



EXPLORING THE CONTOURS OF PEACE-BUILDING AND WOMEN AS ARCHITECTS OF PEACE

Zara Qurban

MRA - MoIB

PhD Research Scholar

National Defence University

Islamabad - Pakistan

zaraqurbanali@gmail.com

Dr. Riffat Haque

Assistant Professor

National Defence University

Islamabad - Pakistan

Abstract

This research article explores the critical role of women as agents of peace in the context of peace building initiatives. By examining the empirical evidence, the paper delves into the unique perspectives and contributions that women bring to conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery processes. It further highlights the importance of their inclusion in peace negotiations and decision-making bodies, emphasizing how their participation can lead to sustainable and equitable peace agreements. The paper also addresses the challenges that women face in assuming leadership roles within peace-building efforts, including gender-based violence, discrimination and limited access to resources. Ultimately, this research aims to underscore the necessity of recognizing and supporting women's agency in peace-building, as their involvement is essential for achieving lasting and inclusive peace.

Keyword: Peace-building, women as agents of peace, conflict

INTRODUCTION

While crises and war elevate the likelihood of both men and women being subjected to violence, women are disproportionately affected by sexual violence. Occasionally, disagreement might result in their being the only providers for the entire family. The lingering trauma that often persists beyond the formalization of a peace accord is crucial to address in order to facilitate the healing of communities. UNDP collaborates with women leaders, healthcare professionals and peace advocates in post-conflict nations such as Iraq to empower women with the necessary resources and expertise to effectively manage both individual and



community trauma.

According to Barnett (2007), in the last 20 years, UN agencies, donor organizations and the INGOs have placed a greater emphasis on the function and application of peace-building in nations affected by violence. Even though the UN has prioritized peacekeeping and peacemaking since its founding, the term “peace-building” did not enter the institution’s vocabulary until 1992, when the UN Secretary General released ‘an agenda for peace.’ As “as action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict,” peace building was defined in this post-Cold War context and distinguished historically from preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Willet (2010) raises question whether women have the secret to a society at peace or not? While much us know about how women are victimized in conflict situations via rape, human trafficking and early marriages, much remains to be learned about how women might be empowered to close gap an bring about peace. Women’s needs have not always been central to postwar reconstruction and conflict management. The UN did not take action on the matter until 2000, when it enacted the Security Council Resolution, which then outlines the unique vulnerabilities that women confront during times of war. Following the adoption of this resolution, scholars, activists and legislators started talking about the unique “burden of war” that women bear and the ways that the world community might support and uplift them.

Smoljan (2003) suggests that peace-building conceptualizations, methods and policies have changed in a variety of ways, from a range of diverse organizations and viewpoints and in tandem with its increasing relevance. Although peace-building was formerly seen as a strictly postwar endeavor, it is now acknowledged as a process that is required at every stage of the conflict. Discussions over this matter, the order and significance of specific initiatives and the relative importance of some industries and areas over others are still going on inside various UN agencies and development partners.

This paper analyzes the empirical evidence that sheds light on the very concept of peace building and role of women as agents of long-lasting peace globally. It further dives down to point out the struggles and challenges women have faced and are still facing in order to claim their rightful grounds to be part of positive transformation in warring/ conflicting areas. This paper further explores, briefly, the contours of Feminist Peace-building Theories to understand and women’s unique contribution to peace-building and the challenges they face.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF PEACE?

According to Estell Nelson (2002) “Peace means different things to women and men because of their unique experiences as a result of the war, and as a result of how society is structured. Peace to women means putting food on the table, economic empowerment, access to healthcare and education, and that we can speak up against abuse in the home. There is violence in the home, but too often women are silent, that is not peace”. Diverse academic disciplines have distinct definitions of peace. While there are differences in interpretations of peace, its fundamental ideas remain the same. Selam, the Amharic word for peace, connotes wellness, health, relaxation, harmony, love, security, contentment and well wishes. Accordingly, a



condition of stability, harmony, health, wellbeing and cohabiting is known as peace.

As per John Paul Lederach (1997), achieving peace is a process rather than a goal that must be reached. In relationships and associations, harmony develops when individuals gather and converse with one another.

Restoring peace is the aim of peace-building. Expert in peace-building Johan Galtung (2013) noted that there are two distinct definitions of peace; Positive Peace and Negative Peace. When there is not a clear-cut violent conflict or open hostilities amongst individuals, the scenarios are referred to as Negative Peace. Peaceful approaches are not always the only option to attain negative peace. Galtung, in 1967, initially recognized the distinction between Negative and Positive Peace, which has subsequently become a fundamental notion for contemporary scholars in the discourse of peace and war. Galtung provides a concise summary of distinctions between negative and positive peace. He defines negative peace as the state in which there is no organized violence, while positive peace refers to the collaboration and integration of human groups, with less emphasis on the mere absence of violence.

International community broadly recognizes the need for peace-building initiatives going beyond merely establishing negative peace. The scholars acknowledge the deliberate attempt to tackle the underlying reasons for conflicts by employing “peace processes and agreements” and by bolstering the fundamental structures of institutions and procedures that promote peaceful resolution of divisions and conflicts. These approaches are employed to build a state of positive peace (Ginty & Richmond, 2013).

Amartya Sen suggests that complete peace is not guaranteed by negative peace. Laws can be used by the government to keep citizens from participating in demonstrations or face-to-face conflict. In a communal culture, people might not be able to do as they choose unless they have permission from gatekeepers in the community. Negative peace typically results in intellectual conflict amongst people rather than overt physical or visible violence in the society. Contrarily, positive peace describes a stable social order free from the escalation of hostilities and war. True peace is positive peace. It is an environment that upholds human and democratic rights, gender equality, religious equality and economic frailness.

PEACEBUILDING: WHAT IS IT?

Prior to evaluating the influence of women on peace-building, it is essential to comprehend the concept of peace-building. The phrase “peace-building” is often overlooked in peace studies, with more attention given to concepts like peacemaking and peacekeeping in academic circles. While the notions are tightly interconnected, it is crucial to acknowledge their distinctions. Peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building are intricate ideals that differ in implementation from one situation to another. As a result, their meanings can significantly vary in academic discussions.

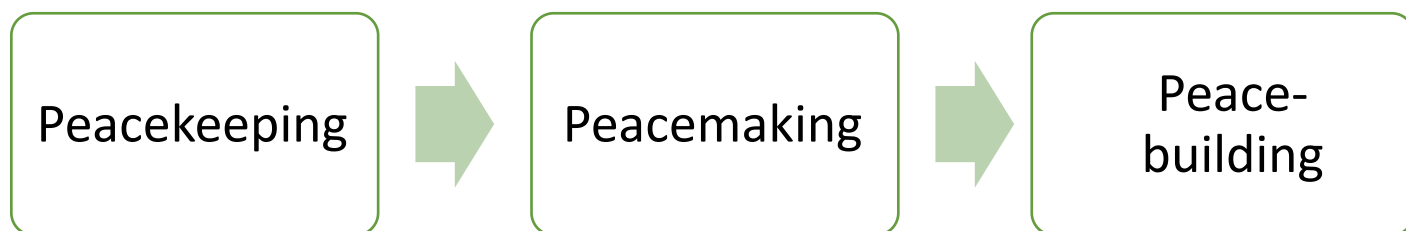
Lambourne (2000) supports and emphasizes the importance of establishing enduring peace, which involves achieving goals related to both negative and positive peace. The UN formally recognizes peace-building as a defined process. The phrase “peace-building” is not that old. However, many diverse cultures do have a wide range of approaches and methods for

promoting peace. Every culture and community has a method for bringing about peace when it is lost. The process of establishing a durable peace by the use of the abilities, customs and knowledge already present in a particular culture is known as peace-building.

Creating a framework that shields a community from conflict is another way to promote positive peace. When adequate steps are made to eradicate structural, cultural and direct forms of violence, positive peace is created. The goal of peace-building is to promote constructive harmony throughout society. Resolving the “root cause of conflict” is the main goal of peace-building. Resolving conflicts can be difficult and take a long time. Therefore, peace-building is a path toward lasting peace. The establishment of constructive peace is the main goal of peace-building. Maintaining stability in the community, establishing a fresh framework that stops disputes from getting worse, getting rid of structural and physical violence, doing away with discriminatory behaviors and fostering interpersonal trust are all part of peace-building (Mutuku et al., (2022).

Initiatives for peace-building aim to modify the dynamics between warring parties and deal with the underlying causes of conflict. Through peace-building, victims of violence can transition from being dependent and vulnerable to being secure and self-sufficient.

According to Porter, the three terms are defined from a UN perspective:



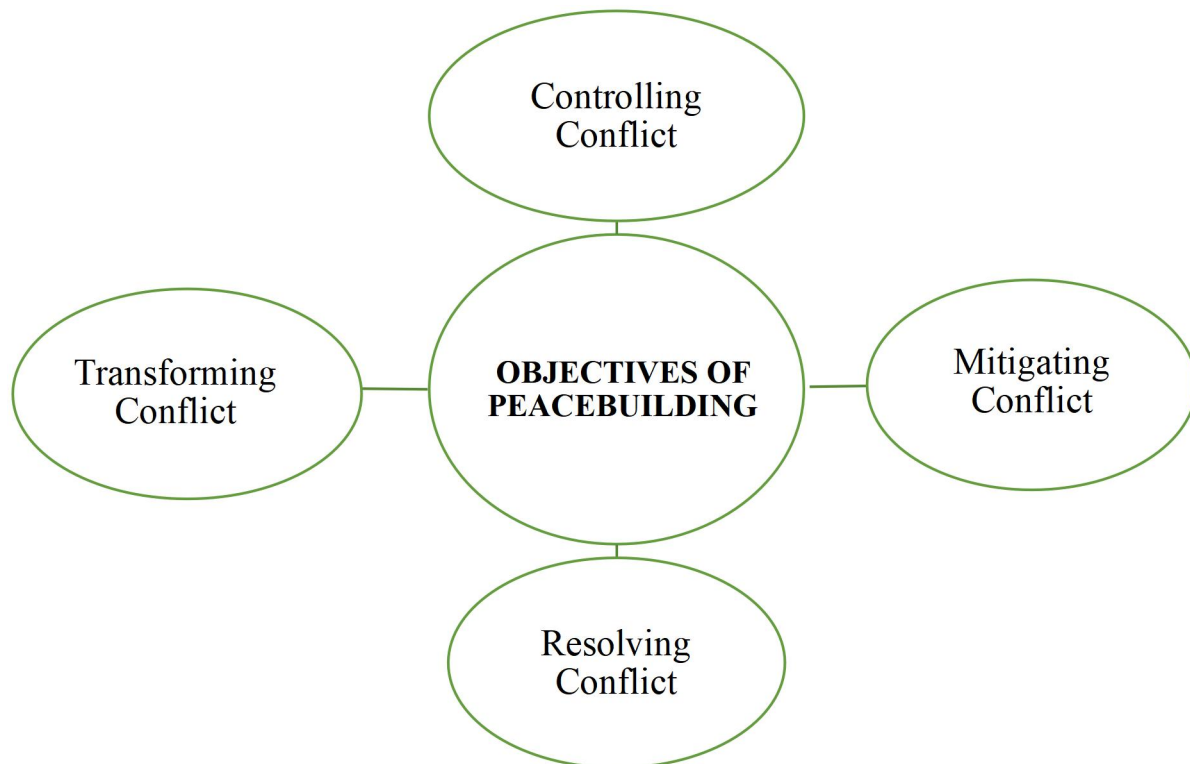
Peacekeeping focuses on preventing parties from engaging in violence or causing harm to each other. This is achieved through the deployment of multinational forces consisting of armed soldiers and police, who are only authorized to use weapons in self-defense. On the other hand, Peacemaking involves using mediation, conciliation, arbitration and negotiation to reach an agreement between hostile parties. Finally, she defines peace-building as the oral process of restructuring a community after a war, with the goal of addressing both immediate security concerns and the underlying causes of the conflict. This phrase appears to include aspects of both peacemaking and peacekeeping (Porter 2003).

The term “peace-building” refers to a broad range of procedures and actions used to end hostilities and create enduring peace. These procedures involve a variety of actions, some of which include dialogue, rapprochement, and justice, aiding war victims, policy reform or training in peace-building. Regardless of the intensity of the conflict, peace-building refers to actions intended to address the fundamental structural causes of conflict and promote human peace. A common focus of the phrase “peace-building” is on the underlying causes of conflict

(Yilmaz, 2009).

Peacekeeping and peace-building are not the same. The UN and other regional organizations handle the majority of peacekeeping. Security guards and peacekeepers work for these organizations. Officers in the armed forces and intelligence community are tasked with maintaining order in certain regions. Working toward peace between two sides at odds is known as making peace. Peacemaking is an effort to end hostilities or war by pursuing peace. It benefits the parties to the ceasefire. Building peace is frequently a post conflict endeavor. It offers thorough rebuilding services in areas of conflict. It focuses on implementing the required adjustments to prevent conflict from happening again. The goal of peace-building is to establish a community with enduring peace (Ginty & Richmond, 2013).

There are four overall objectives for peace-building, including:



Depending on the nature of the dispute and other variables, the peace process may last a short while or a long time. Peace-building is typically a laborious process. This method involves a number of tasks. The sequence in which these tasks are completed may change based on the actual circumstances (Smoljan 2003).

Governments, religious institutions, civil society, traditional leaders and structures, the media and the business community are all involved in the multi-stakeholder process of peace-



building. Building peace is a continuous effort but there is no one-size-fit-all approach to peace-building. The process of peace-building involves participation and inclusivity.

INVESTIGATING THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING PROCESSES

Women play a multifaceted role in peace-building., often bringing unique perspectives and approaches that significantly contribute to the success and sustainability of peace progress. At the grassroots level, women frequently act as community leaders and activists, working tirelessly to bridge divides and foster reconciliation among conflicting groups. Their roles in organizing dialogues, mediating disputes and providing humanitarian support are crucial in laying the groundwork for lasting peace. Women's ability to build trust and nurture relationships with communities enables them to address the root causes of conflicts and promote social cohesion effectively.

In formal peace processes, women's participation enhances the inclusivity and comprehensiveness of peace agreements. Research has shown that peace agreements are more likely to be implemented and to endure when women are involved in their negotiation and implementation. Women often prioritize issues such as human rights, social justice and economic development, which are essential for addressing the long-term needs of post-conflict societies. Their advocacy for the inclusion of marginalized groups ensures that peace agreements are more representative and equitable, fostering broader support and commitment from the population (Paffenholz (2014).

Women may make valuable contributions to the advancement of society. Sociocultural barriers and gender discrimination often limit their participation in formal peace processes, where decision making is typically dominated by men. Women peace-builders may also encounter political and institutional obstacles, such as lack of access to resources and support from governmental and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the security risks associated with working in conflict zones pose severe personal safety concerns, further hindering their ability to contribute effectively.

The impact of women's participation in peace-building extends beyond immediate conflict resolution. Women led peace initiatives often lead to socioeconomic benefits, such as improved education, healthcare and economic opportunities for communities. By addressing the broader needs of society, women's peace-building efforts contribute to creating more resilient and self-sustaining communities. Women's participation in peace processes fosters more gender equality and challenges conventional gender stereotypes, both of which are necessary for long-term peace and prosperity. Women have a crucial role in peace-building, contributing vital viewpoints and solutions that improve the efficacy and long-term viability of peace initiatives (Porter, 2003).

Despite facing numerous challenges, women's contributors at both grassroots and formal levels are pivotal in creating inclusive, equitable and lasting peace. Recognizing and supporting women's roles in peace-building is crucial for addressing the complex dynamics of conflict and building a more peaceful world.



Regarding women, peace and security, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution in 2000 under the name UNSC Resolution 1325. Four ground pillars make up the resolution including:

- Prevention
- Participation
- Protection
- Peace-building and recovery

This resolution came forth as a result of the realization that women are frequently left out of the peace negotiations that take place post conflict. The purpose of the resolution was to highlight the critical role that women play in preventing conflict and finding solutions to it, as well as in negotiating and constructing peace (George & Shepherd, 2016).

In terms of women's contributions to achieving and sustaining peace, the new resolution's approval was a first. It sought to encourage women's equal participation in the establishment and upkeep of peace, as well as their involvement in the process of establishing peace. Resolution 1325's passage was historic because it was the first time that the UNSC focused exclusively on women involved in armed conflict, viewing them as agents in peace negotiations and peacekeeping efforts rather than merely victims; the resolution demonstrated the understanding of women's effect in violent conflicts and their role in promoting peace. Adoption of the resolution demonstrates, among other things, that women's exclusion from the peace process constituted a threat to the peace itself. Nonetheless, a 2015 poll revealed that Resolution 1325 had minimal effect on women's participation in the peace process, with fewer than half of the peace accords signed mentioning women in any way. A quantitative investigation that examined potential gender perspectives included into peace accords signed between 1990 and 2010 assessed if UN Resolution 1325 had an effect on women and their participation in peace-building (Aghabekian, 2019).

The discussion around women's participation in peace-building is troubling since women are beneficial to peace talks. So, why are they not involved? Women are allocated duties by the parties involved in the peace discussions, rather than being present during the process and allowed to decide their own roles in peace-building. Although women are sometimes allocated duties in peace accords, little is known about the roles that women really play in peace-building as opposed to what is specified in the agreements. The issue is that, while making up roughly half of a nation's population, women are agreements that promote peace.

Research on the topic of women in peace-building has been quite active. For instance, Agbalajobi conducted a case study of Burundi as part of her research on the responsibilities played by women in promoting peace in Africa. The author summarizes the widely held belief that women are frequently perceived as victims in conflict situations. Instead of seeing women as victims, Agbalajobi aims to highlight the various roles that women may lay in conflicts in which they may also be involved, such as soldiers, supporters, informants and so on (Aghabekian, 2009).



The sociological theory regarding sex and gender that says masculinity and femininity are more socially produced and taught throughout infancy and adulthood than something we are born with is also covered by the writers. Schirch and Sewak also emphasize the necessity of embracing an intersectional viewpoint, in which one's behavior is determined by factors other than one's gender. They contend that women's contribution to peace-building should not stem from the perception that they are inherently more peaceful and can therefore establish a lasting peace; rather, women should be involved in peace-building simply because they make up around half of the population. These include decreasing direct violence, developing capacity, directing conflict nonviolently and altering relationships (Arabi, 2008).

Women are disproportionately involved in four types of peace-building. These include working as human rights and democrat advocate, peacekeepers, relief and humanitarian workers, mediators, counselors and legislators as well as working in education. The writers also shed light on the significance of eschewing the notion that women are victims, since this makes it difficult for them to participate in the peace process as workers and to have a say in the negotiating procedures.

Women involved in peace-building rarely receive the same acknowledgement as their male counterparts. Though they are not as notable, she claims that women are mostly present. Women who engage in peace-building frequently utilize their position of authority and knowledge to support and elevate other women. Because women are the gender, they are not given the same recognition as males and are thus disempowered.

Although women have been more involved in efforts to bring about peace in recent years, this has not necessarily resulted in better lives for them following a conflict. Women are naturally gentle and peace-loving. The aforementioned writers all concentrate on how women are viewed as victims during a conflict although it is they who endure sexual assault, rape and displacement as a result of the conflict. They also come to the conclusion that this viewpoint on women in the wake of a conflict is quite debatable because women, as agency, frequently participate in the conflict in different ways, either by advancing the conflict or promoting peace.

The notion of agency may be utilized to gain a deeper understanding of the situation. One widely accepted definition of agency is the ability of individuals to control the conditions of their own lives and the way that behaviors people consider to be free from external influence are frequently products of the social systems in which they exist. This is predicted on the widespread belief that stories about battle are typically associated with men and are gendered. The conversation about agency diminishes the essence of being a woman. Discussing power and how it is associated with masculinity is crucial to understanding the idea of agency. As a result, women can only be men's subordinate where power is wielded, but do not have equal access to these domains since they are in the male domain.

Laura Shepherd (2007) explores women not as victims of abuse but as change agents. She contends that in the past, a lot of academics have claimed that women are the victims of violence in disputes and males are the ones who commit the crimes. Shepherd, however, is arguing that the masculinized narrative of war fails to capture the nuanced nature of the roles played by both men and women. Furthermore, she implies that limiting women's representation



of that of victims of violence undercuts their agency and consequently the growth of peace-building initiative in which women may take part and have all of their experiences with conflict taken into account.

The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, along with six more resolutions on women and peace-building, led to the development of a policy framework on women, peace and security which have strengthened international recognition and acceptance of women's participation in peace-building efforts globally.

Although there is an agreement among international players about the necessity of proactively involving women in peace processes, international actors and policymakers tend to overlook the experiences of women in both peace and war. For instance, it is noteworthy that women have only been included in peace negotiations as negotiators in 9% of cases, more than ten years after UNSCR 1325 was adopted (Georger & Shepherd, 2016).

Success stories such as the Liberian women's peace action gave further impetus to the call for female leadership in the peace process. The UN Women study, which showed that women made up only 4% of participation in peace processes, reinforced the demand for more female peacemakers. Women, according to proponents of more female representation, are vital because they address society demands in the negotiation press, bringing a more holistic peace plan rather than concentrating just on what would satisfy the warring parties. Women do have a positive and considerate influence on peace; in fact, encouraging women to participate raises the likelihood that violence would decline within a year by 24% (Adjei, 2019).

But there are some limitations. An agreement for a more sustainable peace is not always the outcome of including women from outside the conflict, such as representatives of the UN or the Africa Union, a durable peace deal depends on the participation of local women who were involved in the fighting. This contrast is crucial because it shows that having women around does not always mean that there will be harmony.

Even though these arguments demonstrate the role that women have had in bringing about peace, the process of peace-building following a conflict may be the most important predictor of sustained peace. The possibility that peace will persist can be greatly increased by institutionalizing gender equality through the establishment of gender electoral quotas and ensuring females are involved in the implementation of gender quotas for national legislatures may result in a 27% increase in the likelihood that violence will stop within five years. Over time, these long-term policies have enabled women to rise about victimization and assume leadership roles may hold the key to developing a more peaceful society.

Although laws imposing quotas on the number of women participating in peace processes appear to be able to forge stronger agreements, particular attention must be paid to the characteristics of female participants who are really advancing the cause of conflict resolution. Currently, a lot of people consider that female representation is a must in order to cross peace agreements off their lengthy list. Women's organizations have criticized this emphasis in quantity above quality of representation, particularly in the UN's policy creation process (Htun, 2004).

The international community should prioritize investing in local women's capacity building



as a means of promoting female leadership. The UN and states can only recognize the critical role women play by enacting more inclusive policies that encourage women to participate. Building strong female leadership representation in the community may be essential to a peaceful society since women have the ability to resolve disputes.

Community based movements, peace activists and religious organizations have apparently neglected to address women's involvement in peace-building and conflict resolution despite the support given to women's engagement in peace-building by the UN, NGOs, scholars and women advocacy groups. Gender disparity in the field of peace-building is made worse by the low representation of women in this sector/ furthermore, it is believed to limit women's potential to support peace-building.

Women face several obstacles when trying to actively participate in peace-building, particularly when it comes to making decisions. The majority of women lack the educational background necessary to engage in peace-building on par with men, there is significant disparity. Women occasionally desire to take part in the peace process but lack the necessary knowledge and experience. Ensuring the active participation of women in peace and negotiation processes, where they hold decision-making power, not only enhances the representation of society's diversity, but also enhances the long-lasting and high-quality nature of peace. Recent research conducted by Krause and Branfors examined 82 peace agreements in 42 armed conflicts from 1989 to 2011. The study found that peace agreements that included women as signatories were linked to long-lasting peace. The study also revealed that peace agreements endorsed by female delegates had superior rates of execution for the term outlined in the accords. A previous study conducted by the Geneva Graduate Institutes Broadening Participation Process examined the involvement of women's groups and other groups in 40 peace and transition processes. The study indicated that when women's groups had significant impact on the process, a peace agreement was nearly always achieved and likelihood of successful implementation of the agreement was higher. The inclusion of women in the formation of an agreement increases the likelihood of its duration by 20% for a minimum of two years and 35% for a minimum of 15 years (Krause et al., 2004).

EXPLORING THE REASONS BEHIND THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIGH-LEVEL PEACEMAKING?

Women's involvement in peacemaking raises a larger issue about the objectives and methods of achieving peace. If the sole aim of a peace process is to halt violence, then women, who are seldom the aggressors, are unlikely to be seen as genuine participants. Furthermore, conventional security narratives in the global system predominantly prioritize the security of states rather than the security of individuals, so underestimating the significance of non-military and non-state-centered viewpoints on problems of peace and security.

Additionally, despite the commitment of multilateral organizations such as the UN and its member states to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the lack of political determination and adequate allocation of funds to challenge and dismantle the established systems that allow warring parties to have a say in peace negotiations is impeding



women's significant involvement in the peacemaking process. As negotiations progress between the U.S. and the Taliban, the conflicting parties continue to show reluctance in including Afghan women as members of the negotiating team. Simultaneously, several western nations who advocate for the WPA agenda have yielded to the prevailing conflict players, despite the significant correlation between the meaningful participation of Afghan women in the peace process and the future stability, prosperity and peace of Afghanistan (O'Reilly et al., 2015).

If the men and women in societies do not collaborate to create a lasting peace, the desired peace will not be realized. People from different cultures, language, racial and ethnic backgrounds, faith, ages and genders come together in the process of peace-building. When men and women are divided, exploited and resentful of one another, there can be no peace. Therefore, women and men must cooperate as partners in order to achieve long-lasting peace.

The requirements of their members are more likely to be met by communities that make use of the skills, knowledge and experiences of both men and women. Half of the population will lose the abilities, experience and skills needed to strengthen the community if women are not allowed to participate in decision-making and leadership roles in the community or if they are too preoccupied with taking care of their families to attend meetings.

Participation of women and enduring peace are related. Numerous research projects have examined the benefits of women's involvement in peace-building. According to John Paul Lederach, a globally renowned expert in conflict transformation and peace-building, a community cannot establish permanent peace if its members' needs are not appropriately met. In this sense, peace-building initiatives that disregard the opinions of peace that start without attending to their demands will not satisfy the requirements of every group and will not endure (Lederach & Appleby, 2010).

Restricting women's access to peace-building opportunities means marginalized and impoverished women's voices are not heard. It denies women the chance to recognize and address their needs and concerns. It also forbids the disclosure of women's expertise and experience with conflict. When it comes to conflict, its causes and its resolutions, women could have different ideas. For this reason, understanding their viewpoint is crucial to peace-building. Having seen war firsthand, women who have survived it have been qualified to arbitrate disputes between warring parties. Women are essential in ending the cycle of violence because they support their families through violent conflicts. Religious and governmental organizations frequently discuss how crucial it is for women to actively participate in peace-building. However, it doesn't appear like the problem is getting any better in reality. It should be highlighted that women gain from peace-building efforts just as much as society does. Women must actively participate in peace-building at all levels if lasting peace is to be established. Consequently, it's crucial to remove barriers preventing women from actively engaging in peace efforts (Sampson, 2007).

IMPEDIMENTS:

One primary obstacle that women encounter is gaining entry to the peace process, which therefore limits their capacity to capitalize on possibilities to shape the process. Due to their



non-combatant status, women often encounter challenges while attempting to get access to the negotiation table. This issue has been resolved in certain instances by the mediator, who exercises their authority to seek advice from and include women's organizations. This is evident, for instance, in the UN-mediated procedures in Syria and Yemen, and to a lesser extent in Libya. Women may have significant impact on political actors by engaging in lobbying and advocacy, either directly or through their constituency, in addition to gaining access to official peace processes. Peace-building stakeholders should thus advocate for the expansion of women's participation and influence throughout different stages of peace processes using diverse strategies. For example, this includes activities such as promoting and supporting causes, influencing foreign funders and mediators, and providing technical assistance to women's groups and organizations (Asseburg et al, 2018).

Another difficulty pertains to the contributions that women are capable of making, namely in terms of their self-efficacy. Many Syrian women have consistently expressed the need of gaining substantial knowledge and skills that would be beneficial for their active involvement in the political process and/or local peace-building initiatives. According to a Syrian female activist, she and her colleagues are often invited to international advocacy events but lack the requisite skills and resources to fully benefit from these opportunities, perhaps causing them to miss out on valuable chances for progress. Women may encounter varying forms of donor investment in their abilities, depending on the time and location of their activities. Consequently, women may have unequal access to the information and skills they require. This fosters schisms within the "women's movement", exacerbates feelings of resentment and disparity, and complicates the ability to engage in political dialogue across different perspectives. According to the Syrian interlocutor, there is an imbalance in our abilities, which means we are not now prepared to collaborate. Therefore, it is essential for peace-building practitioners and international women's support organizations to not only provide training opportunities but also use their power to create a fair and equal environment (Moore & Talarico, 2015).

Additional strain, which is the deployment agency, arises due to the absence of effective coalition building across women's groups, resulting in the absence of a unified "women's agenda". This is partially attributed to the presumption held by international peace-building players that women on all sides of conflicts would inherently provide coverage and form a cohesive collective voice. Instead, women should be regarded as possessing a wide range of beliefs, inclinations, interests and viewpoints. This oversimplified assumption may hinder women's ability to collaborate, establish trust, or reach a shared understanding on contentious matters. It can also result in a collection of theoretical and general goals, rather than a specific plan and a comprehensive long-term strategy. The absence of these two components may weaken women's capacity to exercise agency. Mediators should actively assist women in their endeavors to establish coalitions, recognizing that this world needs a substantial and enduring commitment.

The last delinquency pertains to women expressing their influence. In order to do this, it is necessary to establish a powerful coalition of women that can effectively advocate for the



integration of a gendered viewpoint in peace negotiations. This coalition should have an agenda that is inclusive and tailored to the local context. Occasionally, when local actors or mediators embrace a completely liberal peace strategy, it might result in the additional marginalization of women. This may be relevant to ideological originations who do not completely adhere to a liberal peace agenda, such as conservative women's groups or those from certain rural areas. International endorsements of such a plan might result in the exclusion of specific women's organizations or the suppression of their perspectives and concerns (Thein, 2019). This might potentially exacerbate the split of the women's movement, thus introducing further intricacy to an already complex issue. International and local peace players should foster local interaction between diverse women's initiatives that encompass all segments of society, therefore advancing an inclusive local peace endeavor. This will enhance women's capacity to jointly exercise influence and contribute to the resolution of conflicts.

Feminist Peace and Security employs a post-colonial and anti-racist perspective to acknowledge and strive to comprehend all forms of power and its manifestations. The objective should be to question and confront societal norms, established customs and the complex dynamics of power, particularly those related to gender. It is crucial; to recognize that toxic masculinity has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond women and impact society as a whole. Feminist Peace and Security aims to address and eradicate the underlying factors that contribute to the violence women face before and during conflicts, as well as during periods of supposed peace, as women are frequently at the greatest risk within their own homes. It comprehends violence as encompassing both the public and personal spheres, including the community and the household. Women, in addition to their official employment, often take on the obligations of domestic and unpaid care labor while serving as leaders in their society. Women face an intolerable burden as they navigate the challenges of war and disaster, while also shouldering the responsibility of maintaining their families and communities. Feminist Peace acknowledges the many roles that women play and establishes a suitable support system, such as childcare, economic empowerment, psychological services and access to self-care to guarantee that women have the necessary assistance and may share responsibilities with men.

Feminist Peace and Security acknowledges that peace-building is both multifaceted and dynamic, and emphasizes the need of prioritizing those who are most impacted by the crisis. It is imperative that women and marginalized groups from all sectors of society, especially those at the local level, are central to the decision-making process at every level. In order to achieve genuine inclusivity and bring about significant change, it is imperative for a Feminist Peace and Security agenda and its advocates to empower local women's organizations focused on peace and human rights. This entails enabling them to independently develop their own conflict-resolution and peace-building initiatives, and providing the necessary assistance to bolster these efforts. It goes beyond simply incorporating women into pre-existing structures and procedures (Sapiano & True, 2022).

Feminist Peace acknowledges the various manifestations of violence and instability, such economic violence and understands that these experiences differ across different groups. Poverty and inequality may be considered as manifestations of violence, just like the



exploitation of natural resources, vested interests and the neglect of climate change and environmental risks. Effective multi-dimensional security necessitates a thorough systems analysis to comprehend the interconnections between various dependencies and determine the necessary actions. Merely addressing individual problems is insufficient for individuals experiencing crisis and severe destitutions. It is imperative to address insecurities collectively and completely. When nations prioritize state security, it is important to ensure that a Feminist Peace and Security agenda is not used for the same purposes. It should not be manipulated or stripped of its political nature, since it is intrinsically political.

WAY FORWARD:

Those who are dedicated to enhancing peace and transition processes by promoting women's meaningful involvement in both informal and official procedures can utilize four essential strategies:

- Consider the dynamics of power and the general public while making decision
- Establish the necessary circumstances to enhance the expression of women's opinion and perspectives
- Implement the selection procedure that is both credible and inclusive
- Form alliances based on ethical and tactical reasoning

Women peace-builders have consistently maintained that the subsequent principles are crucial for creating a conducive atmosphere that enhances women's significant involvement in both peacemaking and peace-building activities:

- Assistance from families, employers and communities
- Childcare amenities
- Adaptable meeting timetable
- Secure and cost-effective means of transportation for attending meetings (Adjei, 2019).

Despite the resolution of all the aforementioned issues, women peace-builders may still face exclusion from informal behind-the-scenes meetings where discussion and agreements regarding provisions of peace agreements may take place. Women must possess a deep understanding of the power dynamics at play in order to develop new methods to overcome them. At a fundamental and pragmatic level, women from various political backgrounds are bolstering each other's viewpoints in the presence of their male counterparts. This constructive feedback loop highlights a feeling of unity among women and simultaneously enhances their voices.



References:

- Adjei, M. (2019). Women's participation in peace processes: a review of literature. *Journal of Peace Education*, 16 (2), 133-154.
- Adjei, M. (2019). Women's participation in peace processes: a review of literature. *Journal of Peace Education*, 16 (2), 133-154.
- Arabi, A. (2008). *Gender and Peacebuilding: The Role of Sudanese Diaspora Women in Sudan's Post-conflict Reconstruction* (Doctoral dissertation, Dalhousie University).
- Asseburg, M., Lacher, W., & Transfeld, M. (2018). *Mission impossible? UN mediation in Libya, Syria and Yemen* (pp. 60).
- Barnett, M., Kim, H., O'Donnell, M., & Sitea, L., (2007). Peacebuilding: What is in a Name? *Global governance*, 13 (1), 35 - 58.
- Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi, D. T. (2009). The role of African women in peace building and conflict resolution: The case of Burundi. *Global Media Journal*, 8 (15), 1-20.
- Galtung, J., & Fischer, D. (2013). Johan Galtung, the Father of Peace Studies. In *Johan Galtung: Pioneer of Peace Research* (pp. 3-23).
- George, N. & Shepherd, L. J. (2016). Women, Peace and Security: Exploring the implementation and integration of UNSCR 1325. *International Political Science Review*, 37 (3), 297-306.
- George, N., & Shepherd, L. J. (2016). Women, Peace and Security: Exploring the implementation and integration of UNSCR 1325. *International Political Science Review*, 37 (3), 297-306.
- Htun, M. (2004). Is gender like ethnicity? The political representation of identity groups. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2 (3), 439-458.
- Krause, J., Krause W., & Bränfors, P. (2018). Women's participation in peace negotiations and the durability of peace. *International Interaction*, 44 (6), 985-1016.
- Lambourne, W. (2000). Post-conflict peacebuilding. *Security Dialogue* 31 (4), 357.
- Lederach, J. P. & Appleby, R. S. (2010). Strategic peacebuilding: An overview. In *Strategies of peace: Transforming conflict in a violent world* (pp. 19-44). Oxford University Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. Washington, DC: USIP.
- Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The local turn in peace building: a critical agenda for peace. *Third world quarterly*, 34 (5), 763-783.
- Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. (2013). The local turn in peace building: a critical agenda for peace. *Third world quarterly*, 34 (5), 763-783.
- Moore, C., & Talarico, T., (2015). Inclusion to exclusion: Women in Syria. *Emory International Review*, 30, 213 – 231.
- Mutuku, B., Krumeich, A., Alaii, J., & Westerdorp, I. Formal Justice and Alternative Dispute Resolution on Land Based Conflicts in Kenya. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 7 (1), 1-19.



- O'Reilly, M., Ó. Súilleabháin, A., & Paffenholz, T. (2015). *Reimagining peacemaking: Women's roles in peace processes*. International Peace Institute, <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/IPI-E-pub-Reimagining-Peacemaking.pdf>.
- Paffenholz, T. (2014). Civil society and peace negotiations: Beyond the inclusion–exclusion dichotomy. *Negotiation Journal*, 30 (1), 69-91.
- Porter, E. (2003). Women, political decision-making, and peace-building. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 15 (3), 245-262.
- Rehn, E., & Johnson Sirleaf, E. (2002). *Women, war and peace*. New York, NY: UNIFEM.
- Sampson, C. (2007). Religion and peacebuilding. *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques* (pp. 273-323).
- Sapiano, J., & True, J. (2022). Feminist Peace: Reimagining Peace Through a Feminist Lens. *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 5 (1), 3 – 6.
- Sen, A. (2011). *Peace and Democratic Society*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers. <https://books.openedition.org/obp/114>.
- Shepherd, L. J. (2007). 'Victims, perpetrators and actors' revisited: Exploring the potential for a feminist reconceptualization of (international) security and (gender) violence. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 9 (2), 239-256.
- Smoljan, J. (2003). The relationship between peace building and development. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 3 (2), 233-250.
- Smoljan, J. (2003). The relationship between peace building and development. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 3 (2), 233-250.
- Thein, Z. (2019). *Bringing a Gender Perspective to the Peace Table: Women in Myanmar's Peace Process* (Doctoral dissertation, Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington).
- Varsen Aghabekian, V. (2019). Demanding a bigger role: Palestinian women in politics and decision making. *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 35 (3), 241-264.
- Willett, S. (2010) Introduction: Security Council Resolution 1325: Assessing the impact on women, peace and security. *International peacekeeping*, 17 (2), 142-158.
- Yilmaz, M. E. (2009). Peace-Building in War-Torn Societies. *Peace Review* 21 (2), 238-248.