Who gets to decide the path to peace?

- A study of the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi and the obstacles for their participation.

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Abstract

The participation of women in peace processes has received increased attention in recent years and it is possible to identify several arguments of why it is of importance to include women to a larger extent. As the debate regarding the presence of women in peace processes is focused around the importance of including women to a larger extent, it can be valuable to further explore the role of women in peace processes in terms of their participation and the obstacles present for their participation. The focus of this study is the peace process in Burundi from the beginning of the Arusha negotiations in 1998 and onwards, as it can be considered a country with a positive outcome in terms of the inclusion of women’s situation in the final peace agreement. The participation of women during the peace process is studied with the aim to identify the main obstacles for women’s participation. The first aspect studied is the participation of women during the peace process both in the formal and informal part of the process. The outcome in terms of the peace agreement signed in 2000 and the situation for women’s participation after the agreement is also considered. Furthermore, the obstacles present for women’s participation in the peace process are studied. To explore the participation of women as well as the obstacles present for women’s participation in Burundi, the case study method is chosen together with the use of theory testing and content analysis. The case of Burundi is placed in relation to theories regarding women’s participation in peace processes and the obstacles identified in Burundi are placed in relation to findings in other studies regarding obstacles present for women’s participation. Content analysis is used when studying the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, in order to explore the inclusion of women’s specific situation in the agreement.

The findings of the study demonstrate that the case of Burundi is similar to several other cases studied in terms of the obstacles women face for their participation. The obstacles identified to be the most common were aspects related to the culture and social norms, as well as the presence of violence in society. The external support is further raised as an important factor for women’s organizations working for a more equal post-conflict society. The participation of women is argued to have had a positive effect on the outcome in terms of the consideration of women’s situation. But as it also is stated, it is difficult to identify the exact impact of specifically the women’s participation.

Keywords: women, peace process, participation, obstacles, Burundi
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List of Abbreviations

CAFOB - Collectif des associations et ONGs Feminines du Burundi

CEDAW - The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

DRC - the Democratic Republic of Congo

UN - United Nations

UNSCR 1325 - UN Security Council Resolution 1325

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNIFEM - United Nations Development Fund for Women
1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

Concerning women’s participation in peace processes, it has often been related to the way women have been suffering during a conflict (Buchanan et al., 2011), reinforcing the view that has been present for a long time of women as victims rather than actors in peace processes. Women are to large extent considered a group in society in need for support, rather then as possible contributors for a sustainable peace (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012). The lack of participation of women is argued to lead to a situation where the experiences of women are being overlooked, as the voices of women are absent or marginalized (Pankhurst, 2004).

There have been and still are an under-representation of women in peace processes, especially at the formal parts of the process, such as negotiations (Nicol, 2012). This despite that increased attention has been given to the issue lately, where it has been a focus on the importance to include women to a larger extent in peace processes. The Beijing Platform for Action, from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 was an important step, as it increased the awareness of the under-representation and marginalization of women in peace processes (Anderlini, 2000). Furthermore, the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in 2000 emphasizes women’s needs and contributions in peace and security (United Nations 2000a; Buchanan et al., 2011). The perception of women as only victims in countries that have experienced conflict, can be seen to have changed towards one where women are considered more as actors that could make a difference in the peace building process.

In the discussion of the need to increase the participation of women in peace processes one argument raised in support of this is that it in the same way as war today have become more inclusive affecting civilians to a much larger extent, the peace process also have to become more inclusive. As women are affected in a different way than before, in terms of being exposed to the violence of the war to a larger extent, it is of importance to also include women (Hunt and Posa, 2001). Regarding women’s participation in peace processes the obstacles for their participation can be seen as an important part of the discussion, where one
can identify a number of arguments commonly put forward as a way to exclude women from participating. These are for example that the peace negotiations are meant for those that have been combating during the conflict in order to solve the conflict or that gender inequality is part of the culture and the peace table is not the place where to address this type of questions (Anderlini, 2004).

As the debate regarding the presence of women in peace processes is focused around the importance of including women to a larger extent and the possible positive effects of an increased participation of women, it can be valuable to further explore the role of women in peace processes and the obstacles present for their participation. Concerning the lack of participation of women in peace processes it can be seen as important to study the obstacles for women’s participation, in order to explore the reasons behind the absence of women in peace processes. The reason for studying the case of Burundi is that it is considered a country with a positive outcome in terms of the way women’s situation is brought up in the peace agreement. It is also a case where women have been participating to some extent, thus making it a suitable case in order to study the participation of women and the obstacles present for their participation. The focus of this study will be from the beginning of the peace negotiations in 1998 leading to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and onwards. The study will contribute with a deeper understanding of the specific case chosen and can build on to already existing research on the topic, in order for a more comprehensive understanding of women’s participation in peace processes and the obstacles present for an increased participation. The study presents an overall picture of the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi together with the obstacles women faced for their participation, while also placing the case in relation to the general debate and other studies on the topic. The obstacles existing for women’s participation are the central aspect of the study, which can be used together with other studies in order to increase the knowledge about women’s participation and what measures that is necessary in order to increase the participation of women in peace processes and in politics overall.

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this study is to explore the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi, in order to identify the obstacles that were present for women’s participation in the peace process. To explore whether the case of Burundi has similar obstacles as other cases
studied regarding women’s participation in peace processes. The focus will be from the beginning of the Arusha peace negotiations in 1998 and onwards.

1.3 Research Questions

In what way have women in Burundi been participating in the peace process and where are the participation of women most common? In what way have women been participating in politics after the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement?

What were the obstacles present for women’s participation in the peace process?

1.4 Analytical Framework

As analytical framework to explore women’s participation in the peace process, two aspects considered to be of importance in terms of women’s participation have been identified out of the literature review done for this study. The first aspect is the participation of women during the peace process in terms of the way women have been participating, where one part of the Power Cube called spaces of power used by Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson (2012) will be applied. The different spaces in which the participation will be divided into are closed, invited and claimed spaces. The outcome in terms of the peace agreement and the situation for women’s participation after the agreement is also considered. The second aspect is the obstacles women face for their participation in peace processes. In each section different theories linked to the aspect of the framework are introduced. The theories presented are related to the understanding of the existence of a causality between women’s participation in the peace process and the outcome in terms of including the specific situation of women in the peace agreement. For this study of women’s participation during the peace process in Burundi, the focus is on the obstacles that were present and to what extent they were similar to other cases studied.

1.5 Methodology

The study will be an abductive study as it is an analytical process where the participation of women will be understood with the use of a framework, with the aim to explore how the participation appears in Burundi and to identify the obstacles for women’s participation in the
peace process. Qualitative methods will be used for the study and it will be done as a case study, which will be useful as it enables a thorough understanding of the case chosen. In order to study women’s participation during the peace process in Burundi the framework based on the two aspects identified to be of importance concerning women’s participation will be used. They will be used throughout the study to in a structured way illustrate the participation of women in the peace process. The spaces used in the aspect of participation is useful both in terms of structuring the data and enabling further research to be done by adding the other parts of the model, levels and forms of power, for a deeper analysis of the power structures. The study will further consider the outcome of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in terms of the inclusion of women’s situation and how the participation of women have been afterwards. This aspect is considered to be important as Burundi is seen as a case where the outcome of the peace agreement were positive, in terms of the mentioning of women’s specific situation. The method of theory testing will be used in order to explore whether different theories regarding women’s participation in peace processes are relevant in the case of Burundi. When studying the agreement content analysis will be applied, as it will be useful in terms of considering to what extent women’s specific situation is brought up in the text.

Concerning the data used for the study it will be based on secondary sources, thus the findings of the study is limited to the data collected by others on the topic. The secondary sources will be reports and other written documents by for example UN (United Nations) and International Alert regarding the case, as well as women’s participation in general. When studying the texts about the participation of women during peace processes, one also has to be aware of the perspective of the author as it might influence what is considered and emphasized in the text.

