women who were advocating for women's involvement

in peace talks in their country. They were invited to the UN but they were denied permission to speak in front of the Security Council in a formal way. When the women spoke, they expressed themselves in nationalist terms and condemned the invasion by the USA and UK as imperialist and criticised the UN for its lack of support. This was contrary to what was expected. They had been expected to speak positively about women's efforts in the reconstruction of Iraq and the role the UN could play. The way they spoke caused discomfort and embarrassment and was discouraged. These power dynamics around the management of women's inclusion mean it is important to ask which women from the Global South are being included and what is allowed to be said. Local women leaders participating in the study argued that the women who go to present women in formal meetings in DRC are quite often selected by the government and they are already involved in the formal political processes in DRC. These women are also those who are chosen to represent them at the UN as well, while grassroots women are excluded. As described by the women from Goma who attended the 62nd UN meeting in New York in 2018, they were not allowed to participate in the formal meeting and only managed to speak and share information at a side event. The women were also questioned by the government delegate from their country and were warned not to expose their country with what is happening in North Kivu. This indicates a worrying trend of having women who are not affected directly by the conflict engaged in formal meetings, while ignoring those women who are affected or living in conflict zone as strong voices. Moreover, financial support to grassroots organisations remains a huge barrier to their progress and support is mainly given to large or national organisations - and according to Paffenholz (2013) donors tend to support mainly moderate, middle class groups due to their ability to speak, write and work in the donor language and their capacity to provide the required. This will need to change.

6.5 Moving towards women's participation - where does this analysis lead us?

Lederach's peacebuilding theory, as translated into his pyramid of peace, has been well contextualised in the ongoing conflict and peacebuilding efforts in DRC. All the actors involved in peacebuilding at different levels in DRC belong to entities or institutions mentioned by Lederach, namely, the top, middle and grassroots levels. However, analysing the findings of the present research, it is evident that the significance of the gender dimension and gendered power relations problematise the hope of achieving integrated peacebuilding as captured in Lederach's pyramid of peace. According to Lederach (1997), peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept that generates and sustains the full array of processes, approaches and stages needed to transform conflict into more sustainable and peaceful relationships, further emphasising that peacebuilding centrally involves the transformation of relationships and cultures by 'sustainable reconciliation' that requires structural, cultural and relational transformations. However, Fetherston (1994) criticises the lack of power analysis in Lederach's theory. In this thesis it is the gendered dimension of power and exclusion which has come into focus, clearly showing the importance of addressing this in the pyramid of peace for the case of DRC.

From this analysis – and the assertion of the importance of women as participants at all levels of peacebuilding – the question arises as to what needs to be done to bring about women's empowerment at all levels of peacebuilding. The women who participated in the field study expressed ideas about this. Local woman leaders clearly indicated that the changing of negative perceptions of women by the whole of society is a necessary beginning to addressing the problem, as negative perceptions are reinforced by norms and cultural expectations, which are passed on through socialisation and embedded in the community through set norms and expectations of boys and girls and women and men.

This was even exemplified in the recruitment of boys to join rebels and of girls being captured and made wives by the military.

My argument in this research is that sustainable and lasting peace is more likely to be achieved by integrating women into all three levels of Lederach's pyramid of peace. This can be done in the case of North Kivu by engaging and holding discussions with men and women on the gendered power relations that continue to hinder women's participation. Since women in DRC are far from being involved in peacebuilding due to male domination, it is vital to explore the community set-up and how people relate to each other (Paffenholz, 2013) in order to establish and build the inclusion of women. During my scoping study in Kinshasa in December 2015, a senior member of staff and head of policy at the Ministry of Gender and the Family said that DRC, on paper, had a superb policy document on dealing with conflict, gender-based and sexual violence and peacebuilding, but has failed to translate this policy into action. He further said that women in the DRC culture are looked down upon and men do not want to be led or told what to do by women.

Much has to be done at the ground level, therefore, to educate, raise awareness and change societal perceptions of women and girls. This fact was confirmed by the research participants who largely view men as dominant and violent and cited male dominance and aggression as pushing civilians to live in a constant state of insecurity in which women continue to be sexually violated. My field research in North Kivu shows that the community has been destroyed by the recurring conflict, that relationships have been broken, that people are living in fear of attack and women are unable participate and carry on their daily lives due to fear of sexual violence from men, including civilians, further reducing trust. From this analysis, and a recognition of women's activities and ideas, it is

possible to offer a number of lessons learned and recommendations for integrating women in peacebuilding. Only then will the hoped for participation aspired to in the WPS agenda become a reality.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter draws this thesis on women and participation in peacebuilding in Goma, North Kivu province of DRC to a close. This research demonstrates that women in Goma continue to build peace and security within their homes and communities and often come together collectively to create change, however the research has also revealed that women face multiple barriers to participation in peacebuilding at all levels. Sjoberg (2010) points out that structures in society often limit women's agency and their importance as peacebuilders. In Goma for example both institutional and cultural barriers hinder women's participation. The persistence of male dominated social structures and socialization processes seriously impede women's meaningful participation in decision making processes. Women's capability and contributions continue to be ignored while participation continues to privilege men. Changes in family relations and in attitudes to women's roles and responsibilities are therefore important to enhance women's ability to take on public responsibilities. Likewise, if the UN and international community's commitment to women's participation encoded in WPS is to be realised, the UN will need to take seriously the analysis of the UN Secretary General. In a 2019 report the UNSG pointed out that structural gender inequalities and discrimination are at the heart of the differential impact conflict has on women, men, boys and girls and preventing

sexual violence requires the advancement of substantive gender equality before, during and after conflict. Addressing these structural discriminations is essential to ensure women's full and effective participation in political, economic and social life and ensure accessible and responsive justice and security institutions (UN 2019). In the following sections I will discuss how women participation in Goma can be enhanced in light of the WPS agenda and changes that are needed for women to be integrated fully into peacebuilding.

7.2 Enabling protection and participation

Based on the analysis in the previous chapters there are two key major finding emerging from this research. First it is very clear that both the protection and participation pillars of WPS are equally important in ensuring the participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma. Many critics of how 1325 has been implemented over the last 20 years argue that governments have prioritised the protection pillar over the participation one (Kirby and Shephard 2016, Otto, 2016). What this research on women's lives in Goma suggests is that these two pillars must go hand in hand. Taylor and Baldwin (2019) argue that protection for women is wide in scope and should not be limited to immediate protection in crisis or conflict settings but also on the threats women face when they attempt to participate in political processes or advocate for human rights and peace and protections should encompass justice mechanisms that can prevent future violations. They further point out that the UNSC indicates a preference for gendered analysis in Resolutions 2122 and 2242, but there is little accountability for missions when their briefings and reports do not consider gender. They argue the Security Council has been particularly reluctant to address ongoing threats and violence directed at women human rights defenders, whose work to build rights respecting communities often puts them in direct conflict with

their own governments, which are UN member states. In his report in 2019 and while focusing on DRC, the UN Secretary General called on the DRC government to strengthen prevention of conflict related violence on women by “promoting the meaningful participation of survivors and members of civil society, including women’s organizations and community leaders, as central in all prevention and response efforts; and supporting the efforts of human rights defenders and journalists who report on conflict-related sexual violence, whose efforts are fundamental to changing norms on structural gender inequality and discrimination” (UN, 2019).

