



**LUND**  
UNIVERSITY

# Towards Female Representation in Peace Negotiations

Comparing the cases of Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia

# Abstract

Women's representation and participation in the forming of peace agreements are argued to have a positive impact on peace. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the necessary preconditions for securing women's representation at the negotiation table. Through a comparative study in which feminist theory is applied to three cases (Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia) that experienced different levels of female inclusion in their respective peace negotiations, I conclude that women's organisations have been essential in promoting women's inclusion. The cases where women were able to mobilise broadly across different sectors were the ones that ended up including more women at the negotiation table. International influence, for instance through the Security Council resolution 1325, was effective when civil society embraced the ideas and actively used them as leverage in their campaigns. Women's literacy rates were detrimental to female representation at the national level. However, also illiterate and uneducated women were in some cases contributing to the mobilisation of women for peace, challenging gendered stereotypes and ideas in peacebuilding contexts.

*Keywords:* female representation, feminism, Colombia, Nepal, Liberia, comparative study

*Word count:* 9,985

# Table of Contents

<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Background and research question.....	4
1.2 Previous research.....	5
<b>2 Case description .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Liberia .....	7
2.2 Nepal .....	8
2.3 Colombia .....	9
<b>3 Theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 A critical, feminist framework .....	10
3.2 Operationalisation .....	12
<b>4 Scope and methods .....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Concepts .....	14
4.2 Comparative design.....	15
4.3 The Cases .....	15
4.4 Material .....	16
<b>5 Analysis.....</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1 Women’s organising before the negotiations.....	18
5.1.1 Liberia .....	18
5.1.2 Nepal .....	19
5.1.3 Colombia .....	21
5.1.4 Empirical analysis .....	22
5.2 International influence on the negotiations .....	24
5.2.1 Liberia .....	24
5.2.2 Nepal .....	25
5.2.3 Colombia .....	26
5.2.4 Empirical analysis .....	27
5.3 Women’s education and literacy .....	28

5.3.1	Liberia .....	28
5.3.2	Nepal .....	29
5.3.3	Colombia .....	30
5.3.4	Empirical Analysis .....	31
<b>6</b>	<b>Discussion and concluding remarks.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>36</b>
7.1	Literature .....	36
7.2	Online sources .....	41

# Appendix

Accra Agreement	Peace agreement between LURD, MODEL, and the Liberian Government, signed in 2003.
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord, between CPN-M and the Nepalese government, signed in 2006.
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army
FAS	Femmes Africa Solidarité
Final Agreement	Peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the Colombian government, signed in 2016.
IDP	Internally displaced people
IMP	Alliance Initiative of Colombian Women for Peace
La Ruta Pacifica	Women’s Peaceful Road to Political Negotiation of Conflicts ( <i>Colombia</i> )
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
Marwopnet	Mano River Women’s Peace Network ( <i>Liberia</i> )
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
PBI	Peace Brigades International
People’s War	Nepali intrastate conflict, 1996-2006.
Redepaz	National Network of Initiatives for Peace and Against War ( <i>Colombia</i> )
UN	United Nations
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIN	United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WIPNET	Women’s Peace Network ( <i>Liberia</i> )
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and research question

Research in the area of peace and conflict studies have shown that the inclusion of women in peace processes and peacebuilding efforts results in a longer-lasting and more sustainable peace. There is also evidence that societies that are more equal in general are more peaceful (Caprioli 2005, p. 174; Forsberg and Olsson 2016, pp. 2-3; Krause et al 2018, p. 22; Melander 2016, pp. 195-196; O'Reilly et al 2015). In light of this context and the knowledge of global gender inequality which complicates women's political representation in most sectors of society, research on the conditions that enable women to be represented in peace process becomes relevant.

There is a range of feminist literature that provides insight to women's representation and participation in peace processes, addressing different aspects of its challenges and accomplishments (see e.g. Aggestam 2018; Aggestam and Svensson 2018; Basini and Ryan 2016; Bell and O'Rourke 2010; Paffenholz 2018a). Some researchers have raised criticism towards the work of the United Nations (UN) for failing to address structural issues related to gender inequality (Bjarnegård and Melander 2013; Otto 2009). Others have emphasised the importance of women's civil society organisations (CSOs) to help secure women's inclusion in peace processes (El-Bushra 2007; Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas 2018; Paffenholz 2018a).

In this paper, I contribute to a deepened understanding of what pre-conditions are necessary to secure women's representation in peace negotiations succeeding civil conflicts. This is done through a comparative study of three countries that signed peace agreements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but with different levels of female representation at the peace talks: Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia. To do this, I

propose the following research questions: *What are the prerequisites for securing women's representation in peace negotiations following civil conflicts? How can we understand this in the context of Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia?*

The purpose of the study is to explain what the key factors are to ensure that women are present at the negotiation table. Indeed, numerical representation is not enough for ensuring substantive gender equality. However, getting women to the negotiation table is a start, and this paper aims to explore how practical measures can contribute to changing the norms needed to secure that.

## 1.2 Previous research

Feminist scholars have contributed to the studies of peace and conflict by broadening and redefining the meanings of the terms war, conflict, security, and peace. They have elucidated the gendered aspects of war and conflict, acknowledging how women and men are affected differently in conflict settings. War and conflict are not solely about violence at the state level as in the traditional interpretation but can be extended to the understanding of structural violence that subordinates women in most aspects of society. Likewise, a gendered understanding of peace and security include the absence of structural violence and inequalities, instead of just the absence of direct violence (Otto 2017; Romaniuk and Wasylciw 2010; Sjoberg 2013; Åhäll 2016).

Forsberg and Olsson (2016, pp. 11-12) elucidate the role of stereotypes and norms in society; societies where gender-equal attitudes are stronger and the level of gender equality is higher tend to be characterised by the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution. These norms relate to men and women treating each other with respect, which could translate into more respectful and considerate peace processes. Caprioli (2005, pp. 164-165) further elaborates about conflict from the perspective of feminist theory; in times of conflict, structural violence is legitimized and justified through gendered hierarchies built on ideas and practices that promote a masculine dominance and female subordination. In a culture where these values are supported, the distribution of power favours structural violence against women.

The international aspect of gender equality in peace processes took a significant step forward in 2000 when the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (hereinafter:

res. 1325) was established, acknowledging women's unique role in peace and conflict settings, and encouraging the inclusion of women in all aspects of peacebuilding (UNSC 2000). The content of res. 1325 challenges the idea of women as passive actors in war and recognizing the diversity of women's experiences of war and conflict (Otto 2009, pp. 16-17). On this note, women are often included in negotiations partly as a result of international actors' oversight of the process. Evidence suggests that UN involvement affects the framing of negotiation settings and addressing the conflict's root causes. Res. 1325 has contributed to women's inclusion in terms of putting pressure on local actors to account for women's situation in the setting up of frameworks for peace processes (Ní Aoláin et al 2011, p. 207).

However, the Security Council's view on gender in peace and conflict situations, and its Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda has been criticized. Both Otto (2009, p. 13; 2017, p. 10) and Bjarnegård and Melander (2013, pp. 561, 571) criticize the UN's vision of women in peace and conflict settings, arguing that its social capital is built on a gendered paradigm in which women are regarded as naturally peaceful and wars are fought by men to protect women. According to Otto (2009, p. 13), the Security Council as an institution becomes limited in its possibilities to work progressively against the exclusion of women because of its narrow conceptualisation of femininity and masculinity.

On a similar note, the term 'gender mainstreaming', which is commonly used by the UN and other international organisations and institutions, is criticised for its lack of practical efficiency. Its capability to challenge gender roles on a deeper level has been questioned, and it has been argued to be used through an 'add women and stir' approach, not challenging the roots of systemic discrimination against women (Ní Aoláin et al 2011, pp. 12-13). As an alternative to gender mainstreaming, a 'gender-central' approach has been proposed, which focuses on the substantive result of gender equality efforts, calling for equality of outcomes as well as of opportunity (ibid. p. 14).



## 2 Case description

This chapter provides an overview of the three cases used in the analysis. It briefly describes the timeline of each conflict and the events that led up to the respective peace negotiations and agreements.