1.6 Limitations, Delimitations and Ethical considerations

In terms of limitations of the study the choice of focusing on one country will give an understanding of the specific case but it will not be possible to make any generalizations about women’s participation in peace processes. It will however enable an understanding of the case studied, which can contribute to the overall knowledge when added to other studies on the same topic. The outcome of the study might be affected by the choice of country, as the same study of another country might come to other conclusions. Another possible limitation of the study is that since it is a desk-study I will have to rely on data collected by others and
thus there is a limitation in the findings of the study. The study will focus on Burundi as an example of women’s participation in a peace process and the part of the peace process that will be studied is the time of the Arusha peace negotiations and onwards. Concerning the Power Cube, the reason of choosing to only use one part of the framework is that it will be difficult to find the data needed for also taking the other parts into account when carried out as a desk study. In terms of ethical considerations one has to be aware of the custom within academic writing, such as avoiding plagiarism and biases throughout the study.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

In the second chapter, the analytical framework used in the study is presented in more detail as well as previous research concerning women’s participation. In the third chapter the methodology is introduced, where the methods used in the study; theory testing and content analysis is described as well as the use of them. The data collection is further considered in this chapter. The fourth chapter gives an introduction of the background in terms of the history of the conflict and the peace process in Burundi. The fifth chapter consists of the findings, which presents the data about women’s participation following the structure of the analytical framework. The sixth chapter presents an analysis of the findings and the final chapter highlights the result of the study in relation to the research questions.
2. Analytical Framework

As analytical framework to explore women’s participation in the peace process, two aspects considered to be of importance when studying women’s participation has been identified out of the literature review done for this study. The first aspect studied is the participation of women during the peace process in terms of the way women have been participating, both in the formal and informal part of the process. One part of the Power Cube called spaces of power, used by Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson (2012), will be applied in order to structure the data regarding women’s participation in the peace process. The outcome in terms of the agreement and the situation for women’s participation after the agreement is studied as well. The second aspect is the different obstacles women face for their participation. The obstacles for women’s participation in Burundi will be related to obstacles present in other cases that have been studied. Before going further into the aspects that will be used as the framework for the study, some previous research regarding women’s participation in peace processes will be presented.

2.1 Previous Research

A central aspect of feminist peace and conflict theory is the understanding that women’s experiences and knowledge are being overlooked in peace processes (Weber, 2006). Within feminist peace and conflict theory a division can be identified between the essentialist perspective and the ones that see the difference between men and women more in terms of a construction (Weber, 2006). The first one understand women as more nurturing and peaceful than men, while the later consider women and men’s roles to be explained by the social relations in the society (El-Bushra, 2007). El-Bushra also address what she calls cultural essentialism, which emphasize the importance of the cultural and social context for women’s lives and also considers the oppression of women as something common for all societies. This is considered being placed between the two standpoints, mentioned above, that can be identified within feminist theory and have also according to El-Bushra been important for development policies and practice. A common view within feminist theory is that women have an important role when it comes to maintaining peace (Weber, 2006).
Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, which emphasize women’s needs and contributions in peace and security, several studies have been made considering the possible effect of UNSCR 1325 on women’s participation in peace processes (e.g. Hudson, 2009; Bell and O’Rourke, 2010). The main findings regarding the effect of UNSCR 1325 have shown on limited results in terms of the actual change concerning the number of women participating in peace processes (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012; Buchanan et al., 2012).

Studies made regarding women’s participation in peace processes have been carried out in several ways where the most common can be considered as the approach to focus on the number of women participating in the negotiations and then place it in relation to the substance of the peace agreements (Bell and O’Rourke, 2010; UN Women, 2012). These studies can be seen as based on the common assumption, also relevant for this study, that women’s participation are important in terms of increasing the consideration of the gender perspective. Where the research, to some extent, support the idea of women’s participation being important for the outcome of peace agreements (Buchanan et al., 2011). Including both the experiences and needs of women and men are considered to be of importance in peace agreements, not only in terms of raising the question of women’s rights but also as it is argued to lead to a more sustainable peace, being more inclusive (Buchanan et al., 2012). Focusing on the negotiations is however only one way of studying women’s participation. It is also argued to be important not to overemphasize the positive effect women’s participation in negotiations have on the agreements (Bouta, Frerks and Bannon, 2005; Nicol, 2012). Findings regarding women’s participation and the possible influence they have on the peace agreement illustrate that the mere presence of women during the negotiations does not ensure that gender will be considered. In the report Peacemaking Asia Pacific: Women’s participation, perspectives and priorities (Buchanan et al., 2011) it is for example recognized that when women are included in the negotiations they are often considered to represent only women’s issues, leading to a situation where they become marginalized.

Another perspective regarding women’s participation in peace processes is to focus on the way women are considered to be part of civil society and to see the informal arena of the process as the place where women can influence the most (e.g. Bell and O’Rourke, 2010; Hunt, 2005). How women find other ways to influence the peace process when excluded from the formal peace processes, such as the negotiations (Buchanan et al., 2011). Moreover, there
are also studies that emphasize the importance of considering the cultural context, related to the cultural essentialism (El-Bushra, 2007), when studying gender and peace processes (Hudson, 2009; Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012; Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf, 2002).

2.2 Framework

This section will introduce the two different aspects that are considered to be of importance for studying women’s participation during a peace process. The aspects are as mentioned, the participation of women in terms of the way women are participating and the obstacles women face for their participation. In each section different theories linked to the aspect of the framework will be presented. The theories presented are related to the understanding of the existence of a causality between women’s participation in the peace process and the outcome in terms of including the specific situation of women in the peace agreement. The theories regarding women’s participation in peace processes presented in this part will be used as the basis for the analysis made further on. The case of Burundi will be placed in relation to the general debate regarding women’s participation and the obstacles present for women’s participation in Burundi will be placed in relation to the findings of obstacles in other studies. The use of each of the aspects will be further explained in chapter 3.

2.2.1 Participation of women

The participation of women during the peace process in Burundi will be explored by structuring the data into the three different spaces from the Power Cube; closed, invited and claimed. Where also the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement will be studied, as well as the situation after the final agreement concerning women’s participation in politics.

The Power Cube was originally developed by the Power, Participation and Social Change team at IDS, Sussex University, U.K (Power Cube, 2011). It is a tool that can be used when analyzing power in governance, organizations and different social associations. The Power Cube can be used to explore each part of the model, as well as their interaction. It is meant to be used as a tool and not to be followed strictly. The Power Cube also includes two other parts besides the spaces of power, which are levels of power and forms of power. Levels of
power refer to the different levels of authority and power that decision-makers have, which can be divided into global, national, local and household levels. The other aspect of the model *forms* of power is divided into visible, hidden and invisible. The visible form refers to the type of power that is visible and easy to identify within legislation, political authority, and organizations. The hidden form refers to the way participation can be hindered, which can be seen in for example the way it is being decided what to bring up on the agenda and what is not. The invisible form is considered as the norms and ideas that are understood as normal and that determines the participation.

In the study *Equal Power, Lasting Peace* (2012) Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson use the Power Cube in order to carry out an analysis with the focus on the power structures in the societies of five different cases. The cases are: Armenia and Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq and Liberia. The study aims to explore the connection between power and peace with a focus on women, with the pre-understanding that power is central to the political process and that the power is gendered. The Power Cube are used in order to display the factors that make the gender inequality to continue and is used as a point of departure in the study, thus not followed strictly. The three different parts of the Power Cube are used in their study as a tool to structure the observations from the five different cases, in order to look for patterns of exclusion and enable a power analysis to be made. They study the work women’s groups have been carrying out in their struggle to gain power and influence, as well as the power mechanisms that leads to an exclusion of women. Moreover, they try to identify at what time it is possible to create links between informal and formal sectors, between *claimed* and *closed* spaces, with the use of forms and levels of power.

Another study using the Power Cube is the study made by Pearce and Vela at the University of Bradford, who used the Power Cube during workshops in Colombia when studying the participation of civil society organizations in the country. The model was used as a tool to help the civil society organizations to think about the spaces presented in the Power Cube and what their ambitions and intentions of their work were. They found that the participants in the study could recognize the central ideas of the Power Cube and it was also helpful as a way to see the obstacles they face in their work. Furthermore, it was useful in order to identify the different ways in which the organizations worked around the obstacles. They did however find one aspect that they thought was missing in the Power Cube, which was the aspect of
violence. By adding violence in their study it made it possible to reflect over the violence at other levels besides the state and non-state armed actors, such as the household level and in the schools (Pearce J., 2013).