The second key finding focuses on the structural barriers which emerge in this research as major hinderances to women participation, alongside the violence that keeps them from the public sphere. Reflecting on Lederach’s pyramid of peace through gender lenses, it is evident that hierarchy and gender dynamics of power are evident at all levels of society in DRC and this continues to prevent the realisation of the potential of full integration of women’s participation into peacebuilding. These barriers are rooted in gender inequality, power imbalances and negative societal perceptions of women as agents in public discourse. As noted by Selebogo (2020), women can enhance the peace process if they are given equal opportunity to participate in the peace and security structures and internal political processes as outlined in the UNSC Resolution 1325. However quite often the unequal distribution of power between men and women, leaves most women without a voice in local, national, regional and global decision-making processes. Moreover, Taylor and Baldwin (2019) criticise WPS with a view that the Security Council mandates for peace operations lack concrete language on WPS which include requests for gender expertise and gendered conflict analysis which is a consistent shortcoming since the Council adopted Resolution 1325. They further argue there is need

to challenge existing patriarchal power structures and heteronormativity within the frameworks of WPS since these norms can be used to maintain an exclusionary status quo rather than to facilitate long-term change including in representation in peace efforts. Making the WPS agenda fully inclusive requires challenging power structures built on exclusion and inequality and can strengthen responses to gender-based violence in all its forms. Speake, (2013), further argues institutions tend to be “masculine” in culture and practice, favouring hierarchical structures and UN itself maintains a deep-rooted gender hierarchy, which militates against gender equality. Accordingly, Gibson, (2011) argues that without addressing the fundamental power dynamics and imbalances which are at the root of violence, a sustainable and ‘positive’ peace for both men and women cannot be established. The research in this thesis confirms these arguments about the limits of an internationally endorsed ‘participation’ agenda which does not challenge the structural barriers to the inclusion of women in the Goma region. In the closing sections of this thesis, the issues of what measures need to be taken to ensure women’s transformative participation are considered.

7.3 Integrating women in peacebuilding

This thesis emphasises the importance of ensuring gender analysis in all the three levels of the pyramid of peace. Such analysis is useful to identify processes and structures that perpetuate inequalities in society, but also then to design interventions that can tackle women’s exclusion and enhance their participation. The process helps to understand the different effects of gender roles and gender division of labour, resource allocation and distribution of benefits on women and men in society. Better awareness of the gendered dimensions of power in communities is critically essential to ensure a realistic assessment of the potential for integrated peacebuilding. El Jacks, (2003) argues inequality

experienced by women during and after armed conflict in all societies derives from the dominant understanding of gender roles and equally gender is one of the social power systems that causes conflicts. Munro (2000) highlights that feminist perspectives on peacebuilding demands gender analysis in order to reveal the unique experiences and needs of women and men, and further create more effective and gender-sensitive strategies and initiatives. Gender analysis then is an analytical tool which take the experiences and needs of certain groups in society as a starting point and investigate how gendered power structures influence these experiences and needs. It then seeks to challenge oppressive or exclusionary structures in order to build emancipatory change. As this thesis suggests, this perspective is a crucial missing element in Lederach's approach to integrated peacebuilding.

To ensure the integration of women in peacebuilding in DRC, different initiatives and strategies will need to be tailored to different levels and different contexts. From the fieldwork it is clear that women are at different levels of readiness, given the structural discriminations and challenges they face. Grassroots women are not yet ready for engagement beyond securing their own lives, their families and livelihoods as they are still very much affected by the ongoing conflict. Local woman leaders have a deep understanding of the conflict and of peacebuilding needs and requirements and are already very active. They are, however, largely excluded from peacebuilding processes and are very much aware of the barriers that contribute to their exclusion – largely grounded in the patriarchal system of male dominance that marks peacebuilding meetings and discussions. The fieldwork demonstrates that manifestations of gendered power relations lead to male domination at all levels of the peacebuilding pyramid. Gender equality must therefore be integrated in all levels of pyramid of peace by ensuring the

equal participation of women in top, middle and bottom levels. Yet gender inequality and gendered violence continues to stymie such progress. In Goma, for example, the lack of women's participation in formal discussions and negotiation at all levels, is clearly evident. However, Taylor and Baldwin (2019) propose that bodies implementing the WPS agenda globally can capitalize on new initiatives to help increase the participation women. This include leveraging regional women mediator networks in all peacebuilding efforts and application of quotas to increase women's participation.

7.3.1 Addressing structural barriers

The WPS agenda does not address the structural, political, social, economic and environmental factors affecting participation of women in peacebuilding in Goma. Taylor and Baldwin (2019) argue WPS promotion needs to shift from UN headquarters in New York and to focus more on the field as the current focus tends to be on elite level policymaking rather than on grassroots and community-driven peace efforts. The violent environment in North Kivu makes lives of women very fragile, mainly hampered by high insecurity. Pratt and Richer (2013) argue women are being added into the existing peace and security agenda, but without any transformation occurring there is a danger of the international community undermining women's local peacebuilding efforts. Hudson (2016) likewise states that the resolutions do little to challenge structural or root causes and power hierarchies that perpetuate women's inequality and insecurity and that a transformational strategy should concentrates more on long-term shifts in gendered power relations directed at changing cultural, structural and behavioural patriarchal patterns. Male and female politicians can only implement reforms to promote gender if they are themselves committed to better understanding the gendered needs of the

population. Successful change will have to be led by those who vouch for a process that is inclusive and representative of the population as a whole.

Education plays a key role in shaping the future by tackling the root cause of the underlying problem and preventing the repeated systematic cycle of underlying issues. There is an urgent need for initiatives in support of gender equality and of challenging stereotypes as related to gender roles and the position of the women in Congolese society. Women and girls are not perceived as equal, and this perception has been reinforced and is embedded in the society. Gender equality and respect for men, women, boys and girls must be introduced into both formal and informal education settings. Institutions at all levels need to adopt measures to challenge stereotypes, beliefs and cultural norms that reinforce gender inequality. Educational curricula need to be reviewed to ensure that the concept of equality between the sexes is taught and supported in all educational institutions. Affirmative measures also need to be implemented aimed at retaining girls in education, including scholarships, healthcare provision and mentoring. National and international NGOs can also help to ensure girls are fully supported to enrol in and complete education.

Women's economic empowerment is central to their participation in peacebuilding, not to mention to their personal realisation. Since women play a key role at family level, with some heading their household. A decent income enables better choices regarding provision for their family and enables their involvement in community activities. While some NGOs are already supporting women in establishing small enterprises, most women lack knowledge or know how on managing, improving, and expanding a business and sometimes become dependent on these NGOs in terms of consistent provision of financial support for their business. NGOs supporting women with the establishment of small

businesses must support them more fully by providing technical support and training in order to ensure the businesses become meaningful sources of income that will help them advance. The government needs to take the lead in ensuring that women can access employment and self-employment through financial support and training in business management skills; this could be done by providing funding support to NGOs that include organisations led by local woman leaders already working with the women on the ground. Financial institutions also need to be more open to providing women with soft loans.

Pratt and Richer (2013) argues that it is necessary to address sources of inequality that include, but are not limited to, women's access to decision-making institutions and processes of peacebuilding and conflict resolution in order to construct peaceful and just societies. Taking necessary action in order to bridge the gap while addressing gender inequality is vital for the case of DRC. Affirmative action through legislative quotas, reserved seats and voluntary political party quotas have been noted in some countries which include Burundi, Namibia and Senegal. Rwanda, for instance, has the highest level of women parliamentary representation (mandated as a minimum of 30%) in the world, achieved by applying both legislative quotas and reserved seats. Gender mainstreaming needs to be promoted at all levels of peacebuilding and the participation of women in leadership positions needs to be increased. The national government needs to ensure that women in Goma, given their experiences of conflict, are well represented at all levels of peacebuilding; this could be done by at least ensuring there are up to five women from the Kivu region in all the meetings planned for discussing peace and security.

7.3.2 Establishing gender-responsive policies and effective laws

The principle of gender equality should be integrated into national policies and policies that avoid a gender-insensitive peace, according to Erzurum and Eren (2014). These

policies should meet women's needs, such as provision of specialist services for women to recover from traumas of the conflict, provision of security measures to protect women from all forms of sexual and domestic violence as well as special legal and social support for reporting and prosecuting of perpetrators of war crimes and human rights abuses, implementation of national policies, and infrastructure to ensure women's rights and participation. They should also make sure that an environment that facilitates women's peacebuilding activities is built. DRC has subscribed to various conventions and treaties and it is important to reflect these in domestic laws and policies. Review and amendments to various laws, in particular the Family Code and the Penal Code, is urgently needed in order to bring domestic legislation into line with CEDAW principles. The state also needs to assume its legal responsibility to protect women from all forms of discrimination given they have adopted the corresponding international frameworks.