### 2.1 Liberia

The Liberian state was founded in 1847 by slaves that had been released from the Americas and who became the ruling elite while indigenous peoples were excluded from governing. The founding received assistance from the American Colonization Society and the state apparatus was formed according to American standards. In 1980, Samuel Doe became the first person to form a government led by a member of an indigenous group. His politics further exacerbated the tension between the ethnic groups (UCDPa, n.d.; UCDPb, n.d.), as he banned political parties and established an authoritarian military regime (UCDPb, n.d.). Since then, Liberia has experienced two civil wars. The first one lasted between 1989 and 1996, after which Charles Taylor was elected president (Chandler 2016, p. 27). Fighting over government resumed in 1999 between Liberia's government and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), eventually turning into the Second Liberian Civil War (UCDPb, n.d.), which is the conflict I focus on in this paper.

During the conflict, women's organisations were actively advocating for an end of the fighting in favour of peace negotiations (Bekoe and Parajon 2007). The fighting was eventually terminated and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was deployed in 2003. That same year, the Accra Peace Agreement was signed between the government, LURD, and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Former president Charles Taylor has since been convicted of crimes against humanity. In the 1980s and '90s, there were several failed attempts

to make peace (UCDPd, n/d). In the early-2000s negotiations, women constituted 17% of the observers (Castillo Diaz 2012, pp. 4-5). According to Aggestam and Svensson (2018, p. 158), two women representatives of the Mano River Women's Peace Network (Marwopnet) signed the Accra agreement in 2003.

## 2.2 Nepal

In 1996, Nepal experienced the start of its civil war over government, as the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) launched attacks against political, military, and commercial targets (Dahal 2015, p. 185). The goal was to overthrow the monarchy and establish a communist regime (UNCPc n/d). The conflict was preceded by civil protests for democracy and a transformation from absolutist monarchy to constitutional monarchy under multi-party democracy in 1990. The new system, however, was vague in its constitutional power-sharing arrangements, causing instability and political polarisation, further exacerbated by widespread poverty (UCDPc n/d). Inspired by Mao Tse-tung, the CPN-M popularised the conflict through the phrase "People's War" (Lohani-Chase 2014, p. 30; Upreti et al 2018, p. 33), making themselves popular among segments of the poor rural population by burning records of land-ownership and establishing taxation systems in several districts (UCDPc n/d). Through their claimed struggle against structural violence, gender discrimination, and domestic violence, they also managed to mobilise women's movements and recruit female members to the rebel group (Lohani-Chase 2014, p. 30-31). After the conflict, just under 20% of the qualified ex-combatants were women (Upreti and Shivakoti 2018, p. 79).

Peace talks were on the agenda in both 2001 and 2003, both ending in a breakdown and a return to violence (Paffenholz 2009, p. 175). In 2004, the EU and the UN offered mediation support which was turned down. After what was perceived as a royal coup in 2005, the king assumed absolute power and political leaders, activists, journalists, etc. were arrested in an attempt to oppress any opposition. The events were condemned by several international actors and followed by peaceful mass demonstrations for democracy which led to the overthrowing of the king (Paffenholz 2009, p. 175; UCDPc, n.d.). Peace talks resumed later that year

between the CPN-M and political parties, and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2006 (UCDPc n/d;). No women were present during the peace negotiations (Castillo Diaz and Tordjman 2012, p. 5).

## 2.3 Colombia

The Colombian conflict started in 1948 with a decade of partisan violence, commonly referred to as “La Violencia”. Although the country reached peace in 1958, widespread social, economic, and political inequalities spurred tension in society, leading to agrarian movements performing peaceful resistance against the status quo (Bouvier 2016, p. 4; UCDPd n/d). In the 1960s, left-wing guerrilla movements were formed, primarily by peasants and students inspired by the Cuban revolution and the Soviet Union (UCDPd n/d). The main rebel group in Colombia’s civil war, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP), took on a Marxist-Leninist ideology in their struggle against the government. Between 20-40% of the members of the FARC-EP were estimated to be women (Gutiérrez Sanín and Carranza Franco 2017, p. 770).

Through the years, several attempts of peace processes have been made, most of them ending in a break-down and a return to violence. In the most recent peace negotiations, that took place between 2012 and 2016 and resulted in the signing of an agreement between the FARC-EP and the government, women were included in the peace negotiations on both sides (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas 2018, p. 5, 15). Unlike previous negotiations, the most recent ones addressed women’s issues in ways that reframed conceptions of the terms conflict and security (Bell 2015, p. 22). The 2012-2016 peace negotiations are the ones I focus on in this paper.

## 3 Theoretical framework

### 3.1 A critical, feminist framework

To explore the reasons behind women's participation in the cases of Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia, I propose using a feminist theoretical framework because of its structural and normative approach towards questions about the relationship between gender and power (Aggestam and Towns 2019, p. 24). Among the many variants of feminist theories, June Lennie outlines an “empowering feminist framework of participation and planning” which supposedly can enhance women's participation and possibilities to achieve not only numerical but substantive representation. The framework draws on feminist structuralism and calls for the pursuit of education, participation, and community development in the planning of development efforts. It further aims to strengthen women's emancipation by deconstructing the prevalent gendered power relations in participatory planning. The author stresses that the strategies used are subject to change to be adjusted to the specific time and context (Lennie 1999, pp. 107-108).

The framework's epistemological assumptions include the view of local and “contextual” knowledge as highly valuable, as it assumes that a hierarchal view of knowledge upholds already existing inequalities (Lennie 1999, p. 108). This is in contrast to the so-called “feminist pragmatic method”, a part of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, which only intends to include local voices as a complement to what is considered highly ranked international “experts” (Davies and True 2018, p. 3). On a similar note, the political economy of post-conflict settings tends to undermine gender mainstreaming efforts and reinforce structural inequalities between men and women (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez-Vanegas 2018, pp. 2-3; True 2013a, p. 1).

On the contrary, the action-oriented participation framework advocates for the recognition of diversity in living experiences between and among men and women. Thus, it accounts for gender analysis in the evaluation of peacebuilding, intending to reduce inequalities in numerical representation. The framework intends to reconceptualise participation as something that is socially and politically constructed, and thus incorporating inequalities that are institutionalised in the beliefs and ideologies of those in power. To contest the prevailing situation, there is a need to bring women's everyday lives into account when planning for participation (Lennie 1999, p. 108). Peacemakers also stress the importance of reframing the negotiation processes to enable women's participation (Aggestam 2018, p. 10).

Moreover, the empowering framework used in this paper also takes into consideration the systemic reasons for unequal power relations and the overall disadvantage of women, while still emphasising the inappropriateness of picturing women as role models of good morals and pacifism in conflict settings (Lennie 1999, p. 109). It is closely related to normative feminism which addresses the importance of challenging the feminine-masculine dichotomy that is prevalent in the field of International Relations studies. It questions the binary concept of gender, acknowledging that it is a social construction that itself requires critical viewing. Although the international WPS agenda and SC resolutions such as 1325 have been criticised by feminist theorists, it has been recognised to affect the norms regarding states' responsibility to protect their citizens. The ideas of the WPS perspective have elucidated the different aspects of violence and how it affects men and women differently (True 2013b, pp. 164-165), why it is motivated to keep in mind in the analysis of women's path to representation.

Lennie's framework is complemented by a critical constructivist framework, which recognises the flexibility of social constructions of, for instance, gender. Because they are the results of interaction in certain contexts, they are per definition, subject to change even though they "may acquire stability over extended periods of time" (Wiener 2009, pp. 179-180). It acknowledges the impact of ideals and stereotypes on international relations as well as on decision-makers in post-conflict settings (ibid., pp. 185-186).

## 3.2 Operationalisation

The normative feminist approach outlined above assumes that women and men have different lived experiences of conflict and that women's pre-existing inferiority in societal structures has excluded them from actively participating in peace processes (Heathcote 2014). With this in mind, I suggest three indicators for analysing the enabling of women's representation in peace negotiations:

1. The nearby history and character of women's organisations in the country before the negotiations.
2. The presence and character of international influence in the pre-negotiation phase.
3. Women's literacy rates and primary school enrolment.

The choice of indicators was guided by Lennie's (1999) framework in combination with a constructivist feminist approach and analyses the changing of gender norms. They all contribute to challenging the socially constructed inequalities that prevent women from being represented in decision-making situations. Hence, the increased valorising of women's experiences and changed behaviour away from stereotypical gender roles may enable women's representation as political actors in peace negotiations.