The Power Cube has also been used in a study made by Edwards (2013) in order to make a power analysis regarding the promotion of local democratic accountability in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The study was carried out as a workshop where the aim was to present and discuss methods used for power analysis, which could be useful for the organizations as they were working for more accountable local governance. Edwards wanted to explore whether the concepts of the Power Cube were relevant for the experience of the civil society in DRC, which he found the concepts to be. By concentrating on the power dynamics it enabled a discussion about the actual way the people could hold the state accountable, rather than what should be done.

In order to explore the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi one part of the Power Cube, presented above, called spaces of power will be used. The different spaces that will be considered are closed spaces, meaning the different decision-making arenas where only certain actors are allowed to participate, such as negotiations, institutions and political structures. The decisions taken within this space are considered to have great effect on people’s lives and an arena where women in post-conflict countries often have been excluded. The second, invited spaces, involves the participation that results from power-holders inviting other representatives to be consulted, participate or observe. The invited spaces can be seen as a result of pressure on increased accountability and participation. The third, claimed spaces, refers to the ones that in some way are seeking power. It is seen as the space where social movements, civil society and other actors in the informal sector can raise their issues, which otherwise would not be brought up on the agenda. The women’s organizations are placed within this space (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012).

Regarding the participation of women in peace processes it is considered as an aspect where there is a need for improvement. The official peace processes continues to exclude women to a large extent and it is argued to be the aspect where least have changed concerning women, peace and security. As mentioned in the introduction the participation of women at the negotiating tables, has not improved that much after the adoption of for example the Beijing Platform and UNSCR 1325. One can however see some increase in terms of women’s
participation in mediation teams, as well as in the consultations between mediation teams and women’s organizations (International Alert, 2012; UN Women, 2012). Women claiming the right to participate in peace processes can today find strong support in the international agreements that emphasize the importance to include women in peace processes (e.g. Anderlini, 2000).

The peace negotiations can be seen as either inclusive or exclusive, where the exclusive is considered as one where the main parties of the conflict, usually political and military, are involved. While an inclusive negotiation also include other types of actors such as civil society organizations (Anderlini, 2004). Concerning the aspect of inclusive versus exclusive peace processes it is argued that in the same way as war today have become more inclusive affecting civilians to a much larger extent, the peace process also have to become more inclusive. Hence, as women are affected in a different way than before in terms of being exposed to the violence of the war to a larger extent, it is of importance to also include them. In the inclusive security concept the focus is on the role women can have during the process, instead of viewing them as a vulnerable group in need for help. Women are seen to be important as they to a large extent have experiences from non-governmental organizations, protests or other citizen empowering networks. Another important aspect of the concept is that the focus is not on the equality of gender per se, but that the process would be more efficient if women were involved to a larger extent (Hunt and Posa, 2001). This view is supported by Anderlini’s (2000) argument that peace cannot come from the top of the society but has to involve the whole society, as the conflicts today to a large extent are internal conflicts where the violence reaches all people in society.

In terms of the role one can have during a peace negotiation there are several ways in which to participate and where the different roles are seen to imply different possibilities to influence the outcome. Being a delegate of the negotiating parties is argued being a role that often includes the possibility of setting the agenda and structuring the process. Other roles possible to have during the peace negotiations are as mediator, member of mediation teams, gender advisor, member of technical committees or to have a parallel forum or movement. The last one is common when excluded from the formal process and considered to be frequently used by women. Other ways of participating are as signatories, witnesses or representing civil society as observers. The role as observer is however argued to be an
uncertain role, where the outcome of what is possible to influence from the position varies (UN Women, 2012).

Regarding the role of being involved as mediator or as a member of mediation teams, one should mention that the United Nations for example never have assigned a woman to be the chief mediator in a peace process. Even though they have assigned women other roles during negotiations in resent years (UN Women, 2012), it illustrates that there is also more to achieve concerning the international actors in terms of women’s participation in peace processes.

Concerning the discussion whether women are more peaceful than men it is among the women taking part in peace processes expressed to be more about women bringing another perspective into the peace negotiations than being more peaceful than men (Anderlini, 2000). Women are seen to contribute to the peace process in a different way than men, being more inclined to bring up the gender aspect, other experiences of conflict and also to bring together people from different political groups. The participation of women is considered leading to increased public support of the peace agreements (Bouta and Frerks, 2005). Anderlini (2000) argues that there is not any strong support of women being more obligated to promote the good of the majority of the population when allowed at the peace table. It is however stated that as women often come from the participation in civil society, they have experience of the difficulties faced by people on the grassroots level. They tend to bring up personal experiences of the conflict and the violence, which contributes to the negotiations by exemplifying how the conflict actually has affected ordinary people’s lives. Additionally it is also a question of democracy, that all citizens should be able to participate in the political life, thus also a peace process. One should not be excluded on the basis of being a woman.

Another aspect important when studying the participation of women can be seen in the number versus substance aspect, whether the mere presence of women at the peace negotiations no matter their role would have an impact on the outcome. Anderlini (2004) argues that the representation of women needs to be strong, meaning that the women participating have to represent all sides of the conflict and to also have a role with some real influence and not merely be there as observers. Moreover, it is in the UN report *Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence* argued that having a non-speaking observer role implies little impact on the text of the peace
agreement (UN Women, 2012). On the other hand, a study of twenty peace processes led by UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) states that even though women were only present as non-speaking observers at the peace negotiations, they were still able to have an impact on the inclusion of gender in the peace agreements. Concerning the participation of women it is also seen as important that the other participants at the table consider the inclusion of women to be of importance for the process. In many cases women’s as well as civil society’s involvement are not considered to be important for sustaining the process (Anderlini, 2004).

The introduction of gender quotas for women’s political participation in post-conflict societies is something that can be seen quite often today. But one question the report by International Alert (2012) raises is whether the number of women participating in politics means anything in terms of the substance in politics. The mere presence of women in the National Assembly does not mean an increase in the gender equality, it also have to be accompanied by measures supporting the struggle. The study Equal Power, Lasting Peace (2012) illustrates that gender quotas were used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and DRC in order to give women access to the politics. The introduction of gender quotas is argued to have been positive, but one issue raised in the cases and that can be seen as a common problem with the introduction of gender quotas is that it is the women that will “listen and obey” (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012:10) that are let into the politics and not the women interested in politics and with the capacity to make changes. Thus even though there are quotas in a country it does not mean that women actually have any influence over the political decisions.

The way in which peace agreements meaning have changed during the last two decades, can be found as support for the argument that women should be included to a larger extent in the peace negotiations. As it today is seen to be much more than the mere signing of a ceasefire between the warring parties. The peace negotiations today includes a wide number of issues that is important for the post-conflict society, such as power-sharing agreements, legislation on human rights, access to land and education, which will have great impact on the lives of both men and women. Many of the agreements negotiated and signed are today considered the basis for the future constitution in the country (Anderlini, 2000; Anderlini, 2004; International Alert, 2012). The agreements are further important since what is brought up in the agreements will have an effect on which kind of projects in the post-conflict phase that
will receive support from international donors. Thus making it important to also include women’s priorities in the agreement (Dolgopol, 2006). The peace process is viewed upon as an opportunity to change women’s role in society (Anderson, 2010). Concerning the peace agreements the common view have been to consider the agreements to be gender-blind, meaning that if referring to human rights it is obvious to also include women’s rights (UN Women, 2012).

Regarding the impact of women’s participation in peace negotiations Anderlini (2004) states that it is difficult to measure the actual difference the participation of women have on the peace agreement. However, the data that have been collected indicate that in terms of the peace agenda women tend to bring the root causes of the conflict up on the agenda to a larger extent, which can be seen to be of importance if to lay the ground for a sustainable peace. Women also tend to be more concerned with practical problems that need to be solved, rather than the control over political power. The absence of women in the formal part of the peace process is argued to lead to a neglect of women’s specific issues and a lack of understanding of the difference in how the decision will impact men and women (Anderlini, 2004; UN Women, 2012). The participation of women in the formal part of the process in for example DRC and Liberia is argued to have had positive effects on the outcome of the agreements (International Alert, 2012). It is further argued that women that are allowed to participate in the peace negotiations are able to change the perception and attitudes about women at leadership positions and in decision-making (Anderlini, 2000). Regarding this it is also important to mention that the outcome can be positive in terms of including women’s situation even though women were not participating in the negotiations. There is always the possibility that other participants advocate for the gender aspects to be included. Concerning the studies presented here it is however commonly understood to be an improved outcome when women are allowed to participate as well.