7.3.3 Financing implementation of NAP and strengthening women at local level

According to the 2015 UN Global Study on WPS a most serious and persistent obstacle to implementation of women, peace and security commitments has been the failure to allocate sufficient resources and funds (UN Women 2015). This is supported by Taylor and Baldwin (2019) where they argue the effectiveness of any country's National Action Plan is subject to national and regional politics and resources and that failure to commit budget for NAPs limit their achievable scope. Women need to be empowered as peacebuilders and change agents at the local level to challenge the engrained behaviour of violence and aggression within patriarchal societies. Erzurum and Eren (2014) argue women's participation in peacebuilding should be supported and funded on a long-term basis because women's economic empowerment enables their participation in peacebuilding processes. They suggest this can be done by establishing allocation

mechanisms that ensure adequate funding for gender-sensitive programming and to make the funding for peace negotiations conditional on the inclusion or greater representation of women in negotiating teams. Therefore, allocation mechanisms that ensure adequate funding for gender-sensitive programming should be established. A possible way of ensuring women's participation in peacebuilding is to make the funding for peace negotiations conditional on the inclusion or greater representation of women in negotiating teams.

7.3.4 Challenging militarism and arm control

Masculine hegemony, control of small arms and sexual violence cultures urgently need to be addressed. Getting rid of rebel groups and ensuring victims of rape receive justice is key, ensuring access to education and employment would go some way to redressing this problem. The government needs to create employment and training programmes for young people, and especially for young men, to deter them from engaging with rebel groups, which, because of poverty, are attractive to young men. Gender-awareness training is also required for the judiciary and the police, not to mention a strengthening of women's participation in these sectors. Taylor and Baldwin (2019) point out that numerous Security Council members that are champions of the WPS agenda do not carry this commitment into practice. They argue many of them manufacture and sell the weapons used in conflicts that WPS actors are working to end. They highlight genuine commitment to WPS requires member states to put their political capital behind the agenda and push for structural change. For the case of DRC, the national and international governments must work together towards reducing and ending access to the small arms and light weapons that rebel groups use to loot and terrorise civilians. It is necessary to ensure effective regulation of the arms trade and control of illicit small arms flows,

especially in the North Kivu region with its high number of armed groups. The state should also formally ratify the Arms Trade Treaty regulating international trade in conventional weapons, signed by DRC in September 2013, as uncontrolled access to arms in DRC is a fundamental cause of rebel groups terrorising civilians. As this thesis has demonstrated security from violence and implementing the protection pillar are integrally linked to enabling women's participation at all levels of the pyramid of peacebuilding.

The structural changes listed here are undoubtedly challenging to implement, but necessary if women are to participate in peacebuilding. Throughout this thesis, Lederach's pyramid of peace has been used as a model for how an integrated, sustainable peace can be built through the involvement of people at all levels of a society in peacebuilding. At the same time, a gender analysis of power dynamics within the pyramid, as applied to the situation in Goma, has revealed the exclusion of women from the elite and middle levels of peacebuilding and their consignment to the grassroots level. Yet, the thesis has also shown the creative work many women in the Goma region are doing to secure their communities, maintain livelihoods, access justice, and build peace. As the peacebuilding potential of women in Goma from the grassroots to the local leaders show, protecting women from violence and ensuring their inclusion, is essential if positive peace is to be realised.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. Ethical approval application

Research project proposal: Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Case Study of Goma

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1. Purpose of research including academic rationale

The main objective for this research is to analyse the gendered dynamics of peacebuilding processes with a focus on Goma, located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The research will look into the roles that women play in peacebuilding in Goma, the barriers they face to full integration in peacebuilding efforts and the way their contributions can be enhanced.

Women's participation in peace efforts is a matter of gender equality and universal human rights, yet many nations fail to apply mechanisms that ensure women are involved and engaged fully in peace processes. When war breaks out, women suffer as they are targeted due to their gender and systematic rape is often used as a weapon of war in 'ethnic cleansing' (Oxfam and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2010). Gender inequality is a major hindrance to the advancement of women and the protection and upholding of their rights as human rights. Naraghi-Anderlini (2007) argues that ignoring underlying

gendered power relations and inequalities in a society can lead to overlooking some of the fundamental causes of conflict. Moreover, since gender equality and social justice are significant preconditions for sustainable peace, all efforts should be made to ensure there is equal participation and leadership of both women and men in all public spheres.

The special role and importance of women's participation in peace-building processes has been officially recognised through the UNSCR 1325, adopted in 2000 (UNSC, 2000). The resolution reiterated the importance of the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding and, recognising that as they are disproportionately affected by conflict, women should play a key role in achieving lasting peace after conflict.

DRC is a zone that deserves particular attention, as it has been devastated by almost two decades of war that have destroyed social relationships between people and communities, causing millions to die of violence, poverty and disease. This vast country, slightly less than one fourth the size of the USA, is located in Central Africa and its capital is Kinshasa. The east of the country, with Goma as the main city, has been the epicentre of conflict (Stearns, 2012). Rape has been used as a weapon of war in the overlapping conflicts that have rumbled on in DRC since 1996. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of women have been raped in attacks aimed at terrorising civilians, humiliating the enemy and ethnically cleansing regions. Survivors of rape often have to endure severe social discrimination. In many cases women are abandoned by their husbands and are left as the sole providers for their children. Many of the survivors are condemned to live with permanent physical damage, such as destroyed reproductive organs or HIV/AIDS. Most of them suffer post-traumatic stress disorder and social stigmatisation and others have had to raise children born of violence (International Trade Union Confederation, 2011). All attempts at bringing the violence to an end, achieving a peace settlement and engaging in post-conflict peacebuilding have failed to date. It is also noteworthy that Congolese women have not been involved in any official processes to date (Mpoumou, 2002).

The argument of this thesis is that integrating women in all levels of peacebuilding processes can help achieving sustainable peace. The research will examine how this might best be achieved in the context of Goma, mainly by applying John Paul Lederach's conflict transformation theory and, in particular, his approach to peacebuilding in contemporary conflicts, which advocates integrated actions for peace in a peacebuilding

pyramid involving three levels: top leadership, middle-range leaders and grassroots leaders (Lederach, 1997, p. 39). Women in DRC, though not a homogeneous group, are generally at the lowest level in the three-tier peacebuilding hierarchy. Moreover, international perceptions of DRC as ‘the rape capital of the world’ lead to the assumption that women in DRC are solely victims, overlooking the fact that they are potential political activists or peacebuilders. The research will identify and analyse women’s peacebuilding efforts in Goma and determine if their participation can be advanced to the middle and top levels of peacebuilding.

The potential impacts and benefits of this proposal will be to contribute to and expand on existing research on women and peacebuilding. It will also challenge and contribute to existing approaches to conflict and peacebuilding through practical recommendations on how to consider the different impacts of conflict and violence on men and women and how to adopt best practices in including women in peacebuilding for sustainable peace. It will also have practical and policy implications in terms of benefiting project implementation on peacebuilding and reconciliation, as it will help to analyse and address gender inequality, the root causes of conflict and the impact of violence, war and conflict on gender relations and will also allow for more sustainable and inclusive approaches to improving the quality of life of communities.

Central research questions and hypothesis

The research will seek answers to the following questions:

- What has been the impact of war in Goma, particularly on women?
- Have there been any attempts at peacebuilding in the area and have attempts at peacebuilding at the national level had any impact in Goma? Who was included? If peacebuilding failed, why?
- What are the perceptions of peace, security and peacebuilding by women’s groups in Goma?
- What has been the level of women’s participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
- What are the factors that have facilitated or hindered women’s participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
- How can women’s participation in peacebuilding be enhanced?

-

2. Brief description of methods and measurements to be used

Desk research and a literature review were undertaken by the researcher during the first two years of the PhD. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, field research is now required and a qualitative research approach will be used, involving focus group discussions and individual interviews. The field research will take place in Goma (eastern DRC) for one month in January 2018. Eight focus group discussions, with six to twelve members from women's groups in each will be held. In addition, individual interviews with five grassroots women leaders and five senior staff from NGOs and international organisations working in Goma will be conducted, using a semi-structured interview guide. With the consent of the participants, discussions will be recorded and later transcribed.