For the first indicator, I have taken into consideration the prevalence of women in CSOs. In the case of Colombia. Women's advocating is viewed by feminist theorists as important for the process of changing norms of gender stereotypes and inequality, and the reinforcement of the view of women as political actors. Women that have been active during conflicts are also likely to have obtained experience and knowledge which could enable their participation and representation in the following peace process (Paffenholz 2018a, p. 186). For this paper, I am primarily taking non-combatant organising into account, although some valuable experiences from female ex-combatants are also provided.

The second indicator has proven to play a large role in involving civil society in peace processes and could thus be of importance in terms of pressuring local actors to include women (Paffenholz 2018, p. 186). As mentioned above, res. 1325

has been important in global work towards changing the standardised norms of women in conflict and peacebuilding efforts. For the third indicator, I have limited myself to look at women's literacy rates because it provides an insight into women's possibilities to engage in formal politics. I also check statistics of primary school enrolment, to complement the former. The caveats of these statistics are discussed further in the methodology chapter below.

## 4 Scope and methods

In the following chapter, I provide a closer view of some key concepts. Thereafter follows an elaboration on the comparative method and the choice of cases. Lastly, I discuss the choice of material and its shortcomings and defend a holistic sample of data.

### 4.1 Concepts

The term *feminism* comprises many definitions and conceptualisations. For this paper, I take off in an understanding of feminism as defined by Joan W. Scott, further elaborated on by Dubravka Zarkov. It goes beyond the dichotomic understanding of sex (man/woman), expanding it to gender as an analytical category, which challenges ideas about manhood and womanhood, thus elucidating the gendered hierarchies that appear in social power relations and status (Zarkov 2017, p. 4). This definition interrelates with the theoretical framework that June Lennie provides; it draws on critical and post-structural feminisms in its critique towards discourses that replicate certain hierarchical social norms. It also recognises the importance of knowledge because of its implications for social, economic, and political understanding and involvement (Lennie 1999, pp. 101, 107-108). Even though this paper does not produce a discursive analysis, I argue that Lennie's framework is adaptable to the analysis of global politics and the social constructions that affect them; by applying a constructivist feminist approach to the topic of women's inclusion, it is possible to analyse changes that have a normative impact on the view of women's representation in politics and peace processes.



## 4.2 Comparative design

I apply a comparative methodology to three cases: Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia. There are several reasons for comparing countries. For instance, a classification of empirical data serves to depict the world of politics as less complex. Comparing countries also allows researchers to make predictions of similar cases that were not included in the original comparison. Purely descriptive comparative studies serve as data for future research on the same cases (Landman 2008, pp. 4-5). The comparative design used in this paper would be closest linked to the Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD), which is further motivated below.

Even though the comparison of few cases is associated with a relatively low level of generalisability as opposed to comparisons involving many cases (Landman 2008, p. 69), the geographic spread of the chosen cases can be argued to have a positive effect on the validity of the research, improving the analysis' chances to apply to other cases in the future. This argument is underpinned by the fact that the analysis considers macro-level proceedings, assuming that societal structures are affecting the politics of international organisations as well as the organising and decisions on national and local levels.

In the analysis, the chosen indicators are applied to each case, whereupon the comparison is made with the use of the critical feminist framework outlined above. Through content analysis and in-depth discussion, my intention with this paper is to add to the understanding of structural barriers to women's representation in peace negotiations.

## 4.3 The Cases

The case of Colombia serves as a successful example of female inclusion in peace negotiations. Colombia has been considered an example of success in this sense since women were represented on the side of the government and the side of the FARC-EP. As previous research has stated, there were numerous reasons for this (e.g. the advocacy of women's organisations in the country, earlier engagement of

women in the formulation of Colombia's new constitution in 1991, etc.) (Marín Carvajal and Álvarez 2018, pp. 4-5). The outcome of the Liberian peace negotiations was largely affected by the work and activism of women. However, in the actual negotiations, women were only present as observers (Castillo Diaz and Tordjman 2012, p. 5), except for two women signatories, a situation which allows for further discussions about the Liberian case and its difference from Colombia. In the case of Nepal, no women were included in the negotiations. The peace agreement that followed did not focus on gender equality specifically, but on social equality as one of the goals of the peace process (ibid.).

In line with the MSSD, the cases share some common features that make them eligible for comparison. All three countries experienced a civil war between the government and rebel groups, and they have all been characterised by severe social and economic inequality. Moreover, they all made several failed attempts to make peace before they managed to sign and maintain an agreement. These agreements were all signed after the establishment of res. 1325, which calls upon the inclusion of women at every decision-making level in the peacebuilding procedure.

## 4.4 Material

For the analysis, I have used a broad range of materials. The data consists of secondary data, primarily previous research on feminist approaches and gender issues regarding the three cases. Academically written articles and books providing analyses of similar topics are combined with reports produced by UN Women and UNESCO. These sources were complemented with some valuable statistics on women's education gathered by the World Bank. I argue that this mix of sources can provide a holistic view of the path towards women's representation in the three cases.

One apparent caveat that I, as many other researchers in the field of Peace and Conflict studies, face, is the lack and/or unreliability of data in conflict-affected countries. This is especially prominent in the education and literacy statistics used in this study since I am exploring the situation before the peace agreements were signed in each country and the civil conflicts were still largely affecting the

societies. This is, to say the least, problematic. However, the supplementary material, which comprises case studies and reports from UN agencies, provide additional support to my assumptions that literacy and school enrolment rates are not likely to have been better during the time of the conflicts. The scope of the diverse material is indicative of certain trends over time, which is why I have decided to also include statistics of lesser reliability.

In terms of time delimitations, the primary focus is set to approximately ten years before the respective peace agreements were signed. Nevertheless, while the analysis concerns these time frames, I have chosen to mention some historical events that go outside the time frame but, through the “glasses” of my framework, have been important to the long-term challenging of institutionalised gender norms. This is relevant since the change of norms and social constructions is generally a slow process, and key events may not show their extensive effect on political processes until many years later.

## 5 Analysis

Below, I analyse the conditions before the peace negotiations in the three cases, guided by the indicators listed above. Starting with women's organisations and women's presence in CSOs, I continue with the involvement of international actors and finish up with the literacy rates among adult women. I explore the prevalence of each category on the cases and then turn to the application of the feminist framework for comparison.

### 5.1 Women's organising before the negotiations

#### 5.1.1 Liberia

Some of the women's grassroots organisations active in the 1990s and early 2000s were significant in their regional characteristic; one of the most influential ones before the Liberian peace process was Marwopnet, which connected women in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, who all suffered from conflicts at the time (Cockburn 2007, pp. 37-38). Marwopnet was founded on the initiative of the Geneva-based organisation Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) (El-Bushra 2007, p. 137). FAS worked in 1999 to facilitate a meeting with female representatives from the three countries, at which women of different backgrounds gathered to discuss their future roles as political actors in peacebuilding efforts. From this, Marwopnet was eventually founded (Cockburn 2007, p. 37). Another organisation was the Liberian Women's Initiative, which served as an informal mediator between the conflicting parties in the 1990s (Martin de Almagro 2018, p. 409).

In the face of the attacks launched by both LURD and MODEL during the Second Liberian Civil War, women from all levels of society mobilised around the

goal of achieving peace. They wanted to change the global narrative of the conflict, turning away from the perspective of the soldiers and to the experiences of the women. They were also determined to put pressure on the government and President Taylor to agree on a ceasefire and enter peace talks (Gbowee 2019, pp. 14-15). Collaborating with Marwopnet were the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), who exercised extensive demonstrations but unlike Marwopnet, they were only active in Liberia. Their influential actions earned them an invitation as observers to the peace negotiations in 2003, which they turned down (Paffenholz et al 2016, pp. 36, 44, 49) with the argument that their advocacy for peace could be done better from outside the negotiation room (O'Reilly et al 2015, pp. 15-16).

While Marwopnet participated as observers to the negotiations, cooperating with CSOs outside the formal settings to create public pressure on the decision-makers (Paffenholz 2014, p. 9; Paffenholz 2018b, p. 7; Paffenholz et al 2016, p. 31, 44), WIPNET showed their support of the peace negotiations through the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace campaign, which gathered women to perform mass demonstrations across the country. Led by Leymah Gbowee, later a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, the women's group travelled to Accra, Ghana, where they blocked the doors of the negotiation building, forcing the negotiators to stay in the room until an agreement was signed (Barnes 2006, pp. 44-45; Chandler 2016, pp. 27-28; Paffenholz 2018b, p. 9; Paffenholz et al 2016, pp. 25, 44).

