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**THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING: A CASE STUDY OF
COALITION FOR ACTION (CoACT) ON THE UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 (UNSCR 1325) IN
UGANDA**

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER
OF ARTS DEGREE IN PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES
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I, Tuhirirwe Deborah Rwabwogo, hereby declare that this dissertation has been entirely executed by me and is original and has not been published and or submitted to any other academic institution before.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my beloved husband and children.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRAs	:	Alternative Dispute Resolution Activists
AU	:	African Union
CID	:	Criminal Investigations Department
CoACT	:	Coalition for Action on 1325
DPA	:	Department of Political Affairs
DRC	:	Democratic Republic of Congo
DPC	:	District Police Commander
FERFAP	:	Federation of African Women Peace Networks
FGDs	:	Focused group discussions
FGM	:	Female Genital Mutilation
KIIs	:	Informant Interviews
LC	:	Local Council
MARWONET	:	Mano River Union Women’s Network for Peace
NAP	:	National Action Plan
NGOs	:	Non-Government Organisations

NRM/A	:	National Resistance Movement/Army
SGBV	:	Sexual and Gender-based violence
UN	:	United Nations
UNSCR	:	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS	:	Women, Peace, and Security

ABSTRACT

This research examined the role of women in peacebuilding using a case study of Coalition for Action (CoAct) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in Uganda. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to assess women’s participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda; to highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda; and to establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda. The study employed a qualitative research approach with an exploratory case study design. A total of 45 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The study used thematic and narrative analyses to analyse the data.

The study found that there are several approaches to peacebuilding that women use to occupy various spaces for their participation in peacebuilding at different levels. Women have participated in peacebuilding through informal and formal ways, manifesting their presence at international, regional, and local/grassroot levels. The findings also showed that women spearhead some peacebuilding efforts and initiatives in Uganda. The different peacebuilding efforts include Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT), Lango Women Clan Leaders Association (LWCLA), Lira Rural Women and Children Development Initiative (LIRWOCDI), Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) and Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE). The study findings indicate that there are challenges women face in peacebuilding, and they include limited women representation

at the grassroots, lack of sustainable funding, cultural and patriarchal systems that influence power sharing, women's oppression, and gender inequality.

The study recommends that the Government should implement the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 (2000) to complement other women's initiatives for peacebuilding in Uganda since the NAP on UNSCR 1325 is a more efficient and strategic way of integrating gender into constitutional, legislative, and institutional reforms. The government should partner with key stakeholders like CoACT 1325, and other international agencies engaged in peacebuilding efforts to generate collective political support for the application of UNSCR 1325 and therefore increase its chances for success.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Peacebuilding encompasses a collection of principles, interpersonal abilities, analytical methodology, and procedures aimed at establishing enduring, equitable, and harmonious societies. Peacebuilding is inherent in all communities and cultures. Nevertheless, certain of our communities require assistance to investigate and enhance their ability to establish peace. Both men and women in any society are already actively involved in constructing peace, although their responsibilities are typically distinct. Gender ideologies shape the specific responsibilities that women and men assume in peacebuilding (Schirch, 2022).

This study assessed the role of women in peacebuilding using a case of Coalition for Action (CoACT) on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT) is an Alliance of 45 member organizations, of which 27 are local women's community-based organizations that work on gender equality and women empowerment, ranging from conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and mediation to promoting social accountability and inclusive governance. This chapter covered the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the conceptual framework.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Conceptual Background

Peace-building originated in peace studies over 40 years ago (Chandler & Empire, 2006). Chandler and Empire (2006) indicate that in 1975, Johan Galtung coined the term peace-building in his pioneering work 'three approaches to Peace', including peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. In his work, he posited that "peace has a structure different from, perhaps over and above, peacekeeping and ad hoc peacemaking. The mechanisms that peace is based on should be built into the structure and be present as a reservoir for the system itself to draw up. More

specifically, structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur” (Galtung, 1976, Pg 297).

These observations constitute the intellectual antecedents of today's notion of peacebuilding: creating sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of violent conflict and eliciting indigenous capacities for peaceful management and conflict resolution.

Another key scholar in peace studies, Lederach (1997, Pg 20), called for expanding our understanding of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding, according to him, "is more than post-accord reconstruction" and "is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships”. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct.

At the heart of this understanding of peacebuilding are three transformative processes: striving for social justice, ending violent conflict, and building healthy, cooperative relationships in violent and conflict-prone societies to prevent the emergence or recurrence of conflict. One advantage of adopting Lederach’s construction is its focus on prevention and its broad applicability to violent, fragile societies, whether in active conflict or otherwise. In this process of social transformation, women often play a significant but seldom recognized role in grassroots initiatives seeking to facilitate dialogue and transform conflict narratives (Banerjee, 2008).

The 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (also known as the Brahimi Report) refined the definition of peacebuilding as "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war" (Brahimi Report, 2000, Pg 3) The Panel also offered a middle ground to the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) political emphasis and UNDP developmental emphasis of the concept by stating that effective peacebuilding is, in effect, a hybrid of political and development activities targeted at the sources of conflict.

Arostegui (2013) asserts that it was at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, where women from around the world came together and, for the first time in such a forum, held focused discussions on women’s experience in war. This resulted in a dedicated chapter on

Women and Armed Conflict in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Chapter IV, Section E) (Arostegui, 2013). It was a turning point, and a call to action for women. In the years that followed, a global network of women, especially those who had been affected by conflict, worked at local, national, and international levels to call for peace and security for women. The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2011) affirm that in 2000, a global group of NGOs launched a worldwide appeal for the UN Security Council to formally recognise women's rights, to promote their participation in all peace and security processes, and to protect them in times of conflict. As a result of women's advocacy, and with the support of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the governments of Bangladesh, Jamaica, Canada, and eventually the UK, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 in 2000, creating an internationally binding mandate to address women and peace and security.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 as described by Nduwimana (2000) is a summary of principles which protect women's basic rights using international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international criminal law. In particular it is concerned with the protection of women's rights through the mechanisms of transitional justice and criminal justice. It was the first formal and legal document from the Security Council that required parties in a conflict to prevent violations of women's rights, support women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction, and protect women and girls from wartime sexual violence (Ursula & Holzinger, 2015).

The resolution acknowledged the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It called for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction. UNSCR 1325 was the result of the commitment and vision of both civil society and UN member states to address the policy gap of counting the role of women in peacebuilding and the long-term impact of conflict on their lives. Several major global conferences and policy frameworks championed by the UN since 1975 sought to advance the rights of women and girls, culminating in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. The Coalition on Women and International Peace and Security formed in response and became the main lobbying force for the creation of UNSCR 1325 (UN Women, 2018).

Adrian-Paul (2012) notes the key provisions of UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions. He asserts that UNSCR 1325 obligates all actors involved in conflict and peace issues - the UN, governments and non-state entities - to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making pertaining to peace and security, and to provide the necessary protections to them in conflict-affected settings. It calls upon all countries to increase representation for women in peace processes, and to consult and include women's peacemaking efforts. In the following years, the UN Security Council continued to develop its Women, Peace and Security agenda and passed additional resolutions to supplement UNSCR 1325: Resolution 1820 (2008) condemns sexual violence as a weapon of war; Resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010) further address sexual violence in armed conflict; and Resolution 1889 (2009) focuses on women's particular needs in post-conflict situations and their participation in all stages of peace processes. These four further resolutions strengthened the normative architecture for protection of women's rights during and after conflict and for addressing their needs in the recovery and peacebuilding period.

As highlighted by PuerchGuirbal (2010), the UNSCR 1325 has got 4 pillars namely; prevention; participation; protection; and relief and recovery. Prevention pillar is about preventing the relapse into conflict and all forms of structural and physical violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence. Participation pillar is about the inclusion of women and women's interests in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Protection pillar is about ensuring women and girls' safety, physical and mental health and economic security are assured and their human rights respected. And finally relief and recovery pillar is about ensuring that women's and girls' specific needs are met in conflict and post-conflict situations.

While UNSCR 1325 represented a shift in how national and international actors approach peace and security from gender perspectives, implementation has remained slow. The 2014 UN Secretary-General's report found that while gender is increasingly integrated into UN operations, challenges remain in fully implementing the resolution at the operational level. Kathrin M. Baumann's (2018) research delves into the aftermath of Resolution 1325, revealing that, despite its noble intentions, barriers such as institutionalized gender biases, cultural norms, and a lack of meaningful representation continue to impede the active participation of women in peacebuilding efforts. The study suggests that the envisioned transformative impact of the resolution has not

materialized to the extent desired, prompting a critical examination of the factors hindering progress (Baumann, 2018).

To accelerate progress, the Security Council in Resolution 1889 (2009) requested the Secretary-General to develop a set of indicators to track implementation of UNSCR 1325. In 2010, the 10th anniversary of the resolution, the UN held a High-level Review to assess progress and make recommendations for advancing the goals of UNSCR 1325 across societal sectors (Ursula & Holzinger, 2015). A follow-up report 23 years later, from the UNSC, continues to emphasize the importance of women, but their results show otherwise (United Nations Security Council, 2023). Women still have not been fully, equally, or meaningfully included in the building of sustainable peace nearly a quarter-century after Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted. Women's participation in peace negotiations has been hindered by a lack of power to influence negotiations, geopolitical divisions that impede progress, and security concerns associated with the proliferation of digital weapons.

Relatedly, UNSCR 1325 holds governments accountable for the protection of their citizens – in particular women and children – but, thus far, its implementation seems to be taking effect in countries with more established human rights records: Canada, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK) have all made significant strides in implementing Resolution 1325. While some African countries are part of the ‘Friends of 1325’ (a group which advocates the implementation of the resolution globally), the success of the resolution in Africa has been difficult to assess. The political will necessary for implementing the resolution at the national and regional level is not evident in many cases and this is compounded by the fact that there is no requirement in place to ensure observance by UN member states. (Center for conflict resolution, 2005)

1.2.2 Historical Background

At the global level, peacebuilding became a primary focus for Europe and the United States at the end of World War II. As a result of the war, many European nations needed to rebuild their industries and establish stable conditions that would create lasting economic stability. The United Nations was created in 1945 after members of 50 countries met to draft the UN Charter, hoping to prevent another global military conflict. During the Cold War, the UN initiated 13 peacebuilding

missions, largely in Africa and the Middle East. International military troops were used to maintain peace, and soldiers could use force only in self-defense (UN Security Council, 2014).

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations has played a vital role in helping to reduce the level of conflict in various regions of the world by mediating peace agreements and assisting in their implementation. However, it was not until then that UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's landmark *An Agenda for Peace* was published in 1992, and post-conflict peacebuilding officially entered the UN language (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). The concept was linked to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. It was defined as "an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (*Agenda for Peace*, 2002, Pg 5).