2.2.2 Obstacles for women’s participation

In terms of the obstacles present for women’s participation in peace processes, several reasons are presented by Anderlini (2004) of why women are excluded in peace negotiations to such large extent. One being that gender inequality is considered part of the culture and the peace table is not seen as the place where to address this type of questions. It is further seen as a risk
to the peace process to include this aspect, where it for example is stated in the UN report (2012) that the inclusion of women and gender issues can have a negative impact on the negotiations. Another argument raised is that the women participating do not represent the whole population but are elites in the country and argued not to have any different opinions than the men. As a comparison this argument is not brought up concerning men’s participation, even though they could be seen to represent the elite only. Furthermore, one reason often given for excluding women is that the peace negotiations are meant for those that have been combating during the conflict in order to solve the conflict. This might be true in terms of ending the armed violence in the country, but in terms of the work of building a framework for the post-conflict society it is argued to be insufficient (Anderlini, 2004).

In *Equal Power, Lasting Peace* (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012) women in the study express a number of ways in which they faced obstacles for their participation in the peace process and post-conflict society. The cases in the study are considered to be at different stages of the peace process but illustrating similar obstacles. They experienced obstacles in terms of the cultural and social norms. They lacked access to information that is necessary for being able to participate and the international community made compromises concerning women’s rights at times of peace negotiations. The excluding effect in terms of social norms can be seen in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina where political decision-making were arranged in places where women did not go. The case of DRC and Iraq is raised as examples of places where the norms have been put into laws that hinder women, as the laws for example give different rights to women and men. Furthermore, the gender stereotypes in society can be seen as a great obstacle for women’s participation. An example of this in the study is the view of women as being more peaceful and connected to motherhood, which might be positive in terms of opening doors for participation for women, but can at the same time decrease the possibility of women’s activity. The traditional roles are further considered a hinder as women and girls in these societies are expected to take on household activities, which limits the time they have available for participation outside the household. War and conflicts are also to a large extent seen to be of concern only for men. A common understanding among the participants in the study *Equal Power, Lasting Peace* were that women are not considered to be relevant actors at the peace talks and the work many women did in the informal part of the peace process was not acknowledged.
They also experienced obstacles in terms of the violence against women in society, which could be seen in for example the high rates of sexual violence against women and the lack of freedom of movement for the women taking part in activities. There were also campaigns against women, aiming to destroy their reputation in terms of decreasing the support from the community for the women’s work (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012).

Furthermore, corruption was considered to be an important aspect for both economic and political exclusion. It was seen as an obstacle for women’s participation in terms of political positions being a question of money, illustrated by the example of DRC where there were a system of buying votes in times of election. Excluding women with less access to money to participate in election campaigns can be related to the obstacle of poverty, which also can have an excluding effect in terms of women not having the money to attend meetings. The corruption can moreover be seen as a reason of why the closed spaces is kept male dominated to a large extent, as demonstrated in the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan where it worked as an excluding effect for women to enter the political arena. The aspect of corruption is in the study considered to be of importance to address in peace building. Legislation and state structures are also brought up as obstacles for women’s participation (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012).

To summarize, the framework that will be used for this study in order to explore the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi consists of two aspects, which are the way women have been participating in the peace process and the obstacles present for women’s participation. The aspect of participation consists of the part of the Power Cube called spaces of power, being divided into the closed, invited and claimed spaces. Where the aspects of the peace process being considered as inclusive or exclusive, the different roles possible to have during a peace negotiation and why it is seen to be of importance to include women are considered. Furthermore, the number versus substance aspects and the introduction of gender quotas are considered as well as the peace agreement and the reason of why it is important to include the specific situation of women in the peace agreement. In terms of the second part concerning obstacles for women’s participation, different reasons of why women are excluded from the peace process to a large extent is presented, as well as obstacles that have been present in other cases where women’s participation have been studied.
3. Methodology

The study will be carried out as a case study with the use of qualitative methods. Doing the study as a case study will be useful as it enables an understanding of the participation of women in the specific country and what obstacles that can be identified for their participation. The method of theory testing will be applied, where different theories regarding women’s participation in peace processes will be used in order to explore whether they are relevant in the case of Burundi. When using the method of theory testing it is important to consider whether the case studied is most-likely, least-likely or crucial in one or several theories. The objective of a theory testing study can be to strengthen or reduce the support for the theory, to narrow or increase the extent of limitations of a theory or to decide which of two or more theories that best explain the case studied (George and Bennett, 2005). The case of Burundi is considered as a most-likely case, as it is perceived as a case where women’s participation possibly has affected the outcome. The method of content analysis (Bergström and Boréus, 2012) will also be used in relation to the peace agreement. Content analysis is useful when to explore the frequency of a specific aspect in a text. Thus making the method useful, as the aim of the analysis made of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is to explore to what extent and in what way the specific situation of women are brought up in the agreement.

Out of the literature review done for this study, two aspects have been identified being important when studying women’s participation in a peace process. The aspects that will be studied are; the participation of women in the different spaces presented in the framework and the outcome in terms of the inclusion of women’s situation in the agreement, as well as the obstacles that are possible to identify for women’s participation. In terms of the participation considering the closed spaces, the focus of this study will be on the negotiations as it is a central part of the peace process. The obstacles women face for their participation within this space is also studied. More specifically what will be search for concerning the negotiations is the number of women participating in the negotiations and what role they had. In relation to the closed spaces the peace agreement will also be studied, as it will indicate the impact of women’s participation on the final agreement. Concerning the invited spaces the data that will be search for is the occasions where the women in Burundi have been invited to participate in the formal part of the peace process, such as at negotiations. In terms of the claimed spaces data regarding different ways in which women have been active during the
peace process even though not being included in the formal parts of the process, such as women’s organizations in the country, will be studied. The different spaces goes to some extent into each other, in terms of for example negotiations, which can be present both within the closed and invited spaces. It will in the findings be specified if possible what type of space the participation can be seen to be placed within. Structuring the findings of women’s participation into the different spaces presented in the analytical framework will be helpful in terms of what aspects of the peace process to search for in the documents. Furthermore, the study will explore the participation in the spaces in relation to the different theories presented in the framework, such as whether the peace process are inclusive or exclusive, the different roles possible to have during a peace negotiation and why it is considered to be of importance to include women. Regarding the peace agreement the inclusion of women’s situation and the outcome for women’s participation afterwards is studied. When studying women’s participation in Burundi the obstacles they have faced during the peace process will be presented and placed in relation to obstacles that have been present in other cases where women’s participation have been studied. This framework will be useful in order to illustrate the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi, taking both the formal and informal part of the process into consideration. To include the outcome of the peace process concerning women’s participation will give a picture of what was achieved during the peace negotiations in terms of increasing the possibility for women to participate in politics. It will also illustrate the situation after the agreement was signed, in terms of the real change in society. Finally, the obstacles is considered important in order to illustrate the reasons of why there are less women participating in peace processes and what has to change in society in order to enable more women to participate in the decision-making.

The data collected of women’s participation will be structured in the way as the analytical framework presented above is divided into the aspects participation and obstacles. Concerning the data used for the study it will be based on secondary sources, thus the findings of the study is limited to the data collected by others on the topic. The type of sources that will be used in order to search for data regarding women’s participation and obstacles in the case of Burundi as well as in general, are reports made by for example the UN and International Alert. Articles and research by for example Anderlini and Falch will also be used. When studying documents about the participation of women in peace processes one also have to be aware of the perspective of the author, as it might influence what is considered and emphasized in the text. To consider why the document was written and what the purpose of
writing it was (George and Bennett, 2005). The data for the study have been collected from electronic databases such as Google Scholar and EBSCO, as well as UN websites for information of peace agreements and resolutions. Limitations that are present in terms of the method chosen for the study is that as it will be a within-case study it will illustrate one out of many possible ways in which women can be participating in a peace process and the type of obstacles identified.
4. Background

4.1 The conflict in Burundi

Burundi has been suffering from several ethnic conflicts since the independence in 1962, where the most recent one began in 1993. In 1990 Burundi began a democratization process, but while the political liberalization started the intrastate conflict in the country started as well. In 1993 the democratization process lead to elections where Melchior Ndadaye became the first Hutu elected president, but soon after the election Ndadaye was killed during a coup by the Tutsi-dominated army. The failed coup and the assassination of the Hutu elected president resulted in more intense ethnic clashes in the country and the beginning of a civil war. The conflict lasted from 1994 to 2008 when the last rebel fraction agreed to take part in the peace process. During the civil war more than 300 000 people were killed and it is considered as one of the worst population displacement crisis in the world (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010; UCDP, 2014).

The women were particularly affected by the war in several ways, they were targeted as a result of being seen as the one that reproduced the ethnic group and were also exposed to gender-based sexual violence by both government soldiers and rebels. The women were also affected by the war in terms of for example becoming the head of household with the responsibility of the family, when the men were killed, jailed or took part in the rebel movements. They were also, as mentioned in the section above, displaced as a consequence of the conflict in the country (Falch, 2010; Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010).

4.2 The peace process in Burundi

Throughout the peace process in Burundi a number of agreements have been signed during the years from 1994-2008 (Bitsure et al., 2011; UCDP, 2014). Where the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement can be seen as crucial in terms of setting out the way forward towards a definite end of the violence in the country.

In 1996 Nyerere arranged peace talks between the two largest Burundian political parties in Mwanza, Tanzania, which then lead to further talks in Arusha later in June 1996. At this time it was however only political parties involved and the talks ended as a result of the economic
sanctions put on the country from neighboring countries (Anderson, 2010). The peace negotiations that later on lead to the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement began in 1998, held by the former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, where different political parties were included but where no civil society organizations were allowed to take part in the negotiations (Dolgopol, 2006; International Alert, 2012). The people participating in the peace talks in Arusha were representatives from the different political parties and armed movements. There were 19 political and military groups among them the Burundian government, the National Assembly, 14 political parties and three rebel groups present at the negotiations (Bitsure et al., 2011; Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010).

In the Arusha Peace Accords in 2000 it was suggested to have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that would consider ethnically based violence carried out in the country between 1962 and 2003. A special tribunal where one could prosecute people responsible for crimes against humanity was also suggested (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010).

During the peace negotiations in Arusha it was widely agreed upon that the reason of the conflict was political. The politics were however mainly defined by the ethnicity where one important aspect of the negotiations was considered to be the equality between Hutus and Tutsis. Thus the ethnicity was seen as an important part of the cause of the conflict (Daley, 2007).

The majority of the rebel groups took part in negotiations with the government and the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in 2000. At the time of the Arusha agreement it was decided on a return to democracy and a number of reforms of the army and the society. The elections later held in 2005 resulted in a former Hutu leader as president with an ethnic power sharing government. The election of a new president in 2005 was seen as the beginning of an end to the civil war in the country. In 2008 the last rebel groups agreed to take part in the peace process and signed a cease-fire (UCDP, 2014).
5. Findings

In this chapter the participation of women during the peace process in Burundi will be explored by structuring the data into the three different spaces from the Power Cube; closed, invited and claimed. Where also the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement will be studied, as well as the situation after the final agreement concerning women’s participation in decision-making. Finally, the obstacles present for women’s participation in the peace process are considered.

5.1 Participation of women

5.1.1 Closed spaces

The closed spaces consist of the different decision-making arenas where only certain actors are allowed to participate such as negotiations, institutions and political structures. Concerning the closed spaces of the peace process in Burundi the participation of women has been limited, but still not totally absent. First the participation will be explored in terms of the number of women participating and then the agreement from Arusha will be studied in terms of the inclusion of women’s specific situation.

During the round of negotiations in 1998 only two women were present out of a total of 126 participants (International Alert, 2012). According to data from the UN, the peace talks in Arusha had no women as signatories or witnesses and only 2 percent women among the negotiating teams (UN Women, 2012). Seven women were allowed to participate as permanent observers in the peace talks in Arusha in 2000 after intense lobbying by the women, which will be considered further on when presenting the claimed spaces. Other civil society actors were given access as observers while women organizations were not, with the motivation that there was no group that could be seen to represent all Burundian women (UN Women, 2012). The women were not allowed to take part until the final stage of the talks and were not viewed upon as real participants of the negotiations (Dolgopol, 2006). The women that were present at the peace talks in Arusha as observers did together with the female participants of the official conference delegations submit documents with inputs on the different issues discussed during the talks, as well as a different version of the agreement considering the gender perspective on the issues (International Alert, 2012).
As the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is considered a positive example in terms of the inclusion of women’s specific situation, it will here be summarized in what way women were brought up in the agreement. In the beginning of the agreement it is stated that representatives from women’s organizations were present at the signing of the agreement. In Article 5, chapter one in Protocol I, it is mentioned that the “new political, economic, social and judicial order” (United Nations, 2000b:17) should build on a number of principles, one being the equality of men and women. Furthermore, in Article 7 considering the public administration it is stated that there should be equal opportunities for men and women to participate. In Article 3, chapter one in Protocol II, women are brought up in a number of ways, where for example *The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) is stated to be an important part of the future constitution in the country. The agreement also specifically mentioned the importance of protection of widows and female-headed households (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010; United Nations, 2000b), as well as considering sexual violence as a violation of the ceasefire in the country (UN Women, 2012).

Even though the gender aspects was brought up on several places in the agreement, it is often stated in a quite general way, especially when it comes to the participation in the political institutions (International Alert, 2012). The claims of the Burundian women to include acts of rape committed during the war as crimes against humanity and thus have the penalty appropriate for that, was one part rejected by the negotiators during the Arusha talks. The Burundian women did advocate that the legal structure in the country had to change in terms of women being able to inherit. This was also not included in the agreement, where the agreement does not mention anything in terms of the right for women to inherit land, which can be seen to be of importance for the gender equality (Dolgopol, 2006). However a majority of the suggestions presented by the Burundian women were included in the Arusha peace agreement, thus it can be considered a positive outcome in terms of the inclusion of women and gender issues (International Alert, 2012).

Although the proposition of a 30 percent quota was rejected at the time of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, there was a more equal representation of women and men at the time of establishing transitional institutions. 33 percent of the members of the monitoring commission for the implementation of the Arusha peace agreement were women (International Alert, 2012). In 2004 Burundi also included the 30 percent quota in their post-
transition constitution. In terms of the positive outcome of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement concerning the inclusion women and gender issues, the role of United Nations and its influence on the negotiations is raised as an important aspect, together with the activism by the Burundian women (International Alert, 2012). The role specific individuals had for the peace process is also raised as an important aspect, which in the case of Burundi were first Nyerere and later Mandela (UN Women, 2012).

5.1.2 Invited spaces

The part of the participation of women in the peace process considered as invited spaces is when the power holders invite other representatives to be consulted, participate or observe. The findings regarding the participation of women placed within this part is rather limited, but some aspects of the participation of women in the peace negotiations in Arusha can be placed within this part.

In January 2000, seven women were allowed to take part in the talks as observers, but this was at a late stage in the process with only eight months left of the negotiations (Anderlini, 2000; International Alert, 2012). Different numbers are presented regarding the number of women that got to participate as observers in the peace negotiations, Bitsure et al. (2011) presents the number of eight women while several other sources (e.g. Anderlini, 2000; International Alert, 2012) presents the number of seven women. Concerning who was invited to take part in the negotiations, representatives from civil society were invited to take part but as member of political parties and not as an independent group, thus implying that the negotiations were only for political parties (Daley, 2007).