I have travelled three times to DR Congo as part of my work with women at grassroots level and have met with some organisations that support people in need, including Caritas DRC, which has been doing extensive work in Goma, St Joseph Fistula Clinic, which works with women victims of rape, Kizito and Annuarite Orphanage, Bon Samaritain Orphanage, Maison Mazzarello Orphanage, Christian Aid, Ministry of Gender and the Family, Independent National Central Electoral, Wezesha DRC and the Catholic Church Education Commission. It was during my scoping study in December 2015 that I met key governments officials and NGO representatives, including Mr. Mobhe, Head of the Ministry for Gender and the Family and Ms. Salome Ntububa, regional and emergency manager with Christian Aid based in Goma. Following this visit I established links and relationships with organisations working in Goma who have agreed to help me, as gatekeepers, with gaining access to multiple informants for my research. These are, in particular, the well-established NGOs Caritas International and Christian Aid. I am also fluent in the local language (Swahili) which is an added advantage.

The data to be analysed will include recordings of the focus group discussions, visual documents prepared in those groups (flipcharts), transcripts of interviews and researcher field notes. Data will be securely stored on a password-protected external hard drive. The data will only be available to me and my supervisor. It will be stored for six years and destroyed thereafter.

Focus group discussions

The purpose is twofold: to gain a general map of level of engagement and involvement of women in peacebuilding; and to explore perceptions of peace, security and peacebuilding amongst women's groups. At no stage during any of the discussions are individuals expected to share personal experiences or stories of violence; they are, rather, intended to explore collective norms, beliefs and practices (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). Please see attached protocol for the focus group discussions.

Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, etc.

The participants will include grassroots women living in and around Goma who are involved in local women groups, women leaders of local organisations and senior staff (men and women) from NGOs and international organisations. Participants will be over 21 years old. The focus group discussion participants will be contacted through the gatekeeping NGOs and invited to participate. They will all receive full information about the project and will be given the opportunity to consent to participate. Eight focus group discussions, with between 6-12 members in each will be held with grassroots women. In addition individual interviews will be held with five grassroots women leaders and five senior staff from NGOs and international organisations working in Goma. The prior scoping study enabled contact to be established with NGOs in the region and these links will be used to identify interviewees. Selection of participants for focus group discussions, women leaders, NGOs and international organisations will be done through the help of several stakeholders which include Christian Aid and Caritas, both based in Goma. These interviews will last a minimum of one hour and focus group discussions will last a minimum of two hours.

All participants in the study will be recruited via grassroots women organisations. The representatives of these organisations are known in this protocol as gatekeepers. The organisations in question are:

- Christian Aid Goma, facilitated by Salome Ntububa, regional and emergency manager
- Caritas, facilitated by Asene Masumbuko, local director.

Recruitment for focus group discussions will be carried out by word of mouth within grassroots women groups which Christian Aid and Caritas have been supporting in

Goma. Members of the target group will be approached in the context of their own groups, either in the course of a regular meeting or via direct contact.

3. Debriefing arrangements

All interviewees will have (and be informed of) the right to review the interviewer's notes, see the transcript of their interview and comment on it. Debriefing meetings will be held with organisations (stakeholders and gatekeepers) helping with recruitment of the participants. They will be contacted before final production of the research to verify findings. Stakeholders will receive a copy of the outcome of the research.

Ethical considerations and how they will be dealt with

Research which has element of impact of violence on women requires a high degree of ethical oversight both in terms of how the research is conducted and how it is framed and disseminated. The focus of this research project is on women's present situation and their engagement in local activism for peace in the Goma region. However, this research inevitably involves the collection of data and information from women who are potentially vulnerable due to difficulties and trauma arising from their experiences of war, gender-based violence and other cultural and social factors. I will ensure the participants are not harmed or abused, both physically and psychologically, and this is possible with the support of organisations working on the ground that have agreed to support my research and help with the recruitment of participants to this research. Some of the organisations offering psychological support in the area will be involved in the research, including Christian Aid and Heal Africa, and measures will be put into place to ensure support is available and that participants have access to such services if needed during or after the interviews. All interviews/focus groups will proceed only after full disclosure by researchers to participants as to the nature and purpose of the research and after their consent has been recorded. After the full briefing, I will offer the potential participant's time to consider their participation before consenting. As required by the FAHSS Ethics Committee I have provided an Information Sheet and Consent Form for participants with this application.

It will be made clear to participants that their contributions will be anonymised and that they will be fully free to withdraw from the process at any time.

Risk or ethical concern	Safeguards
Women's confidentiality could be compromised during data collection in a small, close-knit community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus group discussions and interviews will be carried out in private, confidential settings. - Focus group discussions will not cover personal or individual experiences.
Women will consent to participation without full understanding of the research topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Information Sheet and Consent Form has been developed for participants to ensure fully informed consent while minimising risk. - At key points in the focus group discussions and the individual interviews, the researcher will actively check to ensure that participants are willing to proceed.
Women may experience distress in the course of the focus group discussions or interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the event that participants are visibly affected in the course of the interviews or focus group discussions, the researcher will ensure that they receive support. Some of the organisations offering psychological support in the area will be involved in the research (Christian Aid and Heal Africa) and measures will be put into place to ensure support is available and that participants have access to such services if needed during or after sessions. The researcher will also follow up by phone after 24 hours to check in with the participant and offer to make a call on their behalf if that would help.
Participants' anonymity could be compromised in reporting the data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collected data will be secured to eliminate the chance of unauthorised access. Information sheets will be kept separate from other data (focus group discussion outputs and interview transcripts) to minimise the risk of identification of respondents if by any chance data is lost or stolen. - All names, locations and grassroots organisations will be removed from reports on the data to ensure anonymity. The risk of deductive disclosure will be carefully considered

	and further details (such as names, profession, age, etc) will be obscured if individuals could be easily identifiable in the reporting.
The researcher could suffer harm in the course of travel to research sites or encounter hostility from community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The researcher will ensure that somebody knows her whereabouts at all times in the course of the research. She will travel with her phone fully charged. Her outreach is supported by community gatekeepers, with whom she will maintain a positive relationship. - The principle point of contact for security will be the researcher's husband Eamonn Henry. She will also file her schedule with her supervisor Gillian Wylie. She will plan her schedule with the gatekeepers who facilitate access for her. The researcher will be accommodated at Centre d'Accueil Caritas in Goma, which already has an evacuation plan in place for its residents.
The researcher could suffer distress in the course of exposure to extremely traumatic experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The researcher will agree to debrief by phone or in person with her supervisors after the initial focus group discussions and individual interviews. Once the process is established, she will agree a regular schedule of debriefs and a plan for emergency debriefing if needed. - The researcher will make contact with Trinity College student counselling services and arrange for a set of counselling sessions before, during and after the research period.

To ensure the safety of the researcher a safety plan has already been agreed with organisations on the ground, including Christian Aid and Caritas Goma. The researcher will be accommodated at Centre d'Accueil Caritas. Address: 68 Avenue de la Corniche, Goma, DRC. Contact person: Fr. Asene Masumbuko, Centre Administrator and gate-keeper. E-mail: arsene_mas@yahoo.fr. Tel. 00243824175161.

Evacuation measures

Centre d'Accueil Caritas already has evacuation measures and a humanitarian team in place for its residents, based on a plan to evacuate all its residents to Gisenyi (Rwanda), located just 200 m away. In the absence of an Irish Embassy in Goma, I will register with the British Embassy and the Kenyan Embassy. The other researchers have relatives living near Goma, in Kigali, just over the border in Rwanda. The researcher will keep regular contact and update the supervisor through email.

Data protection

The researcher will comply with Trinity College Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003, which confer rights on individuals as well as responsibilities on persons processing personal data. Trinity College has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with data protection legislation where it is the controller of personal data. However, all employees and students of the College who collect and/or control the contents and use of personal data are individually responsible for compliance with data protection legislation.

Confidential information will be stored in a hard drive disc and special attention will be paid to guaranteeing the security of electronic data including encryption and password protection. Printed or written information and data will be disposed of using an appropriate method according to the sensitivity of the data. This includes shredding in the case of hard-copy data and reformatting or overwriting in the case of electronic data. The information will be stored for no more than six years.

Data anonymisation

The research will use anonymised data, which means that people will not be readily identifiable by the recipients of information. If any participant withdraws, I will delete all recordings related to them. In order to ensure research integrity through compliance with data protection legislation, I undertake to obtain and process the personal data fairly, keep it only for specified and lawful purposes, process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was volunteered initially, keep it safe and secure and retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes.