### 5.1.2 Nepal

The history of Nepal's feminist movement dates back, according to former Nepali parliamentarian and member of one of the country's communist parties, UPL, Binda Pandey, to 1917 with the Youmaya rebellion action, and has since experienced its ups and downs (Pandey 2016, p. 216). The 1990 abolishment of the Hindu based panchayat system and a new constitutional reform gave air to CSOs, paving the way for the continued work of the feminist movement (Tamang 2009, pp. 69-70). In a 2006 interview with the then president of the women's organisation Jagaran, Sharmila Karki, she told the interviewer of her work towards engaging women in Nepali society. She had been networking with other CSOs, such as Women in Black and Women's Peace Network, and some of Jagaran's main goals were to provide

girls with education and scholarships. Karki, along with many other women, participated in the three months of peaceful mass demonstrations for democracy (Manzano 2006, pp. 4-5) that preceded the CPA (Paffenholz 2014, pp. 20-21).

Women in Nepal, particularly those of lower castes and discriminated ethnic groups, have been thoroughly marginalised and disadvantaged in terms of education, economy and political activity (Paffenholz 2009, pp. 173-174). One anthropological study of a women's group in central Nepal shows how their strategy changed over time. At Tij, an annual women's festival, there was space for women to unite around symbolic songs of their personal lives and subordinate status in society (Holland et al 2008, pp. 112-114). In the 1990s, however, political Tij songs became pre-dominant for the first time, aiming criticism at the old panchayat system as well as the Nepali Congress Party, the winners of the 1991 national election (ibid. p. 115). Even though the new democratic system was preferred over the panchayat system, the constitution-writing process received criticism for being elitist (Tamang 2009, p. 66). The new paradigm of songs created a split in the feminist movement, in which educated women were valorised over uneducated and illiterate women, a change that hit the identity of the uneducated women particularly hard as a result of the deeply rooted history of state repression (Holland et al 2008).

Furthermore, women in the CPN-M have admitted to struggling in their efforts to make their voices heard. In a survey about the People's War conducted by the women's department of CPN-M in 2002-03, organisational issues such as gaining acceptance as leaders, assumptions of women as "weak", and doubts about women's capability in military operations, were reported (Parvati 2005, p. 5234). Although it was concluded from the survey that the People's War had helped liberate CPN-M women from the private sphere, there were obvious structural barriers to substantive participation (ibid. p. 5236). Previous research has highlighted the complexity of Nepal's multiple hierarchies and its effects on women's struggle to unite (Tamang 2009, pp. 62-63). Between 1992 and 2002, the Nepali government initiated several gender mainstreaming projects, such as the establishment of a Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, and the Women's Commission. However, women in positions in mainstream political parties as well as in the CPN-M have been blamed for acting upon the interests of their parties rather than upon those of women (ibid. 66-68).

### 5.1.3 Colombia

Through the decades, women in Colombia have organised through a variety of constellations. This paper will not in detail go through the period of the entire conflict. I will nevertheless include some brief information about important milestones before the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 1991, the new Constitutional Reform was signed by the Colombian government and the rebel group Popular Liberation Army (EPL), ameliorating the election of political parties other than the Conservatives and the Liberals who had been sharing the power since La Violencia in 1958. The new constitution allowed for previously marginalised groups to enter national politics (Nasi 2018, p. 41). This was also the first time that women's issues had been explicitly addressed in the country's constitution (Bell 2015, p. 22), *inter alia* recognising women as victims of gendered violence (Bouvier 2016). Article 40 of the 1991 Constitution also calls for the inclusion of women in "decision-making ranks of the public administration" (Colombian Constitution of 1991, art. 40). In the 1990s both women and men were active in civil society groups. One of the most significant ones, the National Network of Initiatives for Peace and Against War (REDEPAZ), worked to establish local peace communities (Barnes 2006, p. 67). It was founded in 1993 and eventually played an important role in the 2012-2016 peace negotiations (Bouvier 2016, p. 17; Cockburn 2007, p. 17-18; Fernandez et al 2004, p. 20).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women in Colombia have continued to advocate for their rights through civil society groups, the most well-known women's organisation being La Ruta Pacífica (Women's Peaceful Road for the Political Negotiation of Conflicts). The group gathered a diversity of more than 300 women's groups across the country, including indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, urban, rural, young, and old women (Cockburn 2007, pp. 18-19). La Ruta Pacífica has made explicit references to feminism as an analytical tool, more so than many other Colombian organisations. In the late '90s and early 2000s, they have been successful in mass mobilisation projects in which they have expressed their solidarity towards female victims of the conflict (*ibid.* pp. 20-22). In 2013, the Collective Thought and Action on Women, Peace and Security, consisting of women's grassroots organisations from across the country, launched the Pacto Ético por un País en Paz (Ethical Pact for a Country in Peace). In this document, women committed to being actively

involved in the society's transformation to peace and put forward fifteen suggestions that, *inter alia*, called for respect towards political differences, a security policy that centred around human beings, and the implementation of active and inclusive dialogues regarding the transition to a peaceful society (CTAWPS 2013).

In the time leading up to the signing of the Final Agreement, several commissions and sub-commissions were created, in which women hold important positions. For instance, in the Gender Sub-commission, established in 2014, women constitute the vast majority of the members. In the Havana peace talks in 2016, their delegates played an important role in bringing the perspectives and proposals of women's organisations to the negotiation table (Bouvier 2016, p. 21-22).

#### 5.1.4 Empirical analysis

The long-lasting conflict in Colombia produced several attempts of peace processes and, thus, many chances for women to organise and advocate for their rights. The country failed to account for the perspective of women in the conflict until the most recent peace process, in which women held significant roles. The 1991 Constitution should be considered an important ground for securing of women's representation in the 2012-2016 peace negotiations. It had been developed as a result of women's organising and served as one of the first signs of institutional change on gender issues. Through mass mobilisation actions taken by La Ruta Pacifica, women across the country were encouraged to engage in their own and their country's future, changing the normative view of women in conflicts from passive victims into politically active individuals united for peace.

The women's organisations in Liberia and Colombia further show the relevance of accounting for local knowledge to achieve a change in the structural violence that prevents women from participating in peacebuilding processes. Women in Nepal were able to discuss among themselves their experiences of their lives as women, e.g. in the early 1990s Tiji festivals, but the messages were not easily transitioned to other settings. One possible explanation to this would be the fight for democracy after thirty years of authoritarian rule; democratic institutions in Nepal were still young at the time of the People's War, perhaps not yet given



enough time for women’s rights movements to manifest their challenges to gender norms in politics.

Regarding the role of women in peace negotiations, the Liberian women were only present as observers, unlike the Colombian peace talks, where women were present and active on both sides of the table. From a constructivist feminist standpoint, this is presumably a result of a more ideologically institutionalised gender perspective in the negotiation teams. This was particularly evident in the case of the FARC-EP, where the leftist ideological beliefs led to more gender-equal conditions within the rebel group. On this note, the case of Nepal ought to have been closer to Colombia with the agenda of structural reform for equality that the CPN-M advocated for. However, the two differ in the sense that women did not make up as big of a part of the rebel group as in the FARC-EP, and the women of the CPN-M admittedly reported struggles to be accounted for.

The point on which the three cases differ most significantly ought to be the ability to unite women *as* women. In Colombia, La Ruta Pacifica gathered women’s organisations across sectors and ethnic groups. Members of FAS, Marwopnet and WIPNET were also successful in uniting a diversity of women for their mass demonstrations. Both cases have proven to be pervasive in their advocacy for women’s participation. Nepal, on the other hand, faced difficulties uniting women of different backgrounds, e.g. regarding class, ethnicity, educational level, etc. This indicates that the women perhaps did not reach the *critical mass* that is often assumed to be needed for the gendered power dynamics to change significantly. The cases of Liberia and Colombia indicate that the kind of community building in which diversity was supported and where larger amounts of women were united, ameliorates the inclusion of women in the negotiation room.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Liberia</b>	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>Colombia</b>
<b>Women’s organisations</b>	Mostly united, primarily elitist.	Limited, fragmented.	United across sectors and territory.

*Table 1.* The character of women’s organisations summarised for all countries.