In the early 1990s, Africa witnessed the peaceful resolution of several protracted civil conflicts mostly through international facilitation or mediation. This was particularly evident in Namibia and Mozambique. Consequently, paradigms for peacemaking gained importance. However, mediation-focused strategies proved inadequate when confronted with exasperating failures of negotiated agreements in Angola and Rwanda. Undertaking each of these situations, international parties dedicated substantial time and money to reach an agreement, only to witness spoilers undermining it with a resurgence of abhorrent violence (Stedman, 1997). In response, the international community examined peace implementation and strategies for effectively handling resolute spoilers. The focus was placed on international monitoring and verification of peace agreements, emphasizing the acquisition of international political will, capabilities, and knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of their implementation.

Women in Africa are the custodians of culture and nurturers of families. However, in times of conflict, they are not represented at the peace negotiation table or in community post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Puechguirbal, 2005). According to UN Women (2002), women constitute fewer than 10% of peace negotiators globally and are only 3% of signatories to peace agreements. These figures tell of a grim tale for women because, in the face of conflicts, they bear the brunt of violence through rape, abduction, and enslavement. According to UNIFEM (2010), women in Africa and elsewhere are the least represented at formal peace processes as signatories to peace agreements, delegates, witnesses, mediators, or members of mediation teams and technical committees. Between 1992 and 2011, 16 peace agreements were signed between the warring

factions within African states, and the average of women signatories to those peace agreements was 0.63%. Out of the 16 states, only the DRC had women signatories to peace agreements and as mediators, with the figures compared to men being 5% and 20%, respectively. Kenya follows with women making up 33% of lead mediators during the 2007/2008 post-conflict violence, and Sierra Leone and Uganda had women making up 20% of witnesses. These figures show that the number of women participating in peace processes in various official roles is significantly low or non-existent (African Union, 2016).

In Uganda, after the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) deposed Uganda's military government and assumed control in 1986, violent conflict erupted in Acholi land in northern Uganda and quickly expanded throughout the region. This war demonstrated women's responsibilities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding procedures. According to Oywa (2002), women's efforts were more effective in community-based activities and advocacy campaigns than in official political processes. Women marched to call for an end to violence, lobbied government leaders, and documented violations by the Ugandan army, bringing international attention to the conflict. They also advocated for the rehabilitation of cultural institutions to promote community healing and reintegration of former combatants. Oywa (2002) suggests that women's efforts demonstrate the significance of addressing the repercussions of conflict at all levels to achieve long-term peace.

Ugandans and other countries that have experienced conflict have learned the lessons of inclusiveness and flexibility, including the crucial role of women. It is argued that women's role is an indispensable mechanism for trust and confidence-building that enhances genuine reconciliation in conflict-affected societies (Mukiibi, 2000).

1.2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Feminist theory as a guiding framework for the study. The Feminist theory is a critical framework that seeks to understand and address gender inequality, exploring the social roles and experiences of women and men across various disciplines (Griffin, 2017). Feminist theory has its roots in the late 18th century, notably influenced by early feminist thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft, who advocated for women's rights and equality. However, the formal development of feminist theory is often associated with the second-wave feminist movement of the 1960s and

1970s, which significantly expanded scholarly attention to gender issues and the role of women in society (Thomas, 2023).

The Feminist theory will help explain and analyze women's role in decision-making processes and the gender roles differences between men and women. Gender is explained to be the characteristics of women and men, girls and boys, and are socially constructed (World Health Organization, 2019). Some of these norms and socially constructed roles, Porter (2007) explains as women who are usually prime nurturers and therefore play a crucial role in peacebuilding, but in informal and unofficial ways and seen more as victims of war. This is further discussed by Butler (1999) who argues that gender is not just anything we are, but in accepting and learning, we become. It's a social performance and can be explained as schemas. Within the first few years of life, children learn and internalize societal gender norms. Bem (1983) asserts that children acquire cultural norms regarding appropriate behavior during these formative years. Girls are nurtured toward traits associated with empathy and care, while boys are encouraged to embody strength and power. As a consequence, women and men exhibit different behaviors shaped by their internalized motivations. Based on gender schemas and societal roles ingrained in the community fabric, they adapt their conduct (Bem, 1983).

Butler (1999) contends that feminist theory offers a perspective that sheds light on how politics and culture are systematically constructed and perpetuated. By challenging traditional assumptions and highlighting the performative nature of gender, feminist theory unveils the mechanisms through which political and cultural systems shape and perpetuate societal structures (Butler, 1999). Therefore, this theory is relevant to the study since it encourages a re-evaluation of power dynamics within conflict resolution frameworks. By adopting a feminist lens, stakeholders can critique existing power structures that perpetuate gender inequality and advocate for transformative changes that prioritize women's voices and experiences. This shift is essential for creating a more inclusive and effective peacebuilding agenda that addresses the root causes of conflict and promotes sustainable peace

Feminist analysis underscores the societal construction of gender roles, with particular emphasis on specific notions of masculinity and femininity (Kronsell, 2006, cited in; Runsala and Källström, 2018). It is plausible that the creation and perpetuation of Resolution 1325 have been shaped by this theoretical framework. The core tenets of feminist theory revolve around examining the social

manifestations of gender, viewing it as a pivotal categorization in society. Consequently, a nuanced hierarchy of gender power has evolved, consistently placing traits associated with masculinity in higher esteem than those linked to femininity (Runsala and Källström, 2018).

To comprehend the cultural and societal norms governing women in Uganda, exploring the extent of their recognition, experiences, challenges, and more from a gender-centric perspective can be illuminating (Nilsson, 2019). Such an approach is vital when delving into the study of women in a peacebuilding context. Feminist theories offer a valuable lens for dissecting power dynamics, both within the peacebuilding process and within broader societal structures. This perspective is crucial for unraveling how gender norms and inequalities contribute to shaping women's roles and agency (Nilsson, 2019).

The Liberal Feminism with its focus to achieve equality in the public sphere resonates with Duncanson's critique of pre-1325 peace operations (Griffin, 2017). Duncanson (2016) argues that pre-1325 peace operations faltered due to the absence of feminist perspectives on peace and security. This deficiency results from an analytic failure to recognize the gendered nature of war, where peace operations remained oblivious to the differential impact of conflict on men and women. Moreover, the failure to acknowledge gender as a relational power dynamic underpinning and sustaining the war system further compounded the shortcomings in achieving effective and inclusive peace (Duncanson, 2016). In this perspective, liberal feminism supports the demand for acknowledging the variance effect of conflict on women and men.

Generally, the feminist theory plays a vital role in shaping the discourse around women's involvement in peacebuilding. By framing women as agents of change, advocating for their representation, and addressing structural inequalities, feminist approaches can significantly enhance the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. This perspective not only enriches the understanding of gender dynamics in conflict but also fosters a more inclusive and equitable approach to achieving lasting peace.

1.2.4. Contextual Background

In October 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 proposed a framework to address women's peace and security issues at the local, regional, and international levels. The resolution is noteworthy in that it is the first internationally recognized document to acknowledge the

disproportionate impact of conflict on non-combatants and the fact that women and children constitute more than 80 percent of the 40 million refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. Broadly, 1325 recommends that the UN Security Council, UN member states, and civil society should endeavour to address four critical issues: first, the need for the participation of women in all decision-making and peace processes; second, the importance of integrating gender perspectives and training into peacekeeping operations; third, the obligation to protect women from gender-based violence in conflict zones; and fourth, the need to mainstream gender into UN reporting systems and program implementation mechanisms. The resolution thus seeks to address the reality of the impact of armed conflicts, human rights abuses, and humanitarian law on women and children, as well as the need to create gender parity at all levels of decision-making within UN Security Council-mandated missions. It also reminds governments of the still unachieved gender equality goals previously set by national and international instruments.

Uganda has had a history of conflict and violence since attaining independence in 1962. While there has been relative peace in the last decade, violent conflicts continue to affect some parts of the country, and the underlying causes of past conflicts remain unresolved. Angom (2018) states that Uganda has learned from its experience of the northern Uganda conflict that women's inputs, in terms of lobbying, peace missions, conferences, recommendations, and creating forums and networks at all levels, have contributed to advance the just cause of the role and contribution of women in the various aspects of peace processes and as vital promoters of the culture of peace.

Coalition for Action (CoAct) on 1325 focuses on localizing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, among other programs. The Organisation believes in building and strengthening institutions and CSOs/CBOs in Uganda to develop and implement strategies that address women's peace and security, including fulfilling human rights. In addition, it coordinates civil society participation in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the Uganda National Action Plan (NAP) on women, peace, and security. Through its women and leadership program, the organization has made deliberate efforts to increase the number of women participating in conflict prevention and resolution by enhancing women's leadership skills.

1.3 Problem Statement

Over the last two decades, the imperative to include women in peace and security decision-making has gained significant global recognition, anchored by milestones such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). These frameworks underscore that sustainable peace requires women's equal participation. Despite this, a persistent gap remains between normative commitments and practical implementation, with women continually underrepresented in formal peace processes. This was evident in Uganda during the 2006 ceasefire agreement between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army, which concluded two decades of conflict yet marginalised women's formal roles.

In northern Uganda, women have historically been and continue to be indispensable agents of peace, forming civic networks and acting as advocates, negotiators, and community-level peacebuilders. They have pioneered informal initiatives critical to post-conflict recovery, including the resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants and returning children, thereby fostering grassroots conditions for lasting peace. While current efforts in Uganda (such as the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, women's advocacy coalitions, and targeted training programmes) seek to empower women and enhance their participation, these initiatives have not yet translated into equitable representation in high-level mediation and decision-making forums. Consequently, despite being on the front lines of peacebuilding and disproportionately affected by conflict, women of all backgrounds remain systematically excluded from formal conflict resolution and complaint-handling mechanisms.

It is against this backdrop of enduring contradiction between vital grassroots contribution and persistent formal marginalisation that this study investigates why, despite their foundational role in peacebuilding and ongoing empowerment efforts, women in Uganda remain significantly underrepresented in official peace processes.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 Major Objective

To assess the contribution of women in peacebuilding using a case study of Coalition for Action (CoACT) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in Uganda

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess women's participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda.
- ii. To highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda.
- iii. To establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. How are women involved to participate in peacebuilding processes in Uganda?
- ii. What are the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda?
- iii. What are the major challenges faced by women in Peacebuilding processes in Uganda?

1.6 The Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

This study was undertaken in Northern Uganda (Yumbe, Lira, Katakwi), Western Uganda (Kasese), and Central Uganda (Kampala, Wakiso). These are some of the districts where the NGOs and Staff of Coalition for Action (CoACT) on 1325 operate in Uganda. Coalition for Action (CoACT) on 1325 is an Alliance of 45 member organizations, of which 27 are local women's community-based organizations in Uganda.