Appendix 2. Information and consent

GATEKEEPER INFORMATION AND CONSENT

(CHRISTIAN AID/CARITAS GOMA)

Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Case Study of Goma by Salome Mbugua Henry

Introduction

This research is about involvement and engagement of women in peacebuilding in DRC, mainly in Goma. DRC has hugely been affected by overlapping conflict and violence in the last few years. While it is argued that the participation of women in peacebuilding may help in reaching sustainable peace, the researcher wants to find out if women in Goma have been involved and to what extent. Further details can be found in the Information Sheet and Consent Form for research participants which accompany this Information Sheet and Consent Form for gatekeepers.

Why am I doing the project?

I am undertaking this research due to my belief in and commitment to women's empowerment. In the last fifteen years I have been working with women with experiences of armed conflict and have become more aware of how recurring conflict continues to affect women in DRC. Violence and conflict is a major cause of poverty and affects women's health and wellbeing. My research is intended to improve policy and tackle gender inequality in peacebuilding.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You and your organisation are being asked to participate in this research as a gatekeeper who will enable and facilitate contact with research participants. In order to conduct this research I need to organise a number of focus group discussions with women involved in community development and peacebuilding. Your organisation works in support of such women and can enable me to access the communities and recruit participants. I will also appreciate your advice in how to approach the focus groups with respect to issues such as language and literacy. I will also like to interview you and others in your organisation regarding your views on the issues being researched.

In recruiting participants for the study, it is very important that they understand what the study involves. Otherwise they might agree to participate without giving informed consent. One difficulty with qualitative research on women and peacebuilding is that they may have experienced violence which could trigger memories of past experiences and sharing this within a group setting could be difficult. For this reason, written recruitment materials specify clearly that the research is about women’s involvement in peacebuilding and not their experiences of violence. However, should anyone find participation in the focus group discussions upsetting, I will request advice from you about how to contact local support organisations on behalf of the participant.

At the end of my research I will provide a copy of my findings and my thesis to your organisation, as likely to be of benefit to you in your work supporting women’s peacebuilding in Goma.

The table below outlines the commitment of the gatekeeping organisation and how the nature of the study will be communicated in each case.

Step 1 How does the woman first hear about the study?	In a regular community meeting (e.g., Christian Aid offices, Caritas) or from gatekeeper	By telephone from a gatekeeper she knows (e.g., Salome Ntububa, Asene Masumbuko)	In person from a gatekeeper she knows (e.g., Salome Ntububa, Asene Masumbuko)
From whom?	Salome Ntububa, Asene Masumbuko (gatekeepers)	A gatekeeper	A gatekeeper
What is communicated about the nature of the study?	The research topic: Integration of women in peacebuilding in Goma. Participant information sheet can be shared at this stage for further information.		

	Protocol for focus group discussions can also be shared, outlining logistics, conduct, confidentiality etc.		
Step 2	Woman expresses interest in participating in the study		
Step 3	Talk to gatekeeper after meeting ends (in confidence, individually or in a small group of interested women). Gatekeeper clarifies that the topic is integration of women in peacebuilding in Goma. No personal information required for focus group discussions.		
Step 4	Woman confirms interest in participating		
Step 5	Gatekeeper takes contact details and provides information about proposed location and approximate times and dates for focus group discussions. Gatekeeper shares participant's contact details with researcher. Follow up takes place within two weeks.		

Gatekeeper consent form

Declaration

- I am 18 years or older and am competent to provide consent.
- I have read, or had read to me, a document providing information about this research and this consent form.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and understand the description of the research that is being provided to me.
- I agree that I as a worker for Caritas/Christian Aid will provide support to this research project, enabling contact with potential participants.

- I agree that my data is used for scientific purposes and I have no objection that my data is published in scientific publications in a way that does not reveal my identity.
- I understand that if I make illicit activities known, these will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- If I am interviewed, I understand that I may stop electronic recording at any time, and that I may at any time, even subsequent to my participation, have such recordings destroyed (except in situations such as described above).
- I understand that, subject to the constraints above, no recordings will be replayed in any public forum or made available to any audience other than to the current researchers/research team.
- I freely and voluntarily agree to be part of this research study, although without prejudice to my legal and ethical rights.
- I understand that I may refuse to answer any question and that I may withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I understand that my participation is fully anonymous and that no personal details about me will be recorded.
- I have received a copy of this agreement.

Participant's name:

Participant's signature:

Date:

Statement of investigator's responsibility. I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study, the procedures to be undertaken and any risks that may be involved. I have offered to answer any questions and have fully answered such questions. I believe that the participant understands my explanation and has freely given informed consent.

Researcher's contact details:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

GATEKEEPER BRIEFING

Background

My name is Salome Mbugua Henry, a PhD student at Trinity College Dublin (Ireland). I will be travelling to Goma to carry out research on the integration of women in peacebuilding in DRC. The main objective of my research is to analyse the gendered dynamics of peacebuilding processes with a focus on Goma. The focus will be on gaining an in-depth understanding of the roles that women play in peacebuilding in Goma, the barriers they face to full integration in peacebuilding efforts and the way their contributions can be enhanced. The procedures will be based on carrying out focus group discussions with programme beneficiaries and interviews with women leaders and national NGOs. I have experience in various research methodologies, and for this work I plan to use qualitative research methods and a participatory methodology. The research will identify and analyse women's peacebuilding efforts in Goma and determine if their participation can be advanced to the middle-range and top levels of peacebuilding.

Recruitment of women and senior officers

You will find attached to this brief a short explanation of the purpose of the focus group discussions and Information Sheet and Consent Form for participants. I would be grateful if you would let me know how best I can communicate with community members in order to invite them to participate (whether e-mail or phone). I would need no more than 12 people for each focus group discussion.

Logistics for meetings

I am aware that I will need to be flexible about the timing and venue of these meetings in order to accommodate women and senior staff regarding their employment, childcare duties and any other responsibilities. I am also aware that I may need to travel to the women groups in order to conduct these focus group discussions.

Ethical considerations

The research proposal and methods have been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Trinity College

Dublin (Ireland). I and my team will conduct all the interviews and focus group discussions. I am committed to ensuring my research meets ethical standards in the following ways:

Confidentiality

All the interviews, focus group discussions and learning days will be audio-recorded by the researchers for transcription and will be encrypted and held by the researchers. I will use pseudonyms during the focus group discussions and audio-recordings will not be shared with organisations, civil society or other stakeholders. The recordings will be stored on a password protected hard drive in Trinity College Dublin and the material will be destroyed six years after the end of the project.

Although sessions will be recorded, names will not be used in transcripts or in the final report. Quotes will be used but will be attributed to ‘a participant’ rather than to a person by name. Christian Aid and Caritas staff will not sit in in these sessions to ensure a space for people to be honest. Participants will also be asked to keep discussions confidential.

Consent

The researcher will obtain consent from all individuals involved. All individuals will be able to give written consent or verbal consent (using the audio-recorder).

Participation

Participants can withdraw from the process at any point.

Wellbeing of participants

Since this research will be examining the integration of women in peacebuilding, participants may find that discussions may trigger memories of past experiences which may upset them and for which they may need additional support. Gatekeepers are asked to confirm that they have a designated leader within the Goma organisation or counsellor to whom I could refer any individuals that requires support.

Safety of participants and particularly marginalised individuals

While I recognise the expertise of gatekeepers in working in volatile and challenging contexts, I include some considerations on ensuring the safety of participants during this process:

* Ensure a safe the space that is physically accessible, secular (preferably not a religious building) and accessible via public transport/safe to walk to.

* Provide risk and mitigation analysis for those who will attend (reactions from family members, explanation of the content of the meetings to their family/community) if this is possible and feasible.

* Provide contact details for legal services, counselling services, refuges and healthcare as required (especially if participants are involved in human rights work).

* Obtain police clearance for meetings (if necessary).

I will also need copies of risk registers, programme risk assessments and security plans so that I can include this information in interviews and focus group discussions.

Literacy levels

As far as possible literacy levels are taken into account to ensure that individuals have a number of different ways to provide information and share their experiences. If there are additional needs that I need to be made aware of, I will be grateful for your advice on other considerations I might need to take into account.