## 5.2 International influence on the negotiations

This section overviews the international involvement in the pre-phase of the peace talks in each case. All three countries have had UN missions adopted in the post-agreement phase. However, for this paper, I am interested in pre-negotiation involvement of other states, NGOs, and the UN, with a special focus on influences from res. 1325 and the WPS agenda.

### 5.2.1 Liberia

As mentioned in the section on women's organisations, Marwopnet, the regional cooperation between Sierra Leonean, Liberian, and Guinean women, played an important role in the grassroots movement in the Liberian peace process, although they struggled to access funding (Barnes 2006, p. 63). The Women's Mass Action for Peace was organised by the West African organisation WIPNET, which gathered support from Liberian diaspora and Ghanaian WIPNET members (ibid. 44-45). Cynthia Cockburn has concluded that even though the res. 1325 was not passed until 2000, the initiatives of Marwopnet showed proof that the thinking that led up to the resolution was "already in the air" in 1999 (Cockburn 2007, p. 38). Once res. 1325 was adopted by the UNSC, it provided FAS, Marwopnet, and other Liberian CSOs with leverage to demand a voice in the upcoming peace process even though that was not its exact intention (Barnes 2006, p. 63). Furthermore, the African Union helped promote the inclusion of women in the Liberian peace process (Ellerby 2013, p. 455).

Regarding UN support, UN Women has been working in Liberia since 2004, after the signing of the peace agreement, through which they promote women's inclusion in the peacebuilding process (UN Women Africa n/d). UNMIL was deployed in 2003 after the signing of the Accra agreement. The UNMIL, however, was not the UN's first operation in Liberia; in 1993 during the First Liberian Civil War, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). In 1997, the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia (UNOL) was established with the intention of inter alia mobilising international support for the peace

process. UNOL met severe barriers to peace-building due to unresolved disagreements between the Charles Taylor government and the opposition parties (UNMIL 2020).

### 5.2.2 Nepal

The Nepali pre-negotiation phase included limited international involvement. After the 1990 movement for democracy, European donors provided financial support to Nepali CSOs to promote democratic forces through a bottom-up approach. As a result, women's organisations received foreign aid funding, which strengthened development programs and increased access to health, education and literacy, voter's education, etc. (Tamang 2009, pp. 91-92). However, on the whole, the Nepali peace process has been considered to be primarily locally owned, with the international community and the UN only a light footprint approach, even as the UNMIN was deployed after the signing of the CPA (Westendorf 2018, pp. 246-247). In the 2002-03 peace talks, the UN and individual governments offered to mediate, offers that were turned down by both sides of the conflict (Paffenholz 2009, p. 177). This seems to have been, in part, due to the involvement of the Indian government, who was one of the main financial supporters of the Nepali government during the conflict. At the time, there was a concern that UN involvement in Nepal would spread to include close-by violent regions controlled by India (Suhrke 2011, pp. 40, 52).

Nepali CSOs were partly supported by international organisations in the early 2000s. In 2003, consultations with women's organisations in Nepal were held as a part of the International Alert's (IA) Gender and Peacebuilding Program. The talks were intended to "bridge the gap between global policy and the practical realities faced by women in ... post-conflict contexts" (PeaceWomen 2003). International NGO workers in Kathmandu also supported and helped organise the protests of the People's Movement in 2006 (Manzano 2006, p. 4).

As for individual governments, the US and the UK supported the Nepali government with arms after the 9/11 attacks and the launch of the global war on terror (Suhrke 2011, p. 39) and the Nepali state's declaration of the CPN-M as a terrorist movement (Paffenholz 2009, p. 176). Strategically, India and China were

the countries with the most interest in the People's War and Nepali state (Suhrke 2011, p. 39). In a 2006 letter from the UN Secretary-General to the President of the UNSC regarding the successful signing of the CPA and the deployment of the UNMIN, there are no references to gender, women, WPS, nor res. 1325 (UN Secretary-General [UNSG] 2006).

### 5.2.3 Colombia

One of the premises for the Colombian peace talks between 2012 and 2016 was the local ownership of the process. It was decided early on that the peace process would be made for Colombians, by Colombians. However, they did to some extent receive some international, primarily from Cuba and Norway (Cramer and Wood 2017, p. 734), but Venezuela and Chile also acted as guarantors throughout the peace talks (Nasi 2018, p. 37). In 2014, Norwegian mediator Rita Sandberg was appointed to the peace talks (Aggestam and Svensson 2018, 160). Since 2012, all UN mediation efforts have included women in their teams. In terms of women mediators, the Nordic countries stand out as particularly inclusive compared to other regions, most likely as a result of gender-equal societies and a strong commitment to international peace work (ibid, pp. 151, 156, 164).

Moreover, Peace Brigade International (PBI), whose primary aim is to open up for politics and justice to take place, was asked to help in Colombia in the early 2000s. They maintained relations with the Colombian army as well as with diplomatic agents and intergovernmental organisations. Through their global network of working groups and NGOs, PBI was able to put pressure on the Colombian government and warn of international responses in the case of violent escalation in the country (Barnes 2006, p. 52).

As for women's NGOs, the Alliance Initiative of Colombian Women for Peace (IMP) were given leverage from the res. 1325 in their agenda to be a part of the formal peace process. As opposed to La Ruta Pacifica, the grassroots organisation, IMP aimed to communicate with the decisionmakers on a national level. They received support from Swedish women and a Swedish funding organisation (Cockburn 2007, p. 153). As stated by the UN Secretary-General in 2016, the Colombian peace process has been the only case to "[address] gender concerns ...

in a systematic manner that exemplifies the aims of Security Council [Resolution] 1325 (2000)” (UNSG cited by Davies and True 2018, p. 12). Cooperation between Colombian CSOs, national actors and the UN WPS agenda has been reported to be ground-breaking despite being limited (Naraghi Anderlini 2018, p. 50), and Colombian women were able to draw on international WPS policy documents to make their voices heard (Lemay Langlois 2018, p. 167).

#### 5.2.4 Empirical analysis

The peace processes of Colombia and Nepal showed great desires to remain overwhelmingly local, which they did with different results. One of the main external observers of the Colombian peace talks was Norway, a Nordic country which has previously proven to be supportive of international peace efforts as well as an advocator for female inclusion in peacebuilding. The appointment of woman mediator Rita Sandberg in 2014 is likely to have set the stage for further inclusion of women at the negotiation table. On the other hand, Nepal denied mediation proposals from the UN, which hindered the possible pressure from actors of global WPS policy. Moreover, the brief support from the US and UK of military arms for the Nepali government, indicates a narrow understanding of security, in which state and military security were the main focus. This differentiates Nepal from large parts of the support for Colombia and Liberia, who received international support focused mostly on reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The Liberian conflict received recurrent peace-promoting efforts from the UN as well as regional support from the AU and women’s regional organisations. However, judging from the perspective of the UN and the difficulties of UNOL to cooperate with the state, the regional support from WIPNET and the AU were presumably more efficient in changing social constructions regarding women as political actors through their practical achievements. The effects were akin to the early 1990s European donations for Nepali CSOs that contributed to women’s education and knowledge of their rights, thus strengthening the role of the woman as independent from her family and the private sphere.

The consultations between the IA and Nepali women’s organisations serve as one of the few international efforts to promote the WPS agenda in Nepal. While

reaching out to women’s organisations were proven successful in the two other cases, Nepal did not see much cooperation at all between the global WPS agents and the conflicting parties, thus missing out on the top-down approach to WPS implementation. This, however, is similar to the Liberian case, with the apparent difference of the Liberian women’s organisations embracing and using res. 1325 as leverage to advocate for their rights. Similarly, the Colombian case proved the efficiency of collaboration between international WPS agents and women’s NGOs. The letter from UN Secretary-General about the CPA indicates the absence of pressure to adopt a gender perspective to the early post-agreement phase in Nepal., an occurrence that could be related to the time of the agreement.

<b>Country</b>	Liberia	Nepal	Colombia
<b>International influence</b>	Primarily regional influence through the women’s organisations.	UN and EU involvement rejected. State-based understanding of security from individual states.	Cuba and Norway as observing and mediating parts. Otherwise, a national peace process.

*Table 2.* The character of international influence summarised for all cases.