5.1.3 Claimed spaces

The claimed space is seen as the part where social movements, civil society and other actors in the informal sector can raise issues that otherwise would not have been brought up on the agenda. This part of the framework is the aspect where women’s participation in the peace process in Burundi can be seen to have been the greatest.

In order to overcome obstacles that are present to women’s participation the women finds solutions that will make them part of the process, as was the case in Burundi (Anderlini,
Women did as a reaction to the exclusion from the formal negotiations use different strategies to put pressure on the peace negotiations, including lobbying of national political members in the corridors outside the negotiating room and also reaching out to the international mediators. In their way of advocating for their participation in the peace negotiations, they had the international legislations such as the Beijing Platform for Action as support for their claims (International Alert, 2012).

The group of women in Burundi engaged in the peace process started to cooperate in the beginning of the war in 1994, working together over the ethnic boundaries for peace in the country. Leading to the creation of two umbrella organizations Collectif des associations et ONGs Feminines du Burundi (CAFOB) and Dushirehamwe, which had important roles in terms of bringing together women from different backgrounds and to work towards the same goal. These organizations are also considered to have been important for the contact between the national and grassroots level (Falch, 2010). One example of CAFOB’s work was during the peace negotiations in Arusha when the negotiators argued that there were no women with the competence to take part in the politics; hence it would not be possible to include quotas in the agreement. To refute the argument they made a list of women with the education and knowledge that met the requirements and gave to the mediators in Arusha (Falch, 2010).

At the time of the first round of negotiations in 1998, a meeting was organized by the African Union, where 65 Burundian women and two men took part (Anderson, 2010). They advocated for women’s participation among the regional heads of states, especially towards Julius Nyerere who at the time was the official mediator. At the time of the second round of negotiations in July 1998, the Burundian women went to Arusha as a delegation even though they had not been invited to participate. Leading to some support from Nyerere in terms of organizing a discussion around the participation of the Burundian women, among the participants present in the Arusha talks. This support continued as Nelson Mandela took over as the lead mediator after the death of Nyerere in 1999 (International Alert, 2012). In July 2000, an All-Party Women’s Conference was held where over fifty women came together from all negotiating parties. The conference was supposed to include women from all different parts of the Burundian society, such as member of women’s organizations, political parties, refugees as well as internally displaced people (Falch, 2010). The conference was held with the support from UNIFEM and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) (Dolgopol, 2006). The conference was considered a turning point in terms of
women’s participation in the peace process (International Alert, 2012). The main task of the participants was to go through the recommendations that were decided on in the negotiations in Arusha and then to bring in a gender perspective. After the conference the women began to advocate for inclusion of the recommendations in the agreement as well as the participation of women in the peace talks (Dolgopol, 2006). Among the recommendations were the claim of a 30 percent quota within governing institutions and to guarantee women’s right to property, land ownership and inheritance (International Alert, 2012). Among the things put forward was also that women would no longer accept being seen upon as only victims, they expressed that it is the women that have to pick up the pieces after a crisis and thus the perspective of women on peace must be considered being of importance (Anderlini, 2000). In the end, more than half of the suggestions were included in the agreements, thus recognizing the importance of women in the peace building process (Dolgopol, 2006; Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010). The women’s movement in Burundi has however not been as united as one might get the impression of. They were in a similar way as the country divided between the ethnic and political differences, which had negative effects on the implementation of the gains that their participation in the peace talks resulted in. It is argued that the work to develop a common program for peace was not that easy to achieve between women living in exile and within the country (International Alert, 2012).

With the support from UNIFEM and international NGOs the women’s movement had a consultative role during the peace process in Burundi 1999, meaning that they informed the women at the grassroots level of what were brought up during the Arusha peace talks. This was considered to be of importance as women belong to the group in the Burundian society being the least informed. By making the information available also for women at the grassroots level, usually to a large extent unaware of what was going on in the negotiations in Arusha, it was possible for them to give their input. The Burundian women have also worked on raising the awareness about their concerns among international observers, as they have been part of for example the Commission on Economic Reconstruction. The women’s association has become an important gathering point for Burundian women (Anderlini, 2000).

Regarding the effects of women’s participation during the peace process in Burundi, it is difficult to state the impact of the women who participated concerning the outcome. However, Klot (2007) argues that the participation of women at the time of the peace negotiations in
Arusha was important concerning how gender equality became an important part of the framework in terms of democratic governance and peace building.

The period after the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement has been viewed upon as a chance for women in Burundi to change the perception of them as victims in terms of the conflict and to become actors in the reconstruction phase. The progress in the country has been possible as an effect of the continued struggle of women in politics as well as women’s groups, with the support from international community and donors (Bitsure et al., 2011). In 2003 the government of Burundi adopted the National Gender Policy and in the constitution from 2004 it is stated that no one should be discriminated as a result of his or her sex. The participation of women at the government level have made great progress, even though there still is more men in the decision-making positions, placing Burundi in the forefront in a global perspective in terms of female participation in politics (Bitsure et al., 2011; Falch, 2010). Female candidates have been nominated to both the Senate and the National Assembly. They also have a ministry for National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender that is working for the rights of women (Dolgopol, 2006). However, even though the law in Burundi supports equal status of men and women, it does at the same time also differentiate between the right of women and men in terms of for example the age when one is allowed to get married, as well as the statement of men being the head of the household (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010).

In terms of the external support Klot (2007) among others argues that the women’s organizations in Burundi are dependent on external support in order to carry out their work. The financial support from the international community have been crucial for the growth of the women’s organizations in the country and have also been important in terms of for example offering technical knowledge.

The election held in Burundi in 2005 was seen as an important point in time ending the civil war that had been going on in the country for more then a decade (Falch, 2010). Falch (2010) argues that the election showed that women’s movements work for more women in the political arena had an impact, as women were participating in several ways during the election, such as being election monitors, voters and candidates. There were several women who gained a position within the government and were appointed to lead ministries that previously had only been open for men.
The peace in Burundi is considered to be fragile as a result of for example the gross human rights violations, the limited access to a judicial system and the difficulties when refugees return back home (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010). In terms of the women’s organizations work in Burundi at present Falch (2010) argues that they have been allowed to continue their work without the government trying to limit their activity, which the government has done with other human rights organizations.

5.3 Obstacles for women’s participation

The women have traditionally been excluded from the public and political life in Burundi and at the time of the peace process women were, as mentioned earlier, excluded to a large extent (Falch, 2010). A number of obstacles can be identified concerning the participation of women during the peace process, which also is relevant for the women’s political participation in general in the country.

In the Burundian culture it is considered to be the men that are responsible for law and justice (Bitsure et al., 2011), thus implying that it is not for women to be involved in. The attitude among the male participants regarding the participation of women in the Burundian peace talks can be indicated by this quote: “The women are not parties of the conflict. This is not their concern. We cannot see why they have to come, why they bother us. We are here and represent them” (Anderlini, 2000:10). Furthermore, the men could not understand why the women wanted to be part of the negotiations, the men were certain that they could represent women’s interests as well during the negotiations (Puechguirbal, 2005). This illustrates one obstacle that many women face when they finally get to participate at the formal peace negotiations, how the men participating show reluctance to the presence of women. In the case of Burundi women expressed a feeling of not being wanted and seen as someone that had to be taken care of (Anderlini, 2000). One also had a perception of women as being unable to participate in the political and confidential negotiations. Many women did refuse to take part themselves and the women’s organizations lacked in unity as women did not support the participation of other women in the negotiations (Bitsure et al., 2011). Another reason presented of the reluctance to include women in the peace negotiations in Burundi is that the participants saw additional participants as a threat to their power (Dolgopol, 2006). The traditional structures in Burundi can moreover be seen as an obstacle as the women for example have to ask for permission from the husband if being able to participate. The women
are also expected to uphold their traditional role as wives and mothers, which means that they have less time to spend on politics compared to the men and makes it difficult to combine with an active life in politics. In terms of the attitude towards women’s participation Falch (2010) argues that there exist a common understanding that women present in the political arena are there only to fill quotas and not because there actually are a will of including women in the decision-making. The political will is something brought up by several authors as an obstacle for the participation of women (Falch, 2010; International Alert, 2012).

Another obstacle identified is the legal framework in the country, which discriminates against women in terms of for example inheritance rights. The case of women not having the right to inherit can be seen as an aspect with great impact on the level of social and economic independence of women in Burundi (Falch, 2010). Poverty is further seen as an obstacle for the participation and where women are considered to be the group most affected by poverty in the society. The low level of education among women can also be seen as an explanation of the low level of political participation of women (Bitsure et al., 2011; Dolgopol, 2006; International Alert, 2012). The aspect that is argued to be the greatest for women’s participation in politics today, which also can be related to obstacles that faced women wanting to take part in the peace process, is the patriarchal culture (Falch, 2010).

Even though Burundi can be seen to have achieved a positive outcome in terms of women’s participation in politics after the peace agreement in Arusha, there are still obstacles present for women’s political participation (Falch, 2010). The women continue to struggle for a more equal post-conflict society in terms of prosecutions, truth seeking and security sector reform. They also want a quota on 50 percent instead of 30 percent (Nibigira and Scanlon, 2010). The cultural practices in the country are still an obstacle for female participation and can also be seen as an obstacle of the implementation of gender equality policies. The security situation in the country where women for example still are exposed to gender-based violence continues to have a negative effect on the participation of women outside the household (Falch, 2010; International Alert, 2012).
6. Analysis

In this chapter the participation of women in the case of Burundi will be placed in relation to the theories presented in the analytical framework and also the participation of women in other countries. Moreover, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is considered as well as the possible effects of women’s participation. Finally, the aspect of obstacles present for women’s participation in the peace process as well as politics in general is considered.

6.1 Participation of women

Concerning the role possible to have during a peace negotiation there are, as presented in section 2.2.1, a number of ways in which it is possible to be involved. In the case of Burundi the women mainly participated as observers during the negotiations, which is a role where one can question how much that is possible to influence in terms of the outcome. Being observer is argued to be an uncertain role, where the possibility to influence varies (UN Women, 2012). It is however argued by others that even though women do not have any spoken influence their mere presence at the negotiations seems to have some effect on the inclusion of gender in the agreements (International Alert, 2012). Other ways in which to take part in the peace process, which is seen in the case of Burundi in terms of the All-Party Women’s Conference that were held at the time of the Arusha negotiations, is to have a parallel forum or movement. Something commonly used when excluded from the formal part of the process (UN Women, 2012). In terms of allowing women to be part as observers, being it a role with limited possibility to impact the negotiation. One should take into consideration that to accept women to participate as observers does not necessarily illustrate a will among the participants to include women to a larger extent. But could be a way to deal with the pressure from the international community to include women and to also make it more legitimate in the eyes of the people, as different groups of society is allowed to take part. Regarding the participation of women during a peace process the part out of the spaces, presented in the analytical framework in chapter 3, where women are present to the largest extent is the claimed spaces. This is the case in Burundi as well as in for example Armenia, Azerbaijan and DRC (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012). The aspect of claimed spaces can be considered as the area during a peace process where women have the greatest possibility to participate, as these organizations often work close to the people at the grassroots level.
In terms of the aspect of number versus substance concerning women’s participation, it is as mentioned in section 2.2.1 important not to overemphasize the number aspect in terms of women’s participation. To also consider the actual influence women taking part in the political arena have on the decisions made. The aspect of number versus substance is relevant both in terms of the peace process and the political life afterwards, as the demand of gender quotas can be seen as common in peace processes today, Burundi being one example where a 30 percent quota later was included in the post-transition constitution. Concerning the focus on the number of women participating, Falch (2010) argues that the number of women in politics in Burundi today do not correlate with the actual influence they have on the political decisions. It is considered to be a few of the women that have the courage to say what they think about issues in the political debates. In the countries studied in *Equal Power, Lasting Peace* (2012) Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq and DRC all used gender quotas to increase the participation of women in the political arena. The introduction of gender quotas were in these cases argued to have been positive, but at the same time it was also stated that the women interested in politics and with the ability to change that were not the ones allowed to participate. Concerning the discussion over the number and substance aspect of women’s participation one can be critical towards the way women often are included in the role as observers in peace negotiations with limited ability to influence. On the other hand, one can argue that they probably have more possibility to influence when taking part as observers than not being there at all. One cannot expect everything to change at once, one step at the time is also a way of doing things and that might be more sustainable for a future society.

Regarding the debate whether women are more peaceful than men it is among the women taking part in peace processes, Burundi being one example, expressed that it is more about women bringing another perspective to the peace negotiations than being more peaceful than men (Anderlini, 2000). An aspect raised in the case of Burundi and which probably is the case also in other countries was the difference in the priority between men and women, where men as members of a party seemed more concerned with the position they were going to get afterwards than the peace in the country (Anderlini, 2000). In relation to this it is of importance to also mention that the groups of women and men are not homogenous groups, but are individuals with their own interests. Thus implying that there also exist women that do not have the people as a whole as priority when participating in a peace process.
In terms of the peace agreements there has in general been limited improvements concerning the inclusion of women’s human rights in the agreements. The common approach towards peace agreements is argued to be one as seeing them as being gender-blind. Meaning that if referring to human rights it is obvious to also include women’s rights and thus no need for mentioning it more specifically, in terms of for example quotas (UN Women, 2012). This was not the case in Burundi where the gender inequality was taken into account in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement throughout the text, which was presented earlier in section 5.1. The mentioning of women’s rights in the agreement is however not any guarantee for the implementation of them, which in the case of Burundi has been slow. The influence of women remains low even though there has been an increase of women participating in governing institutions due to the implementation of quotas in the country. It can however be seen as a first step in the right direction. Concerning the implementation of peace agreements, it is argued that the mentioning of gender equality in a general way can be a possible explanation of the lack of implementation (International Alert, 2012). If this is the case one can further question the argument many times put forward about peace agreements being gender-blind. The statement of peace agreements being important in terms of what projects that will receive support from international donors in the post-conflict phase, mentioned in section 2.2.1 (Dolgopol, 2006), illustrate the importance to include the aspect of gender in the agreements if one wants the gender inequality to be improved in the post-conflict society. That one cannot deal with the gender issues at a later stage, as is argued in many cases.

That agreements today are seen to include much more than the mere end of the conflict, also being the basis for future constitutions in countries is illustrated by the case of Burundi where the constitution adopted was based on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement (International Alert, 2012). Thus further supporting the importance of including women to a larger extent, as it can be seen crucial to include the aspect of gender if one wants the gender inequality to be improved in the post-conflict society.

Another aspect that was considered to be important in the case of Burundi was the external support the women’s organizations received from the international community and donors (Bitsure et al., 2011). Where the support was important for the women’s organizations in order to carry out their work. The continued need of support among the women’s organizations is however also argued to become an issue as there are a lack of long-term support, meaning that the women’s organizations when starting a project do not know if they
will be able to finish it (Falch, 2010). Concerning the support the women in Burundi received from UNIFEM, Anderson (2010) claims that the peace process in Burundi and the time of the Arusha talks became a case for UNIFEM to use as a positive example for the promotion of the UNSCR 1325. It is at the same time also stated that the reason of choosing Burundi as the example could have been a result of women already being active in the country. It is difficult to state the actual reason of the specific outcome in the case of the Burundian peace process, but it is argued that the outcome probably became more successful with the support from international actors such as UNIFEM (UN Women, 2012).

The participation of women at the government level have made great progress in Burundi, even though there still are more men in the decision-making positions in society (Bitsure et al., 2011). That it continues to be an under-representation of women within institutions in Burundi as well as in several other countries that have gone through a peace process recently, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iraq (Dolgopol, 2006; Falch, 2010; Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012) has to be placed within a wider perspective, as this is the case also in developed countries. If developed countries that have had a well functioning democracy for a long time do not have an equal representation of women and men, one should not expect a country like Burundi to have it right after a civil war that lasted for more than a decade. This can be related to what was written earlier about international actors not appointing women as chief mediators while at the same time advocating gender equality at national level in countries, illustrating a double standard. Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson (2012) argues that the gender structures one trying to change at the national level in countries going through peace processes are present and defines the international organizations taking part in peace building interventions.

In terms of the effects of women’s participation it is, as mentioned, difficult to state if the participation of women were the decisive factor in the peace process concerning the inclusion of women’s specific situation in the peace agreement. In the case of Burundi, the UN Women report (2012) argues that the intense lobbying of the Burundian women had an impact on the outcome. That there was a correlation between the participation of women and to what extent the specific situation of women were brought up in the peace agreement. This is also stated in studies made of Liberia and DRC, where the participation of women in the formal part of the process is argued to have had a positive effect on the outcome of the agreements (International Alert, 2012). In the case of Burundi there is as mentioned also other factors
considered important for the outcome, such as the support from international actors and the role of the mediators (UN Women, 2012).

6.3 Obstacles for women’s participation

One aspect seen as important for women’s participation is the attitude in the society towards their participation. The women in Burundi advocating for their participation in the negotiations, experienced unwillingness among the men participating in the negotiations to include women (Anderlini, 2000). This indicates the need in the society to change the perception of what role women and men are supposed have in society. The attitude among both men and women has to change towards accepting women to take part in a larger extent outside the household. The cultural and social norms of what a woman is supposed to do can be seen as the underlying reasons of many arguments put forward of why women should not be allowed to participate. In general one can identify a common attitude of little understanding of why the men could not represent women’s needs and interests as well. The argument for example that women do not participate in the armed conflict and thus have no place at the negotiating table, does not hold in todays reality as there is an increasingly amount of women taking part as soldiers in conflicts.

The argument raised about the women active within women’s organizations working for peace not representing the whole population but the elites, thus not having other opinions than the men already participating (Anderlini, 2004) has to be considered as a rather weak argument since the issue is about including women’s perspective into the process. Even if women would belong to the elite the perspectives can still be different as women and men have different roles in most societies. In the case of Burundi the women participating in the peace process at the national level had a strong connection with the movements on the grassroots level (Anderlini, 2004). Thus illustrating the weakness of this argument further, as this connection meant that they were informed about the situation of the women at the grassroots level and could bring that into the discussion.

The perception that the participation of women as well as inclusion of gender issues can have a negative impact on the negotiations, increasing the risk of failure of the negotiations (UN Women, 2012), can be seen in the case of Burundi where the inclusion of more participants was seen as a threat to the power of the ones already participating (Dolgopol, 2006). A
question that can be raised in this respect is what aspect that is considered most important in terms of a peace negotiation and the following agreement; the mere signing of an agreement or that it actually sets out a way towards a post-conflict society where men and women have equal opportunities.

Regarding the situation in Burundi after the agreement signed in 2000; the amount of women that were elected at the local level in the election in 2005 increased despite that it was not specified anything in the constitution about the local level (Falch, 2010). This could indicate that the perception among people in Burundi had changed to some extent, not only being the introduction of quotas at the national level that resulted in more women participating, but also a change in how people viewed female participation in the political life. One should not draw to large conclusion on this observation, but it can however indicate that they have started to move towards a more open view of women participating in politics. This is further illustrated by the example of a Burundian woman that took part in the negotiations in Arusha as part of the women’s delegation, who expressed that the attitude towards women’s role in society have changed in terms of men being more open to women’s participation in politics (Falch, 2010).

Violence is an aspect that can be seen to be of importance when discussing women’s participation in activities outside the household, such as peace processes. In Burundi the violence against women in the society continues to be an issue (Dolgopol, 2006). This can be related to the previous study made by Pearce and Vela, where they found that the aspect of violence was important in terms of the participation, an aspect also found to be missing in the Power Cube (Pearce J., 2013). The obstacle in terms of the presence of violence against women in society can be seen as an issue also in countries such as Iraq and DRC, where the lack of security hindered women to participate both in closed and claimed spaces as they could not get safely to meetings. Concerning the claimed space the presence of violence weakened the activity of organizations as the possibility to mobilize at a more national level decreased (Mannergren Selimovic, Nyquist Brandt and Söderberg Jacobson, 2012).

It is difficult to out of the data collected for this study state which obstacle that is the most important in terms of women’s participation in Burundi, in the end the different obstacles are taken altogether a great hinder for women’s participation and are to some extent related to each other. But one can see that many of the obstacles is associated with the traditions and
culture in terms of for example the attitude that exists in the society, which is something that takes time to change but that at the same time is possible to change. Hence it is important that the women in the country continue their work for more equality in the country and also getting the external support needed to continue their work. That most of the obstacles can be seen to be related to the cultural context illustrate that the studies, as is mentioned in section 2.1 of previous research, considering the cultural context to be important when studying gender and peace processes are on the right track.

In this chapter the case of Burundi has been placed in relation to the general discussion regarding women’s participation and the findings from other countries where women’s participation have been studied. Concerning the participation, Burundi is seen to be similar to other countries studied where the claimed spaces is the part of the peace process where women are seen to be most common. In terms of peace agreements, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement stands out as a positive example where women’s situation are brought up throughout the text, but where the implementation have been rather weak. It is further argued to be a correlation between the participation of women during the peace process and the outcome. Regarding the obstacles for women’s participation in Burundi they are found to be similar as in other cases studied, which is obstacles that are related to the culture and social norms as well as the violence that exist in the society.
7. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore the participation of women during the peace process and to identify which obstacles they face in their struggle for more influence. The case of Burundi was chosen since it is considered a country where the outcome of the peace process were positive in terms of the inclusion of women’s situation in the peace agreement. The findings demonstrate that the participation of women is most common within the claimed spaces, thus the informal part of the peace process. When participating in the closed spaces it was mainly as observers, which is a role argued to be uncertain in terms of the possibility to influence the outcome. The case of Burundi illustrates the possibility for women starting of their work within the informal part of the process, to at a later stage reach the formal part such as the negotiations. It is further argued that the external support Burundi received from UNIFEM as well as the mediators were crucial for the inclusion of women.

As the outcome in Burundi is argued to have been positive in terms of the inclusion of women’s specific situation in the peace agreement, it is also important to consider to what extent the aspects brought up in the agreement were implemented afterwards. In the case of Burundi the implementation is argued to have been less positive, where the influence of women remains low. However, the participation of women within governing institutions has increased to some extent, indicating some improvements in terms of women’s participation in decision-making. One should have in mind that these are aspects that take time to change and hopefully Burundi is moving towards more influence of women at the decision-making level. The fact that the agreements today encompass much more than the signing of a ceasefire, also being the basis for future constitution in the country as in Burundi, illustrate the importance of including women to a larger extent in order to take their perspective into account as well.

The main obstacles present for women’s participation in Burundi are aspects related to the culture and social norms as well as the existence of violence in society. Where the understanding of what women and men should be doing in the society is deeply rooted, but as shown in Burundi and other cases possible to question in terms of demanding the right of women to participate. One can further see that the obstacles existing in the case of Burundi are similar to other cases studied regarding women’s participation in peace processes. Taken together the social norms and the violence in society must be seen as the greatest obstacles for
women’s participation, aspects that needs to be dealt with if the post-conflict society should be a more equal one between women and men.

This study indicates that the presence of women have a positive effect on the outcome in terms of the inclusion of the gender perspective, but there is as mentioned difficult to state the exact impact. The peace process in Burundi demonstrate that the women managed with their hard work and the support from external actors such as UNIFEM to achieve a positive outcome in terms of the way women and gender were included in the final agreement, as well as the level of women participating in politics today. The work of women’s organizations in Burundi coming together over the ethnic boundaries can be seen to be of importance for a sustainable peace in the country as the ethnicity was considered an important part of the cause of the conflict. Women still face obstacles in society for their participation in politics, but these are aspects that take time to change. The positive outcome of the peace process can be seen as a starting point from where to continue to build a country with sustained peace and improved equality. For future research further analysis can be made in the specific case of Burundi in order to identify the power structure to a larger extent by adding the two other parts, levels and forms, of the Power Cube. This would be useful in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the obstacles women in Burundi face for their participation in the politics. Furthermore, the statement about how decisive the support from external actors such as UNIFEM were for the women in Burundi concerning their work during the peace process is an aspect that could be studied. This can be explored in terms of making a comparison of the support received by women’s organizations in other countries during a peace process, to identify the importance of the external support.
References


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