Focus group recruitment

As part of ethical practice I am asking gatekeepers to provide details of women and individuals to be invited to participate in the focus group discussions and interviews. I will facilitate these focus group discussions without the gatekeepers.

Protocol for focus group discussions

The main issue is to create a safe space where women can feel secure and at ease.

Informed consent

I will brief the participants at the beginning of the session about the purpose of the research. Participants will be asked to give verbal consent before sessions begin. There are also written consent forms available. I will also ask for their consent to audio-record sessions. While these recordings will remain available to the researchers, only parts will

be used for academic publication, so as to encourage individuals to be as open and honest as possible.

Secular space

I recognise that different individuals hold different religious views and beliefs. To acknowledge those differences I will hold a minute of silence at the beginning of the session for quiet reflection or prayer, leaving each individual participant to decide how they would like to use that time.

Celebrating diversity and inclusivity

Before doing introductions, I will explain that I work with diverse communities and always want to make sure that people feel a space to be safe and inclusive. As a result I will ask participants to introduce themselves using the name they would like on the audio recording (a pseudonym or their real name) and will also ask them which pronoun they are comfortable using.

Session content

This session will begin with questions on involvement in peacebuilding based on activism at community level. I will be asking questions about peacebuilding, gender, gender equality and experiences as women and individuals. I will encourage participants to be as honest as possible. However, since this might mean that some participants become upset or re-traumatised by the content of the sessions, I will ensure there is access to immediate support. Participants can withdraw from the session at any time and can request a break at any time. I will ensure there is someone available at the end of the session if participants need additional support or counselling.

Risk to participants

I am aware that there might be some risk to participants on account of their engagement in sessions. I will therefore ask the participants at the outset if they have any concerns about being involved in the session.

Duration

Each session will last no more than two hours, with short comfort breaks as necessary.

Bringing back the findings

The researchers will produce a final report with the findings for Trinity College and will prepare it for academic publications. I will report the findings back to Christian Aid, Caritas and the DRC Ministry for Gender and the Family.

Code of conduct

All content covered in the session will be treated as confidential and as the property of Trinity College Dublin. The names and contact details of participants will be held in strict confidentiality.

Process

The methodology will be qualitative and will include participatory approaches. As a result, participants will be asked a series of questions and responses might include written or visual responses.

NOTE: THE RESEARCHER WILL OBTAIN VERBAL CONSENT BEFORE STARTING EACH SESSION.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT**Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Case Study of Goma by Salome Mbugua Henry**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take your time to read the following information carefully. Ask me questions if anything you read is not clear or you would like more information. Take the time to decide whether or not you want to take part.

Introduction

This research is about involvement and engagement of women in peacebuilding in DRC, mainly in Goma. DRC has hugely been affected by overlapping conflict and violence in the last few years. According to the United Nations, participation of women in peacebuilding may help achieve sustainable peace. Therefore, I want to find out if women in Goma have been involved in peace efforts and what their level of involvement has been from grassroots and civil society organisations to the formal political level.

Why am I doing the project?

I am undertaking this research due to my belief and commitment to women's empowerment. In the last fifteen years I have been working with women from armed conflict zones and have become more aware of how recurring conflict continues to affect women in DRC. Violence and conflict are major causes of poverty that also affect women's health and wellbeing. At the same time, academic research and international policy makers suggest that women's participation in peacebuilding is crucial to secure lasting peace. My research is intended to improve policy and tackle gender inequality in peacebuilding.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to take part because you have been involved at community level in your women's group designed to reduced violence and sustain peace. I am interested in your views about the nature and causes of conflict, your involvement in the prevention of conflict and on what works in bringing about change.

What will you have to do if you agree to take part?

You will be invited to take part in an interview or a focus group discussion with researchers. The interviews will last around one hour and the focus group discussions for around two hours. You will be asked about your views on ongoing conflict in Goma, why it happens, who is affected and whether you have been involved in activities intended to address the recurring conflict. You will also be asked to share your feedback on these

processes and their successes and challenges. All sessions will be audio-recorded by the researchers for transcription but will be encrypted and held for exclusive use by the researchers.

Will your participation in the project remain confidential?

Yes. If you agree to take part, your name and identity will be fully anonymous. Your real identity will never be disclosed to other parties. Your anonymised responses to the questions will be used for the purpose of this project only. Different names will be used for interview transcripts and you will not be named in any publications related to the project. Any extracts from what you say will be anonymised.

What are the advantages of taking part?

There will be no direct benefit to you, but you may enjoy sharing your experiences and opinions. Your participation is likely to help us find out more about how to improve women's integration into all levels of peacebuilding and help support research in the area.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer questions or take part in the session if you feel that questions are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

If you become distressed at any time during participation, please indicate this. I will immediately pause the session and assess whether it is safe and/or appropriate to continue. If not, the interview will be stopped and I will offer information about where you can receive support to deal with your distress. Furthermore, any data collected until that point will be destroyed and your participation withdrawn. If the interview is paused, and I deem it safe and appropriate to continue, this can be done then or at a later date.

Do you have to take part in the study?

No, your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part. Similarly, if you do agree to participate you are free to withdraw at any time if you change your mind. You may also choose to omit individual responses.

Provisions for debriefing

I will give you an opportunity after the interview/discussion to review your remarks, when you can ask to modify or remove parts if you do not agree with the notes or think I did not understand you correctly. I will provide you with further information about the project at the end of your interview.

Please note that in the extremely unlikely event that you give any indication that you intend to do harm to yourself or another person, we will be obliged to report this to the appropriate authorities.

If you have any questions, you can ask me now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me at:

Salome Mbugua, Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland,
mbuguahs@tcd.ie

Thesis supervisor: Dr Gillian Wylie, wylieg@tcd.ie

Appendix 3. Research questions

Integrating Women into Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A Case Study of Goma by Salome Mbugua Henry

1. What has been the impact of war in Goma, particularly on women?
2. Have there been any attempts at peacebuilding in the area and have attempts at peacebuilding at the national level had any impact in Goma? Who was included? If peacebuilding failed, why?
3. What are the perceptions of peace, security and peacebuilding by women's groups in Goma?
4. What has been the level of women's participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
5. What are the factors that have facilitated or hindered women's participation in peacebuilding in Goma?
6. How can women's participation in peacebuilding be enhanced?

Appendix 4. Global women, peace, and security commitments and instruments

UNSCR 1325 (2000): First recognition of unique role, and active agency, of women in conflict, peace and security
UNSCR 1820 (2008): Recognition of sexual violence as weapon of war
UNSCR 1888 (2009): Reiteration of the threat of sexual violence and call for deployment of experts to areas where sexual violence is occurring
UNSCR 1889 (2009): Focus on the importance of women as peacebuilders at all stages of the peace process
UNSCR 1960 (2010): Reiteration of the importance of ending sexual violence in conflict
UNSCR 2106 (2013): Addressing the operational details in combatting sexual violence
UNSCR 2122 (2013): Focus on stronger measures and monitoring mechanisms to allow women to engage in conflict resolution and recovery
UNSCR 2242 (2015): Refocus on 1325 and its obstacles, including incorporation of 1325 in the UN
UNSCR 2272 (2016): Provides measures to address sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations
UNSCR 2467 (2019) Recognizes that sexual violence in conflict occurs on a continuum of violence against women and girl
UNSCR 2493 (2019) urges member states to commit to implementing the nine previously adopted resolutions
CEDAW General Recommendation 30: Linkage of the women, peace and security agenda to CEDAW, including measures to ensure protection of women during and after conflict

Appendix 5. African Union women, peace, and security commitments and instruments

Gender Parity Principle (2002)
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)
Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004)
Common African Defence and Security Policy (2004)
Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (2006)
African Union Gender Policy (2009)
African Women’s Decade 2010-2020 (2009)
African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009)
Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform (2011)
African Union Aide Memoire on the Protection of Civilians (2013)
Agenda 2063: First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2015)
African Union Declaration on 2015 Year of Women’s Empowerment and Development Towards Africa’s Agenda 2063 (2015)
Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Code of Conduct
Regional Instruments and Commitments
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
COMESA Gender Policy (2002)
COMESA Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Action Plan (2008)
East African Community (EAC)
EAC Gender and Community Development Framework (2012)
EAC Protocol on Peace and Security; Regional Strategy for Peace and Security (2006)
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