## 5.3 Women’s education and literacy

### 5.3.1 Liberia

In a sense, women in Liberia have a history of educational and societal empowerment. A relatively large number of women holding ministerial positions and being employed inter alia as teachers in secondary school and universities from the 1950s through the early 1980s (Fuest 2008, p. 208). The women in pre-war Liberia, who managed to reach institutionally higher positions were mostly of American-Liberian descent and privileged from the colonial legacy of the American Colonization Society (Garnett and Øygaard 2019, pp. 23-24). Eventually, however,

macro-economic changes affected the labour markets, causing labour-migration for men and a feminising of the agricultural sector. The relative lack of access to education and paid labour mostly being held by men perpetuated the traditional role of women as dependent on male breadwinners (Fuest 2008, p. 208-209).

In both pre-war and mid-war settings, Liberia suffered from inequalities, with the elite, educated women being the most visible ones in peace movements (Moran and Pitcher 2004, p. 508). However, research has found that illiterate women in rural areas and smaller villages were engaged in the promoting of peace through local groups (ibid., p. 504). Focus group discussions and interviews in post-war Liberia have revealed that education was commonly held up as an eminent measure to empower women and increase their participation possibilities (Justino et al 2018, p. 920). The statistical data on women's literacy rate is inadequate; in 1991, it was at 17% for females aged 15 and above. The 2007 measurements show an increase to 27% (The World Bank Group 2019a). There is some discrepancy separating these results from those UNESCO; according to a 2013 report, the average literacy rate for adult females between 2005 and 2010 was at 53%. The corresponding rate for males was 63% (UNESCO 2013). Literacy data from the time of the Second Civil War is missing. Nevertheless, one can assume that the levels have been low also during wartime. Primary school enrolment rates for females during the war seem to have gone down. According to the World Bank Group (2019b), the rates went from 42% in 1999 to 36% in 2006. The level in 1984 was at just over 19%, indicating that the majority of women who during the war had reached early adulthood, were uneducated and illiterate.

### 5.3.2 Nepal

The literacy rate and educational level of girls and women in the late 1990s to early 2000s were low. In a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural report from 2000, the barriers to women's and girls' education are discussed. The report finds that women's literacy rate at the time was only at about 30%, and 60% for men (UNESCO 2000, p. 1). The numbers roughly match the data of the World Bank, which shows a literacy rate for females ages 15 and above at 34% in 2001 (The World Bank Group 2019a). The UNESCO report further

highlights that the literacy rate in urban areas was nearly double of that in rural areas. In poorer families, daughters are reported to have been a lower priority than sons when deciding which child would be educated; daughters, when they get married, are considered an asset of her husband's family. Child marriage at the time was not uncommon, and the married girls were often taken out of school (UNESCO 2000, p. 2). School enrolment at the primary level for girls was estimated at 64% in 2001 (The World Bank Group 2019b).

Research conducted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has found that women faced educational barriers both during and after the signing of the CPA. For instance, previously mentioned Sharmila Karki stated that many Nepali women were not educated enough to know about their rights, and thus not aware of what do demand or how to do it (Manzano 2006, pp. 5-6). Focus group discussions comprising older women have shown disbelief in women's abilities to participate in peacebuilding activities and decision-making due to lack of knowledge. The authors of this study conclude that a lack of education appeared to justify a reinforcement of the gender roles and barriers to women's engagement in the peace process (Justino et al 2018, p. 920).

In the Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) program that followed the CPA, female ex-combatants reported to having had to choose cash payments instead of receiving employment in the Nepali Army for their reintegration. This was partly because of their roles as mothers and caregivers, partly because many of them did not meet the requirements of minimum education to have that option (K.C. 2019, p. 460). Former female CPN-M combatants also admitted to the experience that pre-war educational issues, which they joined the movement to fight against, resurfaced in the aftermath of the People's War (K.C. and van der Haar 2018, p. 15).

### 5.3.3 Colombia

Colombia has experienced a large increase in literacy in and school enrolment rates in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The primary level enrolment for girls has been above 90% since at least 1999 (The World Bank Group 2019b). These statistics correlate with the literacy rates for females ages 15 and above, which have been above the 90% level since 1993 (The World Bank Group 2019a). However, the data need to be



considered with some awareness of the inequalities in the country, and the measurement difficulties in a conflict-affected country with great infrastructural insufficiencies.

According to research by UN Women, women and girls comprised 54% of Colombia's nearly 6 million internally displaced people (IDP), a majority of whom lack access to basic services such as education. Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombians are overrepresented in the IDP population (Bouvier 2016, p. 8). Furthermore, people in rural parts of the country were reported to lack access to education and, thus, facing barriers to political participation. The same goes for LGBT people, and especially trans women, who are marginalised in Colombian politics (ibid., p. 13). In a 2016 report, the Historical Memory Group recommended the Colombian state to invest in education to promote recognition of the many different impacts that the conflict has had on people (GMH 2016, p. 407).

#### 5.3.4 Empirical Analysis

The main differences shown in the World Bank statistics presented in the sections above are the ones between Colombia on one hand, and Liberia and Nepal on the other. Colombia, for a relatively long time, has seen comparably high levels of primary school enrolment and literacy rates. Even though the data must be looked at with some carefulness, rates are so significantly higher in Colombia, that one can assume that more women were literate there than in the other two countries. Thus, it would be reasonable to argue that more women had the opportunity to engage in politics at the national, regional, and local levels. A notable difference between Liberia and Nepal is the lesser gender disparities in Liberia compared to those in Nepal, where the literacy rates between adult men and women differ greatly. This could be seen as an indicator of differences in women's status between the two cases; in Liberia, as mentioned above, the women have traditionally had relative power in society, offering them some relative advantage in the path towards empowerment. This is despite not being equal to men in terms of the UN's liberal definition of gender equality.

The women of Nepal suffered not only from low rates of literacy but also of general imaginaries of uneducated women to not be able to contribute to the peace

process. This perpetuation of traditional gender roles is another difference from the lived experiences of many Liberian women, who organised locally for the promotion of peace, even in rural and illiterate areas. As was concluded earlier in this paper, the women of the Liberia elite were the ones who were the most visible to the public, for instance through Marwopnet and WIPNET. However, the mobilisation of women even in rural areas can be assumed to have strengthened the general image of women as active peace advocates, providing leverage to the transition of gender norms in peacebuilding processes.

<b>Country</b>	Liberia	Nepal	Colombia
<b>Female literacy and primary level enrolment</b>	Low, especially in rural areas.	Low, especially in rural areas.	High average. Lower in rural areas and among IDP population.

*Table 3. Levels of female education summarised for all cases.*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Liberia</b>	<b>Nepal</b>	<b>Colombia</b>
<b>Women's organisations</b>	Mostly united.	Active but fragmented.	United across sectors and territory.
<b>International influence</b>	Primarily regional influence through the women's organisations.	UN and EU involvement rejected. State-based understanding of security in involvement by individual states.	Cuba and Norway as observing and mediating parts. Otherwise, a national peace process.
<b>Female literacy and primary level enrolment</b>	Low, especially in rural areas	Low, especially in rural areas.	High average. Lower in rural areas and among IDP population.

*Table 4. Summarising the results of all indicators and countries.*

## 6 Discussion and concluding remarks

This paper has explored the prerequisites necessary to secure female representation in peace negotiations. To answer the research question, I compared three cases that all experienced intrastate conflicts between the government and rebel groups. Liberia, Nepal, and Colombia all signed peace agreements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, i.e. after the establishment of res. 1325, which calls for female inclusion in all phases of peacebuilding. I found, inter alia, that women's organisations have been present in all cases, but have been more or less successful in mobilising. Organisations such as La Ruta Pacifica in Colombia, and Marwopnet in Liberia, organised peaceful mass demonstrations for peace, which gathered women from different backgrounds and sectors. The women in Nepal, on the other hand, did participate in mass demonstrations but were not able to mobilise as broadly across different sectors. According to the findings, they may not have reached what is often referred to as the critical mass, the point at which the gendered power dynamics truly start to become restructured. When connecting these findings to the critical, feminist framework that has guided this paper, I conclude that the socially constructed gender norms that determine the levels of female representation in peace negotiations were only changed once a significant share of women mobilised to jointly oppose these norms.

Considering that the FARC-EP and the CPN-M both advocated for social and economic re-structuralising of their respective societies, guided by leftist ideologies (Marxism and Maoism), one might assume that the former female combatants of the rebel groups would face similar opportunities in the aftermath of the conflict. However, the findings suggest differently. The FARC-EP included women at their side of the negotiation table while the CPN-M did not. This might have been due to a larger estimated share of women in the FARC-EP and, thus, broader chances that gender equality had been further institutionalised in the everyday lives through the ideology. Women of the CPN-M, on the other hand, faced significant barriers, not only during the negotiations but in the DDR process as well, a probable indicator

that the gender equality that the Nepali rebel group had advocated for, had not yet been institutionalised in the everyday life. This apparent difference may also have been a result of the different lengths of the conflicts as well as women's lack of education and literacy. With the FARC-EP being active for more than years before the Final Agreement was signed, there was a long time to acknowledge the gendered aspects of the conflict. In contrast, the People's War in Nepal lasted for ten years, thus not allowing as much time for gendered stereotypes to become fully recognised in among the rebels, not in society as a whole.

The time aspect becomes somewhat apparent in the case of international influence as well. The fact that women until 2012 were not yet included in all UN mission teams provides further evidence of the drawn-out process that the changing of social norms and constructions is. This could contribute to the understanding of the differences between Colombia and the other two cases. Previous attempts to make peace between the FARC-EP and the government did not to the same extent include women and did not explicitly mention women in the agreements, despite being set after 2000 and res. 1325. However, on this note, Liberia serves as a counterexample to Nepal; the women of Liberia actively used the ideas from res. 1325 to advocate for their rights to participation in peacebuilding, as did the women's organisations of Colombia. These findings indicate that res. 1325 per se does not challenge the roots of gender equality. However, when used for leverage by already mobilised women's groups, it contributes to transforming the gendered norms of post-conflict representation and participation. Moreover, the aims of international actors, such as the UN and other governments, produce different sets of norms regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Literacy among women matters to the level of post-conflict participation at which they have the opportunity to engage. Higher rates of literacy have correlated with the extent to which women have been included in peace negotiations at the national level. However, once again Liberia serves as an exception since many illiterate women were involved in local peace-promoting initiatives, which in turn can be argued to have contributed to the changing view of women in post-conflict settings. On this note, Nepal differed from Liberia, with uneducated commonly being viewed as incapable of participating in the peace process. The Nepali uneducated and illiterate women's lived experiences were not considered as valuable to the peacebuilding process as those of the educated ones. This finding

contradicts the recognition of local/contextual knowledge that the feminist framework advocates for.

To conclude, this paper confirms some of the work done by previous researchers in that its findings suggest that the broad mobilisation and efforts of women's organisations have been essential in securing female representation in post-civil war peace negotiations. It also contributes to the understanding of international influence from UNSC resolutions in combination with local grassroots initiatives. The comparison of three countries located in geographically distant settings from each other somewhat strengthens the generalisability of the study. However, future research using similar indicators in other cases could strengthen or nuance the theoretical approach. Moreover, this paper did not explicitly use the representation of women in rebel groups as an indicator for the analysis. This is also something for future researchers to explore, to deepen the understanding of female ex-combatants' impact on women's inclusion in peace processes.

# 7 References

## 7.1 Literature

- Aggestam, Karin – Ann Towns, 2019. “The Gender Turn in Diplomacy: A New Research Agenda”, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 9-28.
- Aggestam, Karin – Isak Svensson, 2018. “Where are the Women in Peace Mediation?” in Aggestam, Karin – Ann E. Towns (eds.), *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 169-191. eBook.
- Aggestam, Karin, 2018. ”WPS, Peace Negotiations, and Peace Agreements” in Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. eBook.
- Bjarnegård, Elin – Erik Melander, 2013. “Revisiting Representation: Communism, Women in Politics, and the Decline of Armed Conflict in East Asia”, *International Interactions*. No. 39 (2013), pp. 558-574).
- Caprioli, M., 2005. ”Primed for Violence: The Role of Gender Inequality in Predicting Internal Conflict”, *International Studies Quarterly*. No. 49 (2005), pp. 161-178.
- Carvajal, Isabela Marín – Eduardo Álvarez-Vanegas, 2018. “Securing Participation and Protection in Peace Agreements: The Case of Colombia” in Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. eBook.
- Chandler, Diane J., 2016. “Women and Reconciliation: A Pathway to Peace”, *Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict*. Pp. 21-36.
- Cockburn, Cynthia, 2007. *From Where We Stand: War, Women’s Activism & Feminist Analysis*. London: Zed Books. eBook.

- Cramer Christopher – Elizabeth Jean Wood, 2017. “Introduction: Land rights, restitution, politics, and war in Colombia”, *Journal of Agrarian Change*. No. 7 (2017), pp. 733-738.
- Dahal, Swechchha, 2015. “Challenging the Boundaries: The Narratives of the Female Ex-Combatants in Nepal” in Shekhawat, Seema (ed.), *Female Combatants in Conflict and Peace*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 185-199. eBook.
- Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True, 2018. “Women, Peace, and Security: A Transformative Agenda?” in Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 149-168. Doi: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58682-3\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-58682-3_8).
- El-Bushra, Judy, 2007. “Feminism, Gender, and Women’s Peace Activism”, *Development and Change*. Vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 131-147.
- Fernández, Carlos – Mauricio García-Durán – Fernando Sarmiento, 2004. “Peace Mobilization in Colombia 1978-2002” in García-Durán, Mauricio (ed.), *Alternatives to War: Colombia’s Peace Process*, no. 14. Accord: International Review of Peace Initiatives. London: Conciliation Resources, pp. 18-23.
- Forsberg, Erika – Louise Olsson, 2016. “Gender Inequality and Internal Conflict”, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. USA, Oxford University Press. Available online: [politics.oxfordre.com](http://politics.oxfordre.com).
- Fuest, Veronika, 2008. “‘This is the time to get in front’: Changing roles and opportunities for women in Liberia”, *African Affairs*. Vol. 107, no. 427, pp. 201-224.
- Garnett, Tanya A. – Kari Øygaard, 2019. “Women’s Education and Professionalism in Post-Conflict Liberia”, *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*. Vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 21-35.
- Gbowee, Leymah, 2019. “When Women Stand Together as One: The Power of Women’s Grassroots Peace Movements”, *Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 72, no. 2, pp. 13-18.
- GMH, 2016. *BASTA YA! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity*. Bogotá: CNMH.
- Gutiérrez Sanín, F. – Franco F. Carranza, 2017. “Organizing women for combat: The experience of the FARC in the Colombian war”, *Journal of Agrarian Change*. No. 17 (2017), pp. 770-778.

- Heathcote, Gina, 2014. "Participation, Gender and Security" in Heathcote, Gina – Dianna Otto, 2014 (eds.), *Rethinking peacekeeping, gender equality and collective security*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 48-69. eBook.
- Holland, Dorothy – Gretchen Fox – Vinci Daro, 2008. "Social Movements and Collective Identity: A Decentered Dialogic View", *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 81, no. 1, pp. 95-126.
- Justino, Patricia – Rebecca Mitchell – Catherine Müller, 2018. "Women and Peace Building: Local Perspectives on Opportunities and Barriers", *Development and Change*. Vol. 49, no. 4, pp. 911-929.
- K.C., Luna – Gemma van der Haar, 2018. "Living Maoist gender ideology: experiences of women ex-combatants in Nepal", *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Vol. 21, no. 3, 20pp.
- K.C., Luna, 2019. "Everyday realities of reintegration: experiences of Maoist 'verified' women ex-combatants in the aftermath of war in Nepal", *Conflict, Security & Development*. Vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 453-474.
- Lemay Langlois, Léa. "Gender Perspective in UN Framework for Peace Processes and Transitional Justice: The Need for a Clearer and More Inclusive Notion of Gender", *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. No. 12 (2018), pp. 146-167.
- Lennie, June, 1999. "Deconstructing Gendered Power Relations in Participatory Planning: Towards an Empowering Feminist Framework of Participation and Action", *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 97-112.
- Lohani-Chase, Rama S., 2014. "Protesting Women in the People's War Movement in Nepal", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 29-36.
- Manzano, Angie, 2006. "Nepal: Women and the Fight for Democracy", *Off Our Backs*. Vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 4-6, 70.
- Martin De Almagro, Maria, 2018. "Producing Participants: Gender, Race, Class, and Women, Peace and Security", *Global Society*. Vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 395-414.
- Moran, Mary H. – M. Anne Pitcher, 2004. "The 'basket case' and the 'poster child': explaining the end of civil conflicts in Liberia and Mozambique", *Third World Quarterly*. Vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 501-519.
- Naraghi Anderlini, Sanam, 2018. "Civil Society's Leadership in Adopting Resolution 1325" in Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford*



- Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 149-168. Doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.65.
- Nasi, Carlo, 2018. "The peace process with the FARC-EP" in Díaz Pabón, Fabio Andrés (ed.), *Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Colombia: Transitioning from Violence*. New York: Routledge, pp. 33-48. eBook.
- Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala – Dina Francesca Haynes – Naomi Cahn, 2011. *On the frontlines: Gender, war, and the post-conflict process*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- O'Reilly, Marie – Andrea Ó Súilleabháin – Thania Paffenholz, 2015. *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*. New York: International Peace Institute, June 2015. Online:
- Otto, Dianne, 2009. "The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law Over the Last Decade", *Melbourne Journal of International Law*. Vol. 10, no.
- Otto, Dianne, 2017. "Women, Peace, and Security: A Critical Analysis of the Security Council's Vision" in Ní Aoláin, Fionnuala – Naomi Cahn – Dina Francesca Haynes – Nahla Valji (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 15pp. eBook.
- Paffenholz, Thania, 2009. "The Nepali Maoists: Successful transformation or compliance with a strategic plan?" in Dayton, Bruce W. – Louis Kriesberg (eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge. Online: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/lund/detail.action?docID=410873>.
- Paffenholz, Thania, 2018a. "Women in Peace Negotiations" in Aggestam, Karin – Ann E. Towns (eds.), *Gendering Diplomacy and International Negotiation*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 169-191. eBook.
- Paffenholz, Thania, 2018b. "What Works in Participation" in Davies, Sara E. – Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190638276.013.11.
- Pandey, Binda, 2016. "Feminist Standpoint and Question of Women Participation in Decision-Making in Nepal", *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. No. 10 (2016), pp. 202-220.

- Parvati, 2005. "Women in the People's War in Nepal", *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol. 40, no. 50 (December 2005), pp. 5234-5236.
- Romaniuk, Scott Nicholas – Joshua Kenneth Wasylciw, 2010. "'Gender' Includes Men Too! Recognizing Masculinity in Security Studies and International Relations", *Perspectives*. Vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 23-40.
- Sjoberg, Laura, 2013. "Viewing Peace Through Gender Lenses", *Ethics & International Affairs*. Vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 175-187.
- Suhrke, Astri, 2011. "Virtues of a Narrow Mission: The UN Peace Operation in Nepal", *Global Governance*. Vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 37-55.
- Tamang, Seira, 2009. "The politics of conflict and difference or the difference of conflict in politics: The women's movement in Nepal", *Feminist Review*. No. 91 (2009), pp. 61-80.
- True, Jacqui, 2013b. "Feminism" in Burchill, Scott – Andrew Linklater – Richard Devetak (eds.), *Theories of International Relations*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. eBook.
- UN Secretary-General (UNSG) 2006. "Letter dated 22 November 2006 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council". S/2006/920. New York: United Nations, 22 November 2006.
- Upreti, Bishnu Raj – Sharmila Shivakoti – Kohinoor Bharati, 2018. "Frustrated and Confused: Mapping the Socio-political Struggles of Female Ex-combatants in Nepal", *Journal of International Women's Studies*. Vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 32-52.
- Westendorf, Jasmine-Kim, 2018. "Challenges of Local Ownership: Understanding the Outcomes of the International Community 'Light Footprint' Approach to the Nepal Peace Process", *Journal of Intervention and Peacebuilding*. Vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 228-252.
- Wiener, Antje, 2009. "Enacting Meaning-in-Use: Qualitative Research on Norms and International Relations", *Review of International Studies*. Vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 175-193.
- Åhäll, Linda, 2016. "The dance of militarization: a feminist security studies take on 'the political'" *Critical Studies on Security*. Vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 154-168.

## 7.2 Online sources

- Barnes, Catherine, 2006. *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace*, issue paper 2 (September 2006). European Centre for Conflict Prevention. Online: [http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5509~v~Agents\\_for\\_Change\\_\\_Civil\\_Society\\_Roles\\_in\\_Preventing\\_War\\_\\_Building\\_Peace.pdf](http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/5509~v~Agents_for_Change__Civil_Society_Roles_in_Preventing_War__Building_Peace.pdf) (accessed 22 May 2020).
- Bekoe, Dorina – Christina Parajon, 2007. “Women’s Role in Liberia’s Reconstruction”, *United States Institute of Peace*. Online: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2007/05/womens-role-liberias-reconstruction> (accessed 5 May 2020).
- Bell, Christine, 2015. *Text and context: evaluating peace agreements for their ‘gender perspective’*. UN Women, Research paper. October 2015. Online: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/evaluating-peace-agreements-for-their-gender-perspective> (accessed 6 April 2020).
- Bouvier, Virginia M., 2016. *Gender and the role of women in Colombia’s peace process*. UN Women, Background paper. March 2016. Online: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/2/gender-and-the-role-of-women-in-colombias-peace-process> (accessed 21 March 2020).
- Castillo Diaz, Pablo; Simon Tordjman, 2012. *Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections Between Presence and Influence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. UN Women. Online: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/03AWomenPeaceNeg.pdf> (accessed 20 April 2020).
- Colombia, 1991. *Colombia’s Constitution of 1991 with Amendments through 2005. Constitute Projects*. Oxford University Press. Online: [www.constituteproject.org](http://www.constituteproject.org) (accessed 12 May 2020).
- CTAWPS – Collective Thought and Action on Women, Peace and Security, 2013. *Pacto Ético por un País en Paz*. Online: <https://www.c-r.org/resource/manifesto-ethical-pact-country-peace> (accessed 12 May 2020).
- Paffenholz, Thania – Rick Ross – Steven Dixon – Anna-Lena Schluchter – Jacqui True, 2016. *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing*

- Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations*. Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) and UN Women. April 2016. Online: <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/sites/default/files/IPTI-UN-Women-Report-Making-Women-Count-60-Pages.pdf> (accessed 27 April 2020).
- Paffenholz, Thania, 2014. *Broadening participation in peace processes: Dilemmas & options for mediators*. Mediation, Practice Series no. 4. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (July 2014). Online: <http://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MPS4-Broadening-participation-in-peace-processes-July-2014.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2020).
- PeaceWomen, 2003. *International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women's Network Portal*. Issue 28 (21 August 2003). Online: <http://www.peacewomen.org/e-news/international-action-network-small-arms-iansa-womens-network-portal> (accessed 26 May 2020).
- The World Bank Group, 2019a. *Literacy rate, adult female (% of females ages 15 and above) – Colombia, Liberia, Nepal*. Online: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.FE.ZS?locations=CO-LR-NP> (accessed 26 May 2020)
- The World Bank Group, 2019b. *School enrollment, primary, female (% net) – Colombia, Liberia, Nepal*. Online: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.NENR.FE?locations=CO-LR-NP> (accessed 26 May 2020).
- True, Jacqui, 2013a. “Women, peace and security in post-conflict and peacebuilding contexts”. Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF). Policy brief: February 2013. [Online:] [https://www.peacewomen.org/system/files/global\\_study\\_submissions/Jacqui%20True\\_NOREF%20policy%20brief.pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/system/files/global_study_submissions/Jacqui%20True_NOREF%20policy%20brief.pdf) (accessed 28 April 2020).
- UCDPa, n/d. Liberia. *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme*. Online: <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/450> (accessed 5 May 2020).
- UCDPb, n/d. Government of Liberia – LURD. *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme*. Online: <https://ucdp.uu.se/statebased/761> (accessed 4 May 2020).
- UCDPc, n/d. Government of Nepal – CPN-M. *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme*. Online: <https://ucdp.uu.se/statebased/562> (accessed 2020-05-04).

- UCDPd, n/d. Colombia. *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme*. Online: <https://ucdp.uu.se/country/100> (accessed 4 May 2020).
- UN Women Africa, n/d. *Liberia*. Online: <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/liberia>. (25 May 2020)
- UNESCO 2000. “Girls and Women’s Education in Nepal”. CE 083 894. Research report. Bangkok: Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Online: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED469238.pdf> (accessed 21 March 2020).
- UNESCO 2013. “Literacy Programmes with a focus on women to reduce gender disparities”. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Online: [www.unesco.org/uii/litbase](http://www.unesco.org/uii/litbase) (accessed 26 May 2020).
- UNMIL, 2020. *Background*. Online: <https://unmil.unmissions.org/background> (accessed 25 May 2020).