1.6.2 Content scope

The study assessed women's contribution to Peacebuilding in Uganda. It looked at the level at which women participate in and get involved in peacebuilding processes. The study also highlighted some of the peacebuilding initiatives spearheaded by women under the CoACT of UNSCR 1325. Lastly, the study established the challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The time scope for this study was from 2015-2024. This time scope was considered because it forms part of the Second and Third National Action Plans purposely to align with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which emphasizes the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding and the need to address their unique experiences during conflicts. This plan was part of a broader framework initiated by the National Action Plan for Women (2007), which outlined priorities for women's rights, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The government will benefit from this study since its findings and recommendations may push it to enhance a policy supporting women in the peacebuilding agenda. This can be done by establishing policies to offer further training and guidelines to Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the country. This will enable women and girls to set agendas in their programs for peace in their respective areas.

The results of this study will provide valuable insights and a more reliable guide to monitoring the operations of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) as well as other stakeholders (NGOs, CSOs) engaged in peacebuilding processes. Through this approach, people are likely to be encouraged to be more peacemakers/ peace-lovers who enhance nothing but the promotion of peace, reconciliation, and socioeconomic development.

Although there is existing literature on women's contribution to promoting peace in Uganda, this study shall substantiate the scholarly works specifically by bridging the existing gap through provision of practical realities of contributions to peacebuilding made by organizations operating under the CoACT on 1325 in Uganda, which other future researchers can find useful in their studies.

1.8 Definition of Key Research Terms

1.8.1 Peacebuilding

This is defined by Lederach (1997) as “a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships” (p. 20). For research purposes, it is therefore analyzed

not as a single event but as the long-term, multi-level process of addressing root causes of violence and establishing institutional and relational foundations for sustainable peace.

1.8.2 CoACT on 1325

This is defined by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET, 2022) as the Coalition for Action on 1325, a national civil society platform coordinating advocacy and monitoring for the implementation of Uganda's National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 (para. 1). For this research, it represents a key institutional actor and case study for examining the mechanisms, challenges, and efficacy of civil society in translating international women, peace, and security norms into national policy and practice.

1.8.3 Participation

In the context of peace processes, peacebuilding is defined as the involvement of a diversity of societal actors, including women, in official peace negotiations and political decision-making after conflict (O'Reilly, Ó Súilleabháin, and Paffenholz, 2015). For this research, it is operationalized as a measurable variable focusing on the presence, roles, and levels of influence of different groups within formal peace and political institutions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review discusses the diverse views and opinions of various authors, researchers, and scholars regarding the role of women in peacebuilding. It asks the question of what role women play in peacebuilding processes. In reviewing the literature, I will focus on women and peacebuilding and the place of UNSCR 1325 as a framework for peacebuilding.

2.2 Pillars of UNSCR 1325

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), adopted on October 31, 2000, is a landmark resolution that addresses the unique impact of armed conflict on women and emphasizes the importance of women's participation in peace and security efforts. UNSCR 1325 serves as a foundational framework for the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, aiming to enhance the role of women in peace processes and to address the challenges they face in conflict situations. Its implementation has been supported by subsequent resolutions and initiatives, including the development of National Action Plans by various member states to localize and operationalize its principles (Ursula & Holzinger 2015). The resolution is structured around four key pillars as discussed below.

2.2.1 Participation Pillar

This pillar advocates for the increased involvement of women in decision-making processes at all levels, particularly in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. It emphasizes the need for women's voices to be heard and considered in peace and security matters. The right to participate and make decisions is one of the twelve areas addressed by the Beijing Platform for Action (United Nations, 2010).

UNSCR 1325 (2000) can be seen as extending and adapting this principle to the context of peacebuilding. Women's right to decision making is a goal that must be approached horizontally as well as vertically. Often, there is a tendency to evaluate women's position solely on the basis of their political visibility. Tryggestad (2010) asserts that women's participation in the economic development of families and communities should be the cornerstone of their participation in

development and peace initiatives. This is corroborated by Shepherd (2008) who agrees that women have the right to take part in designing and managing local development projects, formal peace and reconciliation initiatives, and local governance structures.

In addition to targeting women's participation in politically visible initiatives and structures, such as negotiations, peace agreements, peacekeeping operations, and power structures set up during the post-conflict transition period, state institutions for constitutional and democratic governance, etc., African governments also need to improve women's access to local power structures. To do so, the following measures should be taken: Increase women's participation in local development projects; Improve capacity-building for women's groups in the villages (literacy, organizational structures, management skills); Design training programs aimed at building women's leadership, especially in rural communities; Develop a political framework encouraging women's participation in local affairs, especially by sensitizing the general public and local actors to the role of women in peace, development and national reconciliation (NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, 2018).

Generally, Lyman (2013) asserts that participation aims to ensure women's equal participation and influence with men and the promotion of gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes at national, local, and international levels. It includes the appointment of more women, including negotiators, mediators, peacekeepers, police, and humanitarian personnel, as well as support for local women's peace initiatives.

2.2.2 Prevention Pillar

The prevention pillar focuses on preventing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations. It calls for the integration of gender perspectives in conflict prevention strategies and policies, aiming to protect women and girls from violence before it occurs (United Nations, 2007). The 2014 Report of the Secretary-General on Women and Peace and Security (S/2014/693) recalls the fact that the efforts of women peace activists and civil society organizations to end war and militarism gave the impetus for breakthrough UNSCR 1325. At the same time, the report identifies the broader prevention aspects of UNSCR 1325 as the least explored and seriously underfunded aspects of the women, peace, and security agenda (Ursula & Holzinger, 2015).

Although protection and prevention go hand-in-hand, prevention has both a legal and a political dimension. The political dimension involves the whole population developing a culture of peace and equality and taking ownership of this culture. Reflecting the march towards peace and reconciliation, this culture should draw inspiration from all the stories: stories of struggle by men and by women, whether through political organizations or social movements, including civil society (Coomaraswamy, 2015).

Cohn (2008) asserts that an important aspect in the prevention pillar is the role of criminal justice and transitional justice in the fight against impunity. Although a very high proportion of women have been affected by sexual violence crimes, the suppression of these crimes by national and international legal instances has yielded very mixed results. UNSCR 1325 (2000) stresses the fact that states have the obligation to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls (Cohn, 2008).

However, the Commonwealth Secretariat (2008) notes that the manner in which the two international tribunals sitting in Africa (Rwanda and Sierra Leone) have prosecuted sexual violence crimes seems to be more a function of the personal sensitivity of the prosecutors than of the mandate of the tribunals. In an effort to make the Tribunal a haven of justice with regards to all the atrocities perpetrated during the civil war, including sexual violence against women, the Prosecutor for the Special Court for Sierra Leone has included rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy in the list of crimes against humanity.

Additionally, the study by Binaifer (2005) shows that even with fewer means and resources, the Special Court for Sierra Leone has had good practices and a record number of convictions for sexual violence crimes, contrary to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (TPIR). Although the TPIR was the first international tribunal to recognize rape and sexual violence as a crime of genocide, and although rape has been used systematically as a weapon of war in Rwanda, 90 per cent of the court decisions rendered by the end of 2004 contained no convictions for rape. Acquittals for rape were twice as numerous as convictions, and in 70 per cent of the cases, no rape charges were even brought by the Prosecutor's Office (Binaifer, 2005). Such mixed results raise questions about the extent of the justice system's willingness to pay attention to crimes of sexual violence against women and girls and the political will to deal with these crimes.

Another aspect of the prevention pillar as noted by Coomaraswamy (2015) is related to social justice and other forms of reparation needed to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims. Usually, the victims' expectations of justice are not limited to punishing the guilty, but also to restoring their own dignity, their physical and psychological health, and their physical and economic security. He adds that there are two closely linked aspects to rendering justice: judgment of the crime, and reparations. One way of helping marginalized groups gain access to some measure of reparations while simultaneously empowering them is to encourage their active participation in defining and implementing truth and national reconciliation mechanisms.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (2010) once said that the Victims' right to claim reparation is now a principle of international law, and to claim that right, a process is necessary that includes conducting investigations, collecting data, and documenting and publicizing crimes against women. He gave the example of Articles 72 and 79 of the International Criminal Court Act that allow the ICC to order that compensation and reparation be paid to the victim by the convicted person. In addition, De Brouwer (2007) notes that ICC has established a trust fund for victims, so that reparations are not limited to compensation and restitution, but also include the reintegration of victims and their families.

Coomaraswamy (2015) urges that the fight against impunity has to do with the punishment by the criminal courts for sexual violence crimes and all other gender-based crimes. The right to reparation relates to social justice for victims. It can take many forms: restitution, compensation, and reintegration. The right to reparations also includes an important dimension relating to guarantees of non-repetition. In this sense, it is a preventive measure based on the reform of any legislation that discriminates against women.

Nindorera (2006) recommends that to protect women and girls against discrimination and violence, and to ensure the integration and systematic advancement of their human rights, African countries must ratify and incorporate into their national legislation, the international and regional treaties which they have adopted, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on the rights of women in Africa, and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child. Governments and cooperation organizations should continue to support judicial reform, including the following aspects: Review of the Constitution to recognize the principles of gender equality and non-

discrimination; Electoral legislation reform; Review of family codes; Setting the legal age of majority required for marriage following the standards of the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child (18 years old minimum)

To sum it up, the UNSCR 1325 (2000) calls on Member States to adopt measures that ensure the protection of women and girls and respect of their human rights, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary. A series of measures are required to ensure that security sector reform, especially as it concerns the police, is a vehicle of participation and representation for men and women and is an entry point for the adoption and application of a code of ethics, code of conduct or work standards that respect the rights of women.

2.2.3 Protection Pillar

Binder, Lukas, & Schweiger (2008) state that protection is a political concept that is used and interpreted differently by different actors. Protection ensures that women's and girls' rights are protected and promoted in conflict-affected situations or other humanitarian crises, including protection from GBV in general and sexual violence in particular. The specific protection needs of refugees or internally displaced women and girls that can occur during the various stages of displacement are particularly emphasized. Protection is not the same as security, although often associated with it. Women and men experience security differently and the focus should be on determining what women and girls need to safely participate in society.

Therefore, this pillar acknowledges the gender-specific impacts of armed conflict and calls for measures to protect the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts. It stresses the need for safeguarding women from gender-based violence and ensuring their safety and well-being in conflict zones. The concept of protection includes three important dimensions: legal protection, social security, and economic security. These three dimensions are interdependent because, in principle, the recognition of women's rights (legal protection) should act as a safeguard for the social and economic security of women. Legal protection should also guarantee the socio-political rights of women, including the right to participation and representation (United Nations, 2015).

Unfortunately, many countries especially in Africa have lagged behind in a number of important areas, such as land rights, education, and HIV prevention and care. Kimani (2007) quotes Nyerere Julias who once said that denying women the right to inherit and own property leaves them

economically vulnerable and dependent. That creates a situation in which women in Africa toil all their lives on land that they do not own, to produce what they do not control, and at the end of the marriage through divorce or death, they can be sent away empty-handed. Thus, the Human Development Report (2006) noted that it is necessary to reform legislation so that countries meet regional and international standards on human rights and gender equality. In a number of countries, the right to inherit and to own land is still contingent upon customary law which, in general, is based on patrilineal inheritance.