ECCAS Gender Policy and Implementation Action Plan
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)
ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework; Women, Peace and Security Action Plan (2008)
Plan of Action for the Implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 (2010)
ECOWAS Parliament Gender Strategy 2010–2020 (2011)
Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)
IGAD Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan 2016-2020 (2015)
IGAD Strategy for Higher Representation of Women in Decision Making Positions (2013)
IGAD Regional Action plan for the Implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 (2012)
IGAD Gender Policy Framework (2012)
Declaration on the Enhancement of Women’s Participation and Representation in Decision Making Positions (2009)
International Conference of Great Lakes (ICGLR)
International Conference Protocol for the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination (2006)
Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence against Women and Children (2006)
The Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region (2008)
Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2011)
Southern African Development Community (SADC)
SADC Declaration on the Prevention and the Eradication of Violence against Women and Children (1998)
SADC Gender Policy (2007)

SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008): Regional Strategic Implementation
Framework on Gender and Development

Appendix 6. Ratification and implementation of international treaties by DRC

	Ratification	Entry into force
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	01/11/1976	01/02/1977
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	01/11/1976	01/02/1977
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	18/03/1996	17/04/1996
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	17/10/1986	16/11/1986
Convention on the Rights of the Child	20/03/1990	27/09/1990
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	11/11/2001	12/02/2002
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	11/11/2001	18/01/2002

Appendix 7. DRC Family Code of 1987

<p>The opening paragraph is a statement that upholds the harmony of families and that indicates that human rights and regulations related to families will be determined in line with Congolese tradition and that the opinion of the father will be prioritised when parents have different opinions.</p>
<p>Article 30 indicates that Congolese women will lose their Congolese nationality when they marry a foreigner.</p>
<p>Article 148 (1) and Article 150 indicate that family registration corresponds to the husband.</p>
<p>Article 352 specifies different marriage ages (men 18 years old, women 15 years old)</p>
<p>Article 353 specifies that the husband is the head of the household.</p>
<p>Article 355 states that women cannot remarry until 300 days after termination of the previous marriage, a period which ends in the event of the birth of a child.</p>
<p>Article 444 indicates that a male family member should be head of the household and women should follow him and, thus, when the husband dies, the wife will manage the household together with the relatives of her husband.</p>
<p>Article 445 indicates that the couple is responsible for mental and material management of the household, while the husband is responsible for guidance.</p>
<p>Articles 448-450 state that – with some few exceptions – the wife cannot take part in legal acts, such as attending court, trade or signing a contract.</p>
<p>Article 454 indicates that only the husband can decide the residence of the couple.</p>
<p>Article 467 specifies that adultery of the husband will be punished only under certain circumstances, whereas the wife will always be punished, regardless of the circumstances.</p>
<p>Article 490 states that the husband will manage the family's assets.</p>
<p>Article 758 indicates that, when the husband dies, the children's inheritance rights are reserved without discrimination on the basis of gender. In reality, however, many ethnic groups have a tradition that relatives of the husband join in household management with</p>

the widow, theoretically to supplement the gap in legal rights of the widow, but in practice, in many cases, to take control of her property.

Appendix 8. Women's organisations in DRC waging for peace

CAFED

The Collective of Women's Associations for Development (CAFED), based in North Kivu, was established in 1993 and has been working for women since 1994. It has intensified its actions from 2000 and currently has 30 members representing women's development organisations led by women. This umbrella group was established with to create a platform and promote exchanges between women's organisations and other civil society actors on women's issues. It serves as a support and interlocutor mechanism for decision-making bodies and national and international organisations promoting the social, economic and political status of women in North Kivu, and additionally collaborates with other actors at the national, regional and international levels in finding solutions to the problems of women in North Kivu. CAFED has been working hard in mobilising women in North Kivu and sensitising them on security and peace through capacity building, outreach and training and information in different areas. The organisation focuses on three areas: promoting gender equality, combating violence against women and eradicating poverty. It has over the years supported a number of women to participate in peacebuilding meetings and discussions at regional and national levels, at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

In February 2019, while attending the Gender is My Agenda (GIMAC) campaign meeting in the Addis Ababa headquarters of the African Union, I met three women who had been supported by CAFED to attend and represent the views of women in North Kivu. While they did not speak on the panel, nor were they among the key speakers, they asked questions and raised important issues that affect women in DRC. A representative from the DRC government also attended the meeting and a national action plan on women peace and security for the African Union region as developed by GIMAC was launched during that meeting.

Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise (CAFCO)

Declaration on the security situation in eastern DRC, Kinshasa, 31 July 2012

We women of DRC, concerned about the security situation in eastern DRC and especially in the North Kivu province, recalling UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security, stipulate that no lasting peace can be established without the participation of women and the integration of a gender perspective in the peace process.

We reaffirm the important role that women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding and stress the importance of participating on an equal footing in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security and to engage more with decisions taken for the prevention and resolution of disputes.

Armed with this resolution and recognising the role played by Congolese women throughout the peace process from 1996 to date, we denounce the aggression and achievement of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC by negative and dark forces in flagrant violation of Article 5 of the Protocol of Non-Aggression and Mutual Defence in the Great Lakes Region.

Considering the commitments made by the heads of state and governments of member countries of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the signature of the Pact on Stability, Security and Development in the Great Lakes Region on 16 December 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya; relying on Articles 8 and 9 of the Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and all forms of discrimination and the Protocol on the illegal exploitation of natural resources; building on the Joint Communiqué of 9 November 2007, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Government of the Republic of Rwanda on a common approach to end the threat to peace and stability in both countries and Great Lakes region; relying on the recent Declaration of Heads of State and Governments of the Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of 15 December 2011 and the Ordinary Summit and the Special Session on Sexual Violence and Gender Based Violence; united to prevent violence, end impunity and provide assistance to victims of violence and paying attention, in particular, to Article 1, which undertakes, within an agreed period, to eradicate existing armed groups present in the region in accordance with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Protocol on non-aggression and mutual respect, reinforced by the recent UN report of June 2012 on the security situation in the eastern DRC in connection with the incursion of the Movement of 23 March 2009, the date of signature of the Agreement between the Congolese Government and the armed groups in Goma in the North Kivu province; concerned about the implementation of an agreement regarding another international 'neutral' force on the borders between Rwanda and DRC while there already exists a large UN mission in the DRC since the year 2000:

We demand that the UN Security Council adopts an urgent resolution to change the mandate of MONUSCO in DRC to implementation of Chapter 7 of the UN Charter on action with respect to threats against peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression as per Article 39.

We launch a heartfelt appeal to all UN member states to support DRC in order to resolve this regional quagmire as soon as possible.

We acknowledge the decision by the US to suspend military assistance to Rwanda and that of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany to suspend aid development in Rwanda.

We encourage other states to follow this example.

Reinforced by these positions and informed of the Declaration of the Interministerial Meeting of Ministers in charge of defence and foreign affairs of member countries of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in relation to the insecurity in Eastern DRC caused and maintained by M23 with the military support of Rwanda, as held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2012:

We demand of Rwanda, signatory of different instruments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and member of the United Nations, the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its troops from DRC, and welcoming the clear political will expressed by the head of state through its press conference this 28 July 2012, urge playing a full role not only as guarantor of the nation but also of territorial integrity.

We request Parliament to assume all its responsibilities in monitoring government action in this difficult time for the nation.

We request of the Government:

- *To take charge of our armed forces at the front*
- *To place all perpetrators and their accomplices that destabilise DRC available to national and international justice.*

We call on civil society to mobilise as one and to remain vigilant to bar the way to the evil plans of the enemies of the nation.

We reaffirm our commitment to the principle that DRC is one and indivisible in its diversity and immensity.

We say stop to any attempts at the balkanisation and dismemberment of DRC.

Source: <http://culturedelapaix.org/blogs/kivu/2012/08/11/cafco-declaration-des-femmes-congolaises/> (in French)

Appendix 9. Field notes on initial scoping study

Initial scoping was undertaken in December 2015 for a period of two weeks. This took place in Kinshasa which I had visited during voluntary work with Wezesha, an NGO working with women and children affected or likely to be affected by conflict and violence. The aim of the scoping study was to get a sense of the situation of women in DRC and how they have been affected by the overlapping conflict and policies and practices supported by agencies for peacebuilding and women's recovery.

I identified six key organisations to meet for the purpose of the scoping study and contact had been made with some of them before leaving Ireland. Meetings were held with four organisations: DRC Ministry of Gender and the Family, Christian Aid (which works at the national level and has offices in both Kinshasa and Goma), the Independent National Electoral Commission and Wezesha DRC. A face-to-face meeting with CAFCO (a national network of women peacebuilders) was not possible due to time constraints, but they sent a declaration (see Appendix 8).

Meetings

At the beginning of each meeting I described the general nature of my research and my interest in holding proper interviews and sharing the outcome and findings of my research when completed. Meetings were held with either senior personnel in the organisations.

Christian Aid (Ms. Salome Ntububa)

Two meetings were held with Ms. Salome Ntububa to discuss the current situation of women living with conflict in Goma and the possibility of holding focus group discussions with these women. Ms Ntububa explained that violence in DRC and its impact on women has been and continues to be a major challenge. She spoke about the work of her organisation with women, mainly focused on raising awareness but also seeking justice. She mentioned that a group has been formed by NGOs to review UNSCR 1325 on women peace and security.

Ms Ntububa highlighted that sexual violence has haunted eastern DRC for years and even though there are many international, national and local NGOs working hard to protect

women and defend the rights of survivors, the situation fails to improve since the root causes of the violence have not yet been properly tackled.

She explained that, based on her work and experience of working on the ground for many years, the conflict has not spared anyone in the community and affects all sectors of society. Poor people, however, are the most vulnerable, especially women and children, as they are faced by major obstacles, including a lack of resources and livelihoods. Since they simply do not have the means to escape or to protect themselves, during the conflict they face great risks.

She said laws designed to prevent crimes such as rape and to bring the culprits to justice are woefully ineffective since state authorities and courts do not function in many areas, while those who should be protecting the population, i.e., the military and police, are often the ones involved in the violence.

She pointed out how women are organising themselves at the community level and that many have set up solidarity groups. She said women are developing ways of coping and of protecting themselves, e.g., working in the fields, walking to market or going for water in large groups so that they can better defend themselves against potential attacks. Furthermore, if one of them is affected by sexual violence, the rest of the group is there to support her, financially and emotionally, as best they can.

She highlighted that many local NGOs are now integrating sexual violence programmes in existing programmes focused on peacebuilding and human rights. She pointed out that, while change is slow, every positive step towards greater gender equality is crucial to improving the position of women in society.

Independent National Electoral Commission for Kinshasa (Ms. Anne-Marie Mpundu, General Secretary)

Ms Mpundu worked as gender coordinator in a Danish international NGO in her previous job. As such she has been involved in women empowerment projects and is very much up to date with issues affecting women in DRC. In our meeting she disclosed that the church in DR Congo has lately been trying to undermine gender discourse, saying that it is undermining family values. This also affects the LGBT community which the Church

argues is a threat to the society. She mentioned that the chaplain of a Christian family movement is fighting gender discourse, while the Catholic church in DRC generally has a problem with the whole concept.

On gender and peacebuilding, Ms Mpundu explained that people are working together under UNSCR 1325 in relation to the involvement of women in peacebuilding through different networks. During the Sun City conference for peace, for instance, they were sufficiently active to attract government attention. However, the war situation has made the life of women more precarious and violence against women seems to be perceived as normal by large sectors of society.

She spoke of the CAFCO platform (Cadre Permanent de Concertation de la Femme Congolaise), which is trying to involve women despite the church backlash on gender equality. Ms Mpundu mentioned that there are gaps between grassroots women and leadership positions, emphasising that grassroots women need more support in order to move to leadership positions at local, regional and national levels. She explained that women have been unable to enter high decision-making levels; meanwhile a great deal of focus has been on helping them to improve their livelihoods. Ms Mpundu argued that gender equality will certainly improve when the social status of women improves, in which case an equal participation with men at all levels will become the norm.

Ms Mpundu explained that a government's strategy to ensure gender equality in decision making has to be implemented, as the DRC constitution says that 30% of government members must be women, but currently the figure is only around 10%. She insisted that the government needs to do much more to ensure women are involved in all levels of decision making; her role in her current office is to encourage women to engage in decision making.

She explained that, in DRC, with a population of over 70 million people of which over half are women, men's attitude towards gender equality has been a struggle, as leadership and politics are still viewed as men's domains. Gender discourse has only been dictated because of recurring conflict and its impact on women, yet tackling the issue is being dragged out or even overlooked, mainly because discussions are led by men. While women are needed for peacebuilding, in reality they are not counted on. Discussion on gender issues is changing the society fabric, Ms Mpundu concluded. She insisted that the

government needs to do more to ensure women are involved in all levels of decision making; her role in her current office is to encourage women to engage in decision making.

Ministry of Gender and the Family (Prof. Mangalu Mobhe, Head of Policy)

Mr. Mobhe gave an introductory overview of his section as the only section that focuses on the study and policy development of gender equality. Its main work is to do preparatory work and develop strategy for the Ministry of Gender and the Family. He pointed out that DRC, due to the overlapping conflict and the corresponding attention of over 100 international NGOs, has very advanced documents on gender, mentioning that the DRC constitution deals with gender and gender equality between women and men in several articles addressing gender equality, violence against women and political participation.

Mr. Mobhe explained that DRC has developed a national action plan on UNSCR 1325 and has created a national secretariat to deal with the issue and to follow up on women's involvement and participation; he also mentioned that a law on equality was recently passed in DRC.

However, Mr. Mobhe highlighted that although everything may look good on paper, especially policies, in reality the situation of women in DRC is very bad and worrying. He said that the level of participation of women in decision making is only 12% while 95% of victims of gender-based violence are women. Violence against women is structural and, as education at primary, secondary and third level is not free, education is prioritised for boys over girls, which creates huge gaps in terms of opportunities for advancement. In terms of employment, Mr. Mobhe said that, under the family code, a woman still needs the authorisation of her husband to take up employment. This would need to change if women are to be considered equal.

Mr. Mobhe cited three key barriers to women's participation:

1. Culture: Despite the law on gender equality, culturally men are resistant and do not want to be led by women. Gender stereotypes about women are rooted in society and reinforced by cultural norms. Women are viewed as homemakers and caretakers of

their families, and not fit for public life. They must respect men as key designated spokespersons in both the private (household) and public spheres.

2. Education: The high illiteracy level of women in DRC means that most women lack qualifications.
3. Equality: Girls receive less educational support than boys. When a family has limited financial means, boys are prioritised over girls and often have to stop their education so boys can continue. The male child is always put first when opportunities arise. Girls are often married at an early age and a higher proportion live in poverty.

Mr. Mobhe explained that women's participation in peacebuilding will take years to achieve in DRC since cultural norms are so entrenched at all levels of society and are not being adequately questioned or addressed.

Wezesha DRC (Mama Christine)

A meeting was also held with Mama Christine and two other officials, members of Wezesha DRC, a group established in 2013. Their current activities include member mobilisation and support for micro-finance. The group has over 400 members and most are working on small income-generating activities. The group purchased land in 2014 and their aim is to build a multi-purpose centre where women can access various services and support. Wezesha DRC's objective is to support women affected by conflict and violence and as well to raise awareness and challenge sexual and gender-based violence. Mama Christine explained the importance of including women in decision-making, saying that the group is preparing women to run for office in the upcoming election and that she will be one of the candidates. The women spoke of many challenges facing women, which include poverty, violence and poor health. The women meet every week and are mobilising as many women as possible to become members.

Appendix 10. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Recalling its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President and recalling also the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816).

Recalling also the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the twenty-first century' (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict.

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

Reaffirming also the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard noting the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of

Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

Recognizing also the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

Recognizing that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

Noting the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

2. Encourages the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

3. Urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;

4. Further urges the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;

5. Expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, invites

Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and further requests the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. Urges Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

8. Calls on all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. Emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. Calls upon all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. Reaffirms its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. Expresses its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. Invites the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and further invites him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. Requests the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Source : <https://www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1325>

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