The North-South Institute and Third World Network-Africa (2000) assert that by recognizing only men and boys as heads of households, customary law contributes to the exclusion of women and girls and considerably limits their access to production resources and their control over these resources. The issue is especially sensitive since in Africa, women are responsible for most of the farm work. They are the ones who develop the land. Yet, it is estimated that only 7 percent 94 of women in Africa own land.

Education is a crucial element in the implementation of SCR 1325 (2000). It is of vital importance for all the young people affected by a conflict, but more so for girls. Hudson (2009) states that education represents a key to protection for girls, in terms of psychological well-being, knowledge and security. It provides them with the necessary means and tools to participate actively in society. It is also a springboard that gives greater access to health and economic security.

UNAIDS (2024) acknowledges that the feminization of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa has been clearly demonstrated as women account for 59 percent of all people 15 years or older living with AIDS. Among 15-24 year-olds, the feminization of AIDS increases and suggests a different sociodemographic reality informed by the extreme youth of the victims. Indeed, Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 63 per cent of young people (15-24 age bracket) living with HIV and 76 per cent of these are female (UNAIDS, 2024). On a similar note, WHO (2004) affirms that the specific vulnerability of women, teenage girls and girls to AIDS can be explained by the weight of socio-cultural and socio-economic factors that deny them decision-making power over their own bodies and therefore considerably limit their ability to exercise control over their sexuality. Further, women and girls constitute the great majority of people who do not attend school or who are illiterate. Yet, education and literacy are needed to gain economic and political power. Numerous studies (Binder, Lukas, & Schweiger, 2008) have demonstrated that the more educated women

are, the better they are able to protect themselves against AIDS. It has indeed been proven that AIDS infects twice as many women and girls with no formal schooling.

However, Hoeffler & Fearon (2014) conversely state that women should not be confined to the role of victims; they are also part of the response and the solution. The fight against AIDS should be based on two realities: the feminization of AIDS and women's contribution to the community response to AIDS. The authors add that women are admittedly the main victims of AIDS, but they are also an important part of the community response, since they carry the socioeconomic burden of AIDS by caring for the sick and the orphans. As a result of the additional responsibilities that women take on for lack of institutional services, women experience physical and psychological exhaustion. They cannot keep up with food production and household work, and family revenue goes down.

2.2.4 Relief and Recovery Pillar

The final pillar emphasizes the importance of including gender perspectives in humanitarian relief and recovery efforts. It advocates for the equitable distribution of aid and resources to women and girls, ensuring their needs are met during the recovery and reconstruction phases following conflicts. Pierson & Radford (2022) affirm that the relief and recovery pillar highlights measures to address international crises through a gendered lens, including by respecting the civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps, and considering the needs of women and girls in the design of refugee camps and settlements.

Miller, Pournik, & Swaine (2014) assert that the relief and recovery pillar focuses on; Ensuring that women and girls' specific relief needs are identified and addressed; Incorporating gender perspectives into relief and recovery efforts; Promoting women's equal access to aid distribution; and supporting women's capacities to act as agents in relief and recovery processes. The authors also highlight the specific indicators used to track implementation of this pillar include: the number of relief and recovery programmes that incorporate gender perspectives; the percentage of relief and recovery funding that is allocated to women's empowerment and gender equality projects; the number of women participating in the design and delivery of relief and recovery programmes.

The United Nations (2015) highlights the importance of aims to ensure that women and girls' specific relief needs are met, for example, in repatriation and resettlement, disarmament,

demobilization and reintegration programs (DDR), the design of the refugee camps, support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. This pillar also promotes the reinforcement of women's capacities to act as agents in relief and recovery processes in conflict and post-conflict. By prioritizing the relief and recovery needs of women and girls and supporting their leadership in these processes, UNSCR 1325 aims to promote more inclusive and effective post-conflict recovery efforts that benefit the entire community.

2.3 Approaches to women's participation in peace processes

2.3.1 Practical Needs Approaches

Women's participation in peace processes is crucial for achieving sustainable and effective peace agreements. Arostegui (2013) asserts that the practical needs approach to women's participation in peace processes emphasizes the importance of addressing specific barriers that hinder women's involvement and ensuring their meaningful engagement in peace negotiations. This approach recognizes that women's participation is not only a matter of equity but also essential for achieving sustainable peace. This approach is grounded in the understanding that women's involvement is not only a matter of justice but also crucial for the effectiveness and sustainability of peace agreements.

Ayat (2021) urges that peace processes are inherently gendered, reflecting existing power dynamics between men and women. Women often face systemic exclusion, and their contributions are frequently marginalized or deemed incidental rather than essential. Recognizing these dynamics is vital for transforming peace processes to be more inclusive and equitable. For instance, one of the primary barriers women face is gaining access to formal peace negotiations. Women are often non-combatants and may lack the connections or resources to engage directly with decision-makers. Mediators can play a pivotal role by intentionally including women's groups in discussions, as seen in the UN-facilitated processes in Syria and Yemen. However, access alone does not guarantee meaningful participation; it must be accompanied by opportunities to influence the process (Ayat, 2021).

Porter (2003) has argued that peace accords lay the foundation of emergent society and, therefore, they should capture gender perspectives so that the future is grounded on sound gender considerations. Anderlini (2000) observes that an increase in women's participation enhances the

chances that major gender issues are discussed during peace talks and peace accords. Anderlini further shows that in addition to placing gender issues more frequently on the peace agenda than men, women often introduce other conflict experiences and set different priorities for peacebuilding. Women often are the sole voices speaking out for women's rights and concerns, forging coalitions based on their shared interests that transcend political, ethnic, and religious differences and bringing a better understanding of inequality to peace negotiations.

Women's roles in public and social life generally expand in times of conflict. El-Bushra (2007) attributes this to the decrease in the stereotypical gender divisions of labour. Also, during conflict, women's latent leadership is activated as they start to organize themselves to maintain a social fabric threatened by war and conflict.

However, women's ability to deploy their agency in peace processes is often undermined by structural and conceptual barriers. These include societal perceptions that politics and peace negotiations are male domains, which can marginalize women's voices. Furthermore, women may face scrutiny regarding their qualifications and experiences, which is not equally applied to their male counterparts. This dynamic can discourage women from participating or diminish their contributions when they do (UN Women, 2014). Actors in the field have made evaluations and criticisms of post-conflict operations and initiatives which claim gender neutrality. Many humanitarian organisations cling to the principle of neutrality in post-conflict relief operations, arguing that meeting the immediate practical needs of populations is their task. However, in practice, these operations do not exist in a vacuum, but work within communities which have their own gendered power structures in place, whereby women are often subordinated (Hudson, 2009).

United Nations (2012) report recognizes the need for fostering linkages across peace tracks through establishing connections between formal and informal peace processes can enhance women's participation. Women often play significant roles in informal negotiations and community-level peacebuilding. By creating mechanisms that link these efforts with formal negotiations, their insights and experiences can inform high-level discussions. The report calls for training and capacity development for women to acquire negotiation skills and knowledge about peace processes. For instance gender advisors can be instrumental in this regard, helping to ensure that women's perspectives are included in negotiations and that they have the tools necessary to advocate for their needs effectively.

Using the practical needs approach or a gendered approach, the UNSCR 1325 can be seen to privilege gender and marginalise other oppressions. The presumption that women involved in peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives will only articulate ‘gendered concerns’ is short-sighted and arrogant. Gibbings (2011) argues that the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda has no space for criticism of imperialism and foreign military intervention by Western powers, as was demonstrated by the embarrassment generated by the comments made by two Iraqi women during their visit to the UN, where they spoke at a meeting attended by gender officers for different UN agencies and several representatives from member states. They criticised the US-UK invasion of Iraq, condemning it as imperialist, and also critiqued the UN for its lack of support. Indeed, UNSCR 1325 has been criticised for ostensibly giving power to Western countries to intervene in peace processes around the world on the pretext of protecting women’s rights.

Generally, the need for a gendered approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution has been gradually acknowledged by the international peacebuilding arena, led by the UN. UNSCR 1325, the landmark document underpinning the UN Women, Peace and Security agenda, is ambitious and transformative in its rhetoric, and calls for women’s involvement at all levels of the peacebuilding agenda (Alberdi, 2010). The practical needs approaches to women's participation in peace processes highlight the importance of not only including women at the negotiating table but also ensuring they have the skills, support, and opportunities to influence outcomes effectively. By addressing the barriers to participation and fostering an inclusive environment, peace processes can become more representative and ultimately more successful in achieving durable peace.

2.3.2 Protection approaches

Alberdi, (2010) states that there is a general consensus that a crucial component of a gendered approach to peacebuilding is to acknowledge gendered vulnerabilities and ensure that women and girls are afforded protection from violence. Conflict and its aftermath affect women and girls, and men and boys, in different ways. Men and women assume different roles and are targeted differently by virtue of their genders. Women have specific vulnerabilities and often experience multiple forms of violence during and after conflict, with brutality and frequency reaching new levels in times of conflict and societal breakdown. Alberdi affirms that “women are not more vulnerable per se in times of war; they are made more vulnerable because of pre-existing

inequalities in so-called peaceful societies. Women do not suffer in war because of any intrinsic weakness, but because of their position in society” (Alberdi, 2010, p.11).

Protection approaches emphasize the need for protection against sexual violence during and after conflicts is critical due to the pervasive and devastating impact of such violence on individuals and communities. Sexual violence is frequently used as a tactic of war, employed to terrorize, dominate, and humiliate populations, particularly women and girls. This form of violence not only inflicts immediate physical and psychological harm but also has long-lasting effects on social structures, health, and economic stability (Center for Peacebuilding, 2012).

This is in line with (Pankhurst, 2008) who states that “deeply held patriarchal beliefs and strong patriarchal social relations are necessary factors in engendering high levels of sexual violence against women, and to the success of rape as a strategy to humiliate and undermine male opposition forces” (Pankhurst, 2008, p.306). The prevalence of sexual violence can escalate during and after conflicts. For instance, reports indicate that in the aftermath of conflicts, such as in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the rates of sexual violence remain alarmingly high, often exacerbated by the breakdown of law and order and the persistence of impunity for perpetrators (Bobillier, 2024).

All in all, establishing operational mechanisms to protect women from violence and discrimination during peacebuilding efforts is crucial. This includes addressing sexual and gender-based violence, providing support services, and ensuring accountability for violations against women in conflict settings. The protection against sexual violence during and after conflicts is not only a humanitarian imperative but also essential for the restoration of peace and security. Addressing this issue requires coordinated efforts at local, national, and international levels to create safe environments and support survivors effectively.

2.3.3 Instrumentalist approaches

Many arguments put forward in support of a gendered approach to peacebuilding are instrumentalist in nature, seeing women as a means to achieve sustainable peace rather than focusing on empowering women for their own sake. These approaches narrowly focus on what women can do for peace while neglecting the issue of what peace can do for women. Speake (2013) argues that the instrumentalist perspectives tend to define women's involvement in peacebuilding

primarily through their utility in achieving peace outcomes. For instance, arguments may emphasize that educating women can enhance community resilience because they are primary caregivers, thereby framing women's contributions as instrumental rather than recognizing their intrinsic value as peacebuilders. This utilitarian view can undermine the holistic understanding of women's roles and experiences in conflict situations, leading to a limited and often stereotypical representation of women as mere facilitators of peace rather than as active agents of change.

Research by Daniela & Kref (2019) shows that women included in formal peace processes do not necessarily represent the interests of their gender and are sometimes made mere instruments of tokenism, thwarting their meaningful participation. When only politically elite women, women of a particular ethnic group, or affluent women are represented in peacebuilding, for example, their meaningful participation may not facilitate desired outcomes or, more importantly, provide the diversity of perspectives and inclusion of those impacted by conflict necessary for achieving sustainable peace. Alexandra & True (2022) affirm that examining which women are present at the decision-making table, who they represent, their diversity of perspectives, and under which circumstances they can make autonomous contributions can provide important insights into advancing meaningful participation and durable peace. These concerns reflect the need for more research on the ways in which intersecting identities facilitate and impede women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding.

Instrumentalist approaches often confine women to their roles as mothers and caregivers, linking these traditional roles to women's perceived peace attributes. While these notions may contain truth, the challenge lies in how these positive attributes are used to undermine the multifaceted involvement of women in peace processes (Onslow & Schoofs, 2010). In fact, the focus on instrumentalist arguments can create barriers to broader engagement in peacebuilding processes. When women's roles are narrowly defined, it may discourage diverse participation from various segments of society, including marginalized groups. This lack of inclusivity can weaken the overall effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives, as a wide range of perspectives and experiences are essential for addressing the complex realities of conflict.

Strickland & Duvvury (2003) disregarding the capacities and efforts of 50% (or more) of the population can be seen as a waste of resources. However, these approaches are based on efficiency arguments, as opposed to considering the intrinsic value of empowering women and girls.

Instrumentalist approaches and arguments can be seen to be, in many ways, a result of NGOs and other groups in the peacebuilding community having to compete for resources in a funding context which is very much driven by the desire of donors to see concrete outcomes, and to meet specific targets (Strickland and Duvvury, 2003, p.15). Generally, while instrumentalist approaches may increase women's participation in peacebuilding, they fail to address the root causes of gender inequality and do not adequately support the diverse needs of women. A more holistic, feminist approach is needed that recognizes women's intrinsic value as agents of change and empowers them to participate meaningfully in building just and sustainable peace.

2.3.4 Participation approaches

Inclusive Peace Processes: Designing peace processes that actively include women at all levels is essential. This involves not only their presence at negotiation tables but also ensuring their voices are heard and valued in decision-making. Strategies include establishing quotas for women's representation and creating platforms for women's organizations to engage with mediators and policymakers. Participation approaches emphasize the recognition of women's agency. Women's roles in peacebuilding should be framed not just as victims of conflict but as active agents of change. Recognizing their contributions and leadership is essential for fostering a more inclusive peacebuilding environment. Women often bring unique perspectives that can lead to more comprehensive and lasting peace solutions.

Examples of the crucial roles that women can play are numerous. Rehn & Sirleaf (2002) affirm that the different roles that women and men play in society give them different insights and knowledge, and at present, much of women's knowledge and insight is not taken into account. From early warning systems right through to post-conflict transformation and reconstruction, women's contributions should be invaluable. In terms of early warning systems, women often have information about signs of potential conflict and escalating attacks. This information is garnered not through "high tech surveillance and espionage", but through small signs of instability relating to day-to-day activities, such as market activity and timings, and the price of 10 light weapons in the community (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002, p.117).

Despite their peacebuilding efforts, the under-representation of women at the peace table continues to be much more marked than in other areas, with women's participation remaining a largely unfulfilled target of UNSCR 1325. It is men who continue to dominate the formal roles in the

peacebuilding process: A UN Report from 2010 suggests that since 1992, fewer than 10% of peace negotiators have been female. Men make up the majority of politicians, peace talk negotiators, formal leaders, and peacekeeping troops and women's roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution (as well as in war) have been largely invisible (United Nations (2010).

Efforts to secure women's meaningful participation in peace processes have highlighted the need for transformative and inclusive strategies. This includes addressing practical barriers such as travel restrictions, visa issues, and the need for family care, which disproportionately affect women. Additionally, women often face heightened scrutiny regarding their qualifications compared to their male counterparts, which can undermine their roles in negotiations (United Nations 2021).

To avert the situation, UN Women (2013) notes the need for improved networking and collaboration among stakeholders. Building networks of women mediators and peacebuilders can enhance their influence in peace processes. Regional and international collaborations can provide support and amplify women's voices in negotiations, ensuring that their perspectives are included in peace agreements. Therefore, enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding is not only a matter of equity but is also essential for achieving durable peace. By addressing structural barriers, providing training, and fostering inclusive processes, stakeholders can ensure that women are not just participants but leaders in peacebuilding efforts. The integration of women's perspectives and experiences can significantly improve the effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives globally.

2.3.5 Transformative approaches

Transformative approaches to women's participation in peacebuilding emphasize the need for both gender-responsive and gender-transformative strategies to create inclusive and sustainable peace processes. The post-war period is often viewed as a critical time for re-evaluating and transforming gender roles and relations, particularly through a transformative approach to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Authors advocating for this transformative perspective argue that it is essential to address the underlying patriarchal structures that persist even after conflicts have ended (Moran, 2010, p.266).

Pankhurst (2000) points out that the challenge to gender relations often becomes too great for patriarchal societies to maintain in times of peace, and women find their historical contribution marginalised in both official and popular accounts of war, and their freedoms in peacetime restricted or removed. Patriarchal norms often normalize violence against women, particularly in conflict settings. This normalization leads to widespread acceptance of conflict-related sexual violence, which is frequently overlooked or inadequately addressed by institutions. As a result, victims face stigma and ostracism, making it difficult for them to seek justice or support, thereby undermining efforts to confront and resolve conflicts related to gender-based violence (Pankhurst, 2000).

Walby (1989) elaborates on how patriarchy affects the social structures. He affirms that patriarchy thereby denotes “a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby, 1989, p 214). This does not mean that all men (as individuals) dominate over and oppress women, or that all women (as individuals) are oppressed. Rather, patriarchal norms are anchored and perpetuated in social relations, institutions, and practices that assert gendered hierarchies. It is the social collective of women that is disadvantaged relative to the social collective of men. Hunnicutt (2009) adds that patriarchy operates at different levels, from household to the macro-level, and in different spheres, like politics, media, and religious institutions. The understanding of patriarchy transcending different spheres is closely linked to the feminist concept of the continuum of violence (Cockburn 2004): sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women in war or peace, in the public or the private sphere, shares a common basis in patriarchal social norms that devalue women (Swaine 2015).

The transformative approaches thus emphasize the recognition of women's roles. The UN Security Council Report (2013) notes that the post-war context is seen as an opportunity to recognize women not just as victims but as active agents in peacebuilding. This shift in perspective highlights women's contributions during wartime and their potential to influence the reconstruction process positively. Ignoring these contributions risks marginalizing women's voices and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Generally, the post-war period presents both challenges and opportunities for transforming gender relations. Advocates for a gendered approach to peacebuilding argue that it is essential to engage with the complexities of gender dynamics to achieve sustainable peace. By recognizing women's

roles as active participants in the reconstruction process and addressing the structural inequalities that persist, societies can work towards a more equitable future.

2.4 Spaces for Women’s Peacebuilding Initiatives at different levels

Gaventa (2006, p.26) elaborates that the concept of space doesn’t only depict physical spaces. Spaces are also “opportunities, moments, and channels” for discourses, policies, and realms of action where decisions are made. Spaces can be divided into closed, invited, and claimed. For effective peacebuilding efforts, these spaces operate in different forms (invisible, hidden, visible), and at different levels with a multitude of actors as highlighted in the following discussions.

2.4.1 Spaces at the Continental Level

Khadiagala (2021) points out that peacebuilding initiatives at the continental level in Africa involve multiple actors and frameworks aimed at addressing conflicts and fostering sustainable peace. The African Union (AU) plays a pivotal role in peacebuilding across the continent. It has established frameworks and institutions to support post-conflict recovery, emphasizing local solutions to conflicts. The AU’s Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) policy aims to create a consensus on peacebuilding approaches, although implementation has faced challenges due to the historical emphasis on state sovereignty and the complexities of local contexts.

In November 2005, the AU Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa came into force. This protocol provides a legal framework committing African leaders to the principle of gender equity and sets out key protection mechanisms for African women (UN Security Council, 2013). The document further seeks to address violations of African women’s rights, outlines a framework for the protection of women in armed conflict, and provides provisions to address gender-based violence. Thus far, 15 African states have ratified the protocol: Benin, Cape Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Gambia, Libya, Lesotho, Mali, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal and Togo. The protocol builds on efforts to promote the participation of women in decision-making and gender equity at the level of African institutions over the last five years, through such instruments as the AU’s 2004 Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. This declaration commits AU members to ensure full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes, including

the prevention, resolution and management of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The cornerstone of implementing UNSCR1325 is its focus on the inclusion of women in decision-making processes. The rationale for this stipulation is the understanding that, where women are visible in decision-making roles, their issues and concerns can be mainstreamed into policies and programs (Williams, 2006).

Several studies have questioned the causes of women's low representation in formal peace processes (Moser & McIlwaine, 2000). These scholars contend that the factors range from the patriarchal culture of most African societies, a misconstrued agency of women during times of war and peace to the underreporting of women's peace-building work at informal levels. Negotiations for peace in many African traditions were considered the preserve of men. Women continue to shy away from offering themselves in peace negotiations, but there are also larger questions about the capacity to engage meaningfully. Women must be given the negotiation skills to participate meaningfully in the negotiation process.

When discussing women in formal peace processes, and in this case, peacebuilding, the argument is that more women must be involved in building a greater gender-balanced and more inclusive peace. Sheckler (2002) has argued that this provides a basis for engendering post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. This is because most political institutions in both conflict and non-conflict situations tend to exclude women.

At the level of African institutions, major strides have been made in the last five years to elevate the status of women in decision-making. The establishment of the AU in 2002 was accompanied by a commitment to ensure gender parity within its Commission, and equitable representation of judges at the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights. The AU's Constitutive Act of 2000 also allows for the participation of civil society through structures such as the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), as well as the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The hope is that the creation of these organs promotes civil society participation in continental institutions and provide for the greater protection and monitoring of human rights (Katharina & Tieku, 2018).

Thus far, the AU Commission has mandated a 50 percent representation of women, resulting in half of the organisation's 10 commissioners being women. The AU Assembly has also created a Directorate on Women, Gender, and Development in the Office of the Chairperson, Alpha Konare,

to co-ordinate all organizations and programs of the Commission related to gender. The Gender Directorate at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is dedicated to ensuring gender mainstreaming in the AU's policies and programs. Furthermore, UNIFEM has been working with the AU to develop a gender strategy to inform its mediation efforts, focusing on strengthening the structures of continental peace processes. These changes have undoubtedly increased the focus on gender concerns within the organization, but the effective mainstreaming of women's issues into the AU's organs continues to be a challenge. However, the pace of the development of the AU's peace and security mechanisms to enshrine these goals has been slow (The African Union, 2002).

The AU's 15-member Peace and Security Council (PSC) – the decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of African conflicts – has acknowledged the status of vulnerable persons, including women and children, in conflict situations, and called for the involvement of civil society and women's groups in supporting efforts to promote peace and security in Africa. The specific mention of women's groups as viable actors in promoting stability is an acknowledgment of the multiple roles played by women in African conflicts beyond that of victims. However, the PSC fails to define clearly how women will be integrated into its structures and initiatives. It is not obvious what roles women will play in other security organs of the AU, for example, the Panel of the Wise; the Continental Early Warning System; the African Standby Force; the Military Staff Committee; and the Peace Fund. Furthermore, while NEPAD has stated its intention to work with women, it has failed to recognise or address the major issues of gender inequality, discrimination and oppression of women (Longwe, 2002).

There are several women networks operating at a continental level. For instance, the Federation of African Women Peace Networks (FERFAP) represents one of the longest-standing women's peace networks, grouping together more than 20 women's organisations in over 15 countries. FERFAP aims at encouraging women to be involved in peacebuilding efforts in Africa and has become a regional platform through which women affected by conflicts can articulate their priorities and concerns to policymakers and decision-makers. FERFAP has enhanced the visibility of women's efforts in peacebuilding through the concept of the Peace Torch, which began in Dakar, Senegal, in 1994, when FERFAP was created, and subsequently travelled to Beijing in 1995. The Peace Torch is now recognised worldwide as a symbol of peace and tolerance. Many of the women from

FERFAP have led peace missions to countries in crisis and have extensive experience in peacebuilding and conflict prevention and resolution (Khadiagala, 2021).

There are numerous women's associations working for peace in Africa. These associations have been the main standard bearer for SCR 1325 (2000). By using SCR 1325 (2000) strategically, women's associations have succeeded in: developing and presenting joint platforms of demands; having women's presence at the negotiating table accepted and their demands incorporated into the peace agreements; reforming legislation and working for the adoption of legislation that is more respectful of women's rights; Expanding women's representation at the level of government structures and institutions. The involvement of women in peacebuilding at a continental level is not just a matter of equity but is essential for achieving sustainable peace. Their unique perspectives and experiences can significantly enhance the effectiveness of peace agreements. However, to realize this potential, systemic changes are needed to ensure women's voices are heard and integrated into formal peace processes across the continent.

2.4.2 Spaces at the Regional Level

Women play a crucial role in peacebuilding initiatives at the regional level, particularly through established regional frameworks, grassroots efforts and formal participation in peace processes. Despite their significant contributions, women remain underrepresented in formal negotiations and decision-making roles. One of the frameworks is the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). The ICGLR is a sub-regional inter-governmental organisation of the countries in the African Great Lakes Region that began in 2000 when the UN Security Council called for an international conference on peace, security, democracy, and development in the region. The organisation is composed of 11 member states: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia. The ICGLR has a strong, legally binding framework that specifically names and addresses the principles of UNSCR 1325 on the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children as critical to peace and security, and is being used as leverage by advocates in the region (African Union/NEPAD, 2006).

The prominence of gender issues in the ICGLR framework results from the input and advocacy of women leaders, women's groups, and civil society that have all been affected by conflict. The ICGLR especially views sexual and gender-based violence as a priority, cross-cutting issue

affecting peace, security, development, and good governance. Its policy framework includes the Great Lakes Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (2006), which includes ten protocols that are legally binding – several of which address issues of gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence – including the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children; the Goma Declaration on Eradicating Sexual Violence and Ending Impunity in the Great Lakes Region (2008); and the Declaration of Heads of State and Government of Members States of the ICGLR on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (2011). The creation of the international and regional instruments pertaining directly to women’s rights have been largely the result of the advocacy of women’s groups, and show the power that women’s voices can have. When armed with knowledge of these frameworks and of their rights, women from the international to the national to the grassroots levels can successfully advocate for gender equality and women’s rights, change societies, and build sustainable peace (Arostegui, 2013).

Additionally, the increased visibility of Africa’s Regional Economic Communities in peacekeeping initiatives is an important consideration when monitoring the implementation of Resolution 1325. As has been apparent within the AU, there have been a number of measures by various RECs to mainstream gender concerns, through the creation of gender units or gender advisers within their organs. For example, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) established a Women’s Desk in 1999 with the intention of promoting women’s participation in IGAD’s programmes. Its objectives include the enhancement of the role of women in current peace processes in countries of the IGAD region such as Sudan and Somalia, and the support of the efforts of member states to train women in best practices for conflict management and resolution, including early-warning mechanisms and small arms control (Economic Commission for Africa. 2004).

In May 2002, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) established a gender policy that commits to mainstreaming gender perspectives in the conceptualization, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all its programs and activities. The policy is also committed to promoting the full, effective, equal, and meaningful participation and benefit of women in all areas of regional integration and co-operation. The Economic Community of West African States has also made progress in putting in place an institutional mechanism for

mainstreaming gender into its work. In January 2003, ECOWAS leaders endorsed the establishment of a Gender Division in the ECOWAS secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, and the restructuring of the West African Women's Association as the ECOWAS Gender and Development Centre. The purpose of the center is to facilitate and coordinate programmes to ensure that integration programmes on the disparities between men and women are incorporated into the framework of the ECOWAS treaty of 1975.

In southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community established a gender unit in 1997 whose primary responsibility is to coordinate SADC's efforts to ensure that the respective needs of women and men are integrated into the policies of its secretariat in Gaborone, Botswana. At the same time, a complementary structure introducing gender focal points in all SADC sectors was established to promote gender-responsive programme development. The adoption by IGAD's summit in 2002 of a resolution for the inclusion of women in the organisation's peace processes is a landmark policy commitment to implement Resolution 1325. With the establishment of the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism (CEWARN) also in 2002, IGAD has made efforts at mainstreaming gender into its peace and security structures. Women are represented in the conflict early-warning and earlyresponse units (CEWERUs). The continuing challenge is that CEWERU's gender policies have yet to be fully institutionalised. To enhance these processes, all conflict monitoring and early-warning systems on the continent must incorporate indicators into their activities which can help to avert the prevalence of sexual violence during conflict and in post-conflict situations. There is also a need to review these indicators, to ensure that they are gender-sensitive, and that women are recruited as field monitors (Kethusegile & Kandawasvika (2005).

Erasmus (2011) asserts that certain activities by RECs have demonstrated the central role that these organisations can play in the implementation of Resolution 1325. IGAD proved integral in ensuring that women were among delegates to the 2002-2004 Somalia peace talks. As a result of these efforts, women were involved in the drafting commission and one woman signed the accord on behalf of women and civil society groups. Despite these initiatives, however, it still remains difficult to estimate the extent to which women's issues are being fully integrated into regional peace and security policies and initiatives by Africa's RECs. The collaboration between gender

units or desks and regional peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peacekeeping initiatives remains weak.

Rehn & Sirleaf (2000) assert that the number of women's collectives for peace at work in the Great Lakes Region, in West Africa, and other regions, indicates that women have found a voice and a way to work for peace in Africa. They give an example of the Mano River Union Women's Network for Peace (MARWONET) which brings together women's groups from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. It is a perfect example of African women's commitment to peace, not only within national borders but also regionally. Similarly, the Women, Peace and Security Network Africa is a Pan-African collective of associations actively involved in advocating for the right of women to peace and security.

2.4.3 Spaces at the National level

Center for Conflict resolution (2005) notes that one of the principle objectives of Resolution 1325 is to promote the mainstreaming of gender justice and gender equality in peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts at the national level. Without this, international efforts will prove ineffective. Countries emerging from war face significant challenges within the humanitarian, development and security spheres. Consequently, as Chege (2005) notes, there is an urgent need to enshrine gender justice during transitions from conflict. Unique opportunities exist during this phase to ensure the direct participation of women in the transition process in order to promote gender equality. This necessitates the central involvement of civil society, governments, as well as international actors, in driving change.

At a national level, the inclusion of women in the processes and mechanisms for developing and amending constitutions and electoral laws is a vital element of this progress. There are further steps that can enable the inclusion of gender parity in constitution-building such as public consultations as well as promoting the involvement of women in the drafting process. Each component of drafting a new constitution should involve women. Civic education should increase public understanding of the process and emphasise the importance of a constitution for democracy. For example, in Eritrea, this was done through songs, poems, stories, radio and local theatre in various languages. In Rwanda, a women's committee conducted training, awareness and sensitisation programmes on the constitution throughout the country (United Nations, 2006).

To achieve greater gender parity, a number of African governments have adopted temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women. For example, Rwanda's 2003 constitution articulates the need for commitment to equality between women and men. This notion is supported by a guarantee that at least 30 percent of all posts in decision-making organs will be awarded to women. Countries such as Eritrea have also introduced gender quotas for parliaments, while major political parties in Botswana, South Africa and Zambia have instituted minimum thresholds. The DRC has recently put in place a quota system in its constitution. While these events are encouraging, the resumption of traditional, post-conflict social structures and gender divisions can compromise the effective participation of women, even where affirmative action programmes exist (United Nations, 2006).

Practical realities at a national level indicate active women's associations and networks involved in peace processes. For instance, in Sierra Leone, Mano River Union Women's Network for Peace (MARWONET) and other women's organizations have taken the lead on many issues, notably the right to participation and political representation. Women actually hold 14.5 per cent of all seats in Parliament. This score may be low compared to the 30 per cent benchmark and the parity principle; however, to appreciate the important gains made by women, it should be noted that in 2002, women occupied 8.8 per cent of the seats in Parliament (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, 2011). In Côte d'Ivoire, various groups such as Coalition des Femmes Leaders, and Plate Forme des femmes have started participating in peacebuilding. Even if women have not been officially admitted at the peace negotiations, they are mobilizing in greater numbers and in a more structured way for peace and their right to participate (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

In Sudan, civil society organizations, such as the Sudanese Women's Association in Nairobi (SWAN), the Sudanese Women's Voice of Peace and the Community Development Association, have denounced violence against women and actively promoted a common agenda for gender equality. In Somalia, women have created the 'sixth clan' in order to be admitted to the negotiation table. When the Nairobi Peace Agreement was signed in 2004, civil society was represented by a woman, Asha Hagi Elmi, thanks to the work carried out by Save Somali Women and Children (Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, 2011).

In Uganda, the Juba Peace Talks to resolve the conflict in the North of the country have only just begun. Nevertheless, the Uganda Women's Network has already petitioned the mediator, Dr. Riek

Machar, on a variety of issues: women's participation and representation at the negotiation table, especially for women living in the region affected by the conflict; and ensuring that women's grievances are addressed in the peace agreement (Ochen, 2008). In fact Uganda has ratified all of the international human rights instruments that are a part of the women, peace, and security framework. These international instruments have been important in advocating for the principle of equality and dignity for women, and especially in advocating for laws addressing violence against women. Lawyers, judges, and advocates familiar with the instruments are able to pull from them and use them continuously to remind the government of its obligations, which have also been domesticated through the Constitution. In line with its international obligations and its 1325 National Action Plan, in 2010 Uganda enacted several laws addressing gender-based violence, and has also passed legislation on land rights and inheritance (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2008).

Arostegui (2013) adds that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, women's organizations have set up 'synergies 1325', a collective of more than 12 provincial and regional associations, including Network for Women's Action; Association of Women Lawyers for Development; Association for Promotion and Support of Women's Initiatives. The groups have committed themselves to disseminating UNSCR 1325 (2000) and to using it as a political bargaining tool. Congolese women's organizations have also pooled their energies and created the *Caucus des femmes Congolaises* (Congolese Women's Caucus). This group has played a decisive role in ensuring the inclusion of women in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. Some 60 women from all the regions of the Congo participated in the multi-party National Forum which took place in Nairobi in February 2002. At the close of this forum women launched the Nairobi Declaration and the Women's Common Platform for Peace. Thanks to women's participation in the peace talks, both at the regional and national levels, the Global and Inclusive Agreement approved at the outset of the political negotiations process incorporated the parity principle, based on SCR 1325 (2000).

Given the aforementioned work in peacebuilding done by women at national and grassroots levels, Connell (2005) notes that it is essential that further support be provided at the national level to enable the participation of women in political, legislative, judicial, electoral and economic reconstruction processes and reform commissions. Many women have made personal and public sacrifices to challenge systems that maintain negative attitudes towards the leadership of women.

In cultures of political violence, however, many women are either excluded or are reluctant to take on public roles. Support is required to maintain the solidarity and morale of women under such circumstances. Technical, material and financial assistance are needed to promote women candidates for elected positions, as well as to encourage the political involvement of women at all levels of society.

Conclusively, O'Reilly et al (2015) points out that there is evidence that suggests that when women meaningfully participate in peacebuilding, they offer perspectives and solutions that include more comprehensive approaches to issues that are often overlooked by their male counterparts, resulting in more durable outcomes. Ranging from ceasefires and transitional justice concerns to matters of health care, housing, education, transportation, child welfare, and natural resource management, issues prioritized by women affect the entire community as well, and impact the well-being of future generations.

2.4.4 Spaces at the Local/Grassroot level

Women have long played significant roles in grassroots peacebuilding efforts often taking the lead in bringing communities together, promoting dialogue, and addressing the root causes of conflicts. At the local level, women's organizations are actively involved in informal peacebuilding activities that aim to reconstruct society and improve people's everyday lives. Tony & Murshed (2005) highlight the informal activities that women and note that they provide food, shelter, healthcare services, education, economic empowerment, and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence in their communities. This practical assistance helps rebuild society from the ground up.

Tony & Murshed (2005) add that women build coalitions across ethnic divides through various channels in their communities. They combine messages of peace with care for victims of war, organizing fasting for peace, interfaith prayer meetings, and support for orphans and other war victims. Women set up local peace committees that bring together traditional leaders to discuss issues, mediate conflicts, and encourage peaceful co-existence. The committees also sensitize communities on alternatives to conflict through radio shows and peace rallies. Women's advocates have long pushed for a rights-based approach, arguing that women have a right to be represented in decision-making processes that impact their lives. They advocate for women's meaningful

participation in all peace and security processes to ensure civilian protection (Tony & Murshed, 2005)

While this study explores women's peacebuilding efforts generally, it also focuses on the domestication and localization of the UNSCR 1325 spearheaded by CoAct in Uganda. The examples highlighted below are the grassroots peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women associations and networks under CoAct on UNSCR 1325.

2.4.4.1 The Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT)

CoACT is an alliance of 42 member organizations, typically women's organizations that work on gender equality and empowerment, including conflict prevention, peacebuilding, promoting social accountability and inclusive governance, and women's economic empowerment. Established in 2014, it arose out of the need to go beyond producing reports of findings of the annual monitoring of the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which would gather dust after they were launched, to tracking the adoption of and action on the recommendations of the reports and going beyond awareness raising on UNSCR 1325 to well-coordinated policy engagement that would lead to concrete action for impact. CoACT envisions a world in which human rights, including the rights of women, are respected by all, enabling women to reach their full potential (Twijikireho, 2019)

CoACT works to make Uganda's international and regional commitments and national laws and policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment fully implemented at all levels of governance. It was established to build the capacity of the public institutions, women's CBOs, and partners to fully implement UNSCR 1325. Additionally, it was established to network and develop partnerships with peace-oriented groups and associations to promote peace, and implementation of gender responsive political, economic and social policies (Twijikireho, 2019).

2.4.4.2 Lango Women Clan Leaders Association (LWCLA)

Women in the Lango sub-region formed the Lango Women Clan Leaders Association to enable them to participate in decision-making in traditional systems and to influence the participation of women in other aspects of development. The association thus helps girls and women in Lango enhance their rights, using gender, culture, and education for development. It promotes positive cultural practices that do not impinge on the rights of women while denouncing those that oppress and humiliate them. Thus it participates in the protection pillar using a gendered approach.

To promote the recognition of women's rights and support girls' education, some women at the LWCLA, who are teachers and members of the Mothers' Union, use their position to help women expand their view of their role in society. The Association has registered achievements in raising awareness, providing sponsorships, and significantly contributing to fora at different levels and through various mass media. It initially targeted secondary education because most girls drop out at that level. Still, it has broadened its advocacy work on the value of collective responsibility towards children to parents and communities, highlighting the role of different stakeholders (government, school teachers) in creating a girl-friendly environment.

2.4.4.3 Lira Rural Women and Children Development Initiative (LIRWOCDI)

This was formed by a female retired police officer in Lira who then established a protective shelter for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Since 2003, more than four thousand women and child survivors of abuse have passed through this Shelter. With the support of the UN Women and Children's Fund, the shelter also has been able to repair 40 serious cases of Fistula, and the youngest survivor was four years whom a neighbor raped. The shelter also provided medical treatment to over 60 young mothers who were sexually abused. The majority of women and girls who are received at the shelter for protection are female survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, forced marriage, child labor, orphans, rescued children from traffickers, potential victims (girl child) of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Fistula.

This initiative contributes to both the prevention and protection pillars of the UNSCR 1325. Despite its achievements, the shelter still faces some challenges as it is mainly run on donations from well-wishers. According to the founder, the shelter's most pressing needs are school fees for orphans to go to school, feeding and clothing, medical care, skills training for young mothers, and a vehicle to ease movement, among others (Loyce, 2014).

2.4.4.4 Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA)

This NGO is located in all the districts in the Teso region and has achieved great success in conflict transformation initiatives. It was formed in 2001 by Cecilia Engole following her participation in the Isis-WICCE Institute to respond to the challenges that women and girls face during and after conflicts. Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) designs issue-based peace-building and conflict resolution projects/programs and organise focused peace-building training for Training of Trainers (TOTs) in communities for sustainability and to create lasting peace. TEWPA's focus is

peacebuilding, conflict transformation, democratization, and human rights. It uses the practical needs approach at a village level where women/girls' needs are assessed. It also includes a transformative approach since its approach to women's empowerment is mainly through holding synergy meetings by working with women and men from different ethnic/tribal/political groups to create collective action to influence decision-makers for an effective change.

Considering its impact so far, TEWPA has established peacebuilding committees and animators in the community structures. They have continuously been trained in human rights and peacebuilding processes to facilitate interventions in various villages. The organisation also organizes dialogues, debates, and Barazas with duty bearers and beneficiary communities to create awareness of women's rights and other issues. The women are organised in consortiums as interest groups for successful advocacy on identified issues of women's concern. TEWPA has trained over 246 Alternative Dispute Resolution Activists (ADRAs), women and men, to mediate land disputes in Teso. So far, over 50 mediation clinics have been conducted, and over 40 land cases have been successfully resolved. 325 women Peace Committees have been trained in peacebuilding processes and Human Rights in the Teso and Karamoja regions, and these have, in turn, reached over 1,967 community members who experienced conflicts and who have successfully internalized what their rights and responsibilities are. Likewise, community members have taken up the responsibility of educating others in their villages. TEWPA has also built the capacity of 159 adolescent mothers on life skills to sustain themselves. This is done through making reusable sanitary wear, liquid soap, and other entrepreneurship skills. The girls were also sensitized to join family planning. The organisation has, therefore, succeeded in making communities understand these actions as means that make them peaceful and, therefore, important to sustain. TEWPA has reached over 8,631 community members in the Teso region to create awareness of women's land rights (Namutebi, 2020).

2.4.4.5 Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE)

Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE) is a membership organization aiming to build the capacity of grassroots initiatives for peacebuilding and conflict resolution in its localities. KANWE was started in 2001, initially focusing on women and children. It was established to change a culture of violence that it believed had become endemic in the Kasese District. This implies that it contributes to the protection pillar of UNSCR 1325. KANWE also promotes peacebuilding among

women and conflicting parties in the Kasese district through training, education, advocacy, and psychosocial support services. This is done by strengthening target communities' local capacities to promote peace in their localities, advocating for appropriate peace initiatives and non-violent conflict, and facilitating social integration and post-conflict healing (RFPJ, 2012).

2.4.4.6 Yumbe Women Peace Mediators' Network

This network of women mediators is involved at different levels of peace processes, including peace dialogues on cattle raids. Women peace mediators and analysts joined forces with the Police and Army in Rengen, Panyangara, Nakapelimoru, Kacheri, and Lolelia sub-counties. This network contributes to the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325. For instance, its members participated in cross-border meetings with the communities of Turkana, Bokora, Matheniko, and Jie ethnic groups. These meetings tackled issues of armed cattle raids, the killing of women and children, and the use of guns among armed communities both in Karamoja and Kenya's border districts. The network also offers guidance, counseling, and psychosocial support for grieving families affected by raids, Sexual gender violence, and death, as well as reporting cases to different stakeholders when identified in the communities before they escalate. It also sensitizes communities on land disputes. Since 2019, Yumbe Women Mediators' Network has trained over 40 mediators, conflict analysts, and monitors to enhance women's capacity to mitigate conflict and sustain peace. The women peace mediators, monitors, and analysts are community-based volunteers who promote peace in their host and refugee communities.

2.4.4.6 Women Peace Initiatives-Uganda (WOPI-U)

Women Peace Initiatives-Uganda (WOPI-U) was founded in 2003 by a group of women to bring back peace, development, and a violence-free society to Northern Uganda. It was established to respond to the tremendous suffering the LRA conflict had caused, particularly the severe impacts on women. The organisation's activities include forming peace clubs in communities and schools, broadcasting peace messages to young people and adults in and out of school, and holding radio talk shows on peacebuilding and sexual and gender-based violence.

WOPI-U has contributed to the relief and recovery pillar of the UNSCR 1325 by supporting the reintegration of formerly abducted girls/women by training 22 of them in tailoring by purchasing tailoring equipment, including sewing machines. A further 23 women were trained to rear goats. They were supported by procuring two female and two male goats to enable them to develop a

breeding programme and create a sustainable livelihood (Peace Insight, 2022). Strengthening joint counseling and guidance services for the community where WOPI-U operates, with an emphasis on women and child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, is at the heart of WOPI-U. It has also trained police officers, other security forces, child protection committees, and clan leaders on their roles in protecting women's and children's rights. Training women on aspects of human rights with an emphasis on women's rights has also been done (Peace Insight, 2022).

Conclusively, while the underrepresentation of women at any level of governance and decision-making results in a democratic deficit, failure to recognize women's grassroots contributions is particularly detrimental to peacebuilding processes and community ownership. As noted in a UN Women-commissioned report, "The international community neglects so-called track 2 negotiations at the local or sub-national level, where many women are already brokering peace or shoring up community resilience, while narrowly investing in track 1 negotiations with political and military elites that are predominantly male" (O'Reilly, 2015, p.54). It is also often at the grassroots level, including in the context of households, that gender relations need to be transformed so as to allow for lasting social change and peace.

Evidence (Anderlini, 2006) suggests that despite women often being more visible in non-traditional areas such as local political institutions during conflicts, they tend to return to their less public roles after conflicts. Hart, (2006) adds that traditional law reduces women to a secondary status as minors, excluding them from certain rights such as that of guardianship over children, or the right to own property. While affirmative action was identified as a key mechanism to increase women's participation in decision-making structures on the continent, it should not be used in the absence of longer-term strategies to transform discriminatory practices and gender-oppressive cultural belief systems

The UNSCR 1325 has legitimized the many struggles for peace in which women have always been involved but which had remained largely unacknowledged. In an aftermath, women's associations have been able to break out of a situation in which they were peace activists without a title or any political recognition. Mayanja (2006) affirms that the UNSCR1325 fundamentally changed the image of women from being exclusively victims of war to being participants as peacemakers, peacebuilders and negotiators. Women at the grassroots level in countries as diverse as Uganda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Liberia, and Somalia among others,

have used this resolution to lobby for their voices to be heard in peacebuilding processes, in post-conflict situations, and in the rebuilding of their societies. Thus, women have used different spaces to participate in peacebuilding at different levels.

2.5 Challenges/Barriers women face in peacebuilding processes

2.5.1 Barrier for participation in Political Spheres

During the early phases of conflict, women experience too many barriers that make it hard to participate in politics. The World Bank (2005) has noted that there is hardly a functioning representative organ, government, or parliament where women become politically active in many conflict situations. It also notes that even when political systems continue to function, the women's role often remains marginal or is co-opted by political players (World Bank, 2005). However, women's latent leadership is activated during the conflict as they organise themselves to maintain a social fabric threatened by war and conflict.

Lederach (1997) has also argued that despite the rights won during the conflict, women's loss of opportunities to exercise political and social leadership immediately after the conflict is among the most extreme and long-lasting of their losses. Similarly, El-Bushra (2003) observes that women managed to play political roles at the community and national levels during the conflict in countries such as Uganda.

2.5.2 Ambivalent Perceptions of Culture and Gender

Women are at the crossroads of competing perceptions and have suffered from a degree of ambivalence. One perception dictates that cultural issues should be handled by men and elderly people only, thus excluding the contribution of women and youth. (CCFU, 2008). The belief that women should be at the center of peacebuilding and resolution processes is not based on essentialist definitions of gender (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005). The field of sociology distinguishes between sex and gender. Beauvoir (2011, p. 330) asserts that "human beings are not born men or women". Butler (1999) adds that masculinity and femininity are learned, rehearsed, and performed daily. It would be naive to assert that all women respond similarly in a given situation or that women are 'natural peacebuilders' (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005). Gender identity is performed differently in different cultural contexts. Gender identity must always be viewed in relationship with an individual's other identities, such as ethnicity, class, age, nation, region, education, and religion. It is important to note that there are different expectations for men and women in various

sectors of society, and gender roles shift with social upheaval. In conflict situation, men and women face new roles and changing gender expectations. Their biological and sociological differences affect conflicts and peace building. Most societies value men and masculinity more than women and femininity (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005).

2.5.3 Lack of adequate and sustainable Funding for Women Organizations

Ochen (2017) analyses several post-conflict situations (Uganda, DR Congo, and South Sudan) and suggests however that many a time NGO programs especially those working with women are abruptly ended at a time of great need. This is especially the case when it comes to supporting civil society organizations to address emergent issues affecting women and children in the immediate, medium term and longer-term aftermath of conflict. Ochen (2017) cites an example of northern Uganda which suffered an atrocious and brazen conflict for 20 years. But when the peace agreements were signed by both government and the rebels, most of the development and humanitarian agencies ceased operation in the region, without due appraisal of the conflict trajectory, a thorough conflict analysis, and assessment of whether the remaining local organisations (including local governments) are prepared and equipped to take over the roles that the international agencies had been performing. This failure to link process and outcome to the sustainability of the program defeats the purpose of peacebuilding interventions in given situations.

Cardona et al (2015) also agree that the sustainability of support for women's organisations is a key barrier which impacts on the sustainability of their work with the communities in various countries in all spaces and levels of peacebuilding. They assert that most of the the local NGOs, women associations, and CSOs are usually dependent on external funding. Yet the funding they receive tends to be short term in nature and restricted to specific project areas, such as livelihood training or counselling. The local organisations struggle to set their own agendas, and are often influenced by the funding preferences of donors. They cite a case of Sierra Leone, where local NGOs, including women's rights organisations, identified severe challenges particularly in terms of capacity and resources which are never enough to combine training and awareness activities with livelihood support initiatives.

2.5.4 Lack of Representation and Participation of Women in Decision-making Levels

The lack of women's participation in decision-making levels poses significant challenges to peacebuilding efforts globally. Women's representation in peace processes is crucial for addressing the unique needs and experiences of women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by conflict. Pankhurst (2000) points out a challenge to ensuring the increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions, as well as during formal peace negotiations and processes. There have been some measures to increase the participation of women in leadership at the continental level. He cites examples of the AU's 2005 Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the 2004 Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa that outline a framework committing African leaders to the principle of gender equality and set out fundamental protection mechanisms for African women. Based on the AU policy on equal participation of women in decision-making positions, women now comprise 50 percent of the commissioners of the AU. Similar measures have been undertaken by African regional organisations to ensure increased gender parity within their organisations.

Research conducted by Endut (2023) shows that peace agreements often fail to adequately address the specific needs of women and girls due to their lack of representation. Between 1992 and 2019, women constituted only 6% of mediators and signatories in major peace processes, and only 20% of peace agreements referenced gender issues (Endut, 2023). This oversight can lead to agreements that do not consider the impacts of conflict on women, such as sexual violence and displacement, resulting in continued marginalization of these issues in post-conflict recovery. To achieve effective peacebuilding, it is essential to create inclusive processes that actively involve women from the outset. This includes establishing gender quotas to ensure women's representation in peace negotiations and decision-making roles. Engaging women in all stages of peace processes (from negotiation to implementation) ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions to conflict.

2.5.4 Impeding Traditional Laws

Tripp (2002) asserts that some traditional laws discriminate against women, and thus hinder their participation in transitions from war to peace and, more generally, make it hard for their full integration into society. Often, traditional laws grant women a secondary status as minors,

excluding them from, among other things, rights of guardianship over children and to own property. While international law may seek to address gender inequalities, social norms do not necessarily advance in line with these changes, and women often remain politically and economically disadvantaged.

Mazuri (2006) notes that the vast majority of societies, political involvement and particularly issues of war and peace have historically been viewed as male domains, and often continue to be perceived as such. Politics in general is often viewed as a violent and dangerous field unsuited to women, while the business of war, and therefore of peace, is often only seen as pertaining to men with guns. Women and girls are seen as extraneous to these issues, even though they are directly and indirectly affected by violent conflict, as well as contribute to perpetuating or ending violent conflict in ways as diverse as men and boys. United Nations (2021) report notes that despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary and an obligation under UNSCR 1325 to do otherwise, many of those involved in designing, funding, hosting, and participating in peace processes, mainly official governmental level peace processes, have systematically kept, and continue to keep, women and women's groups at a distance.

2.5.4 Structural barriers

ACCORD (2015) points out the erroneous conceptualization of war and conflict as being pre-eminently or exclusively male domains and the essentializing of women as only either victims or peacebuilders which eventually leads to direct structural barriers to women's participation. Even where women have played major and visible roles, as supporters or active combatants, their participation is often air-brushed out of public narratives of conflict by various actors, and their roles either downplayed or rendered invisible (ACCORD, 2015). This leads to a reinforcing of the male domination of armed groups, be they state or non-state, and of their political representatives, since having fought in conflict is often an unstated prerequisite for participation in peace processes. Thus, the combatant parties, their political wings and, in spite of advances over past years, the international machinery supporting negotiations, remain a man's world, especially as far as Track One diplomacy is concerned. Most often, women have simply not been promoted to the positions necessary for taking part in discussions (Axelsson, 2015).

The underrepresentation of women in political spheres limits their involvement in peace negotiations. Women make up a small fraction of political leaders globally, which restricts the

pool of potential female participants in peace processes. Structural barriers, such as discriminatory practices and gender bias, further hinder women's meaningful participation. For example, despite the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which calls for women's involvement in peace and security, progress remains slow, and women's roles are often relegated to tokenism rather than genuine engagement (Shekhawat, 2015).

2.5.5 Poverty and Household responsibilities

Poverty and household responsibilities significantly hinder women's participation in peacebuilding efforts. These barriers manifest through various social, economic, and cultural dimensions, limiting women's ability to engage meaningfully in peace processes. Cordona (2012) cites an example of women in communities of Liberia who stated that lack of income is a significant barrier to taking part in peacebuilding activities. Women reported that they are unable to engage in peacebuilding or development activities due to a lack of time because of their domestic roles. In addition, as a result of low levels of education, lack of finance, lack of experience in employment, and a cultural tradition that previously marginalized women economically, women stated that they lack the confidence to engage in income generation or to speak up.

Oxfarm (2020) observes that poverty plays a crucial role in restricting women's involvement in peacebuilding activities. Many women face economic inequality that forces them to prioritize income-generating activities over participation in peace initiatives. The dual burden of domestic responsibilities and the need to earn a living often leaves women with little time or resources to engage in community peace efforts. Reports indicate that women frequently lack control over household income, which further limits their capacity to participate in peacebuilding activities.

Relatedly, Dagmar (2020) asserts that the traditional gender roles assigned to women often result in disproportionate household responsibilities, including caregiving and domestic chores. A significant percentage of women are unable to participate in paid work due to these responsibilities, which can consume over 12 billion hours of unpaid labor daily globally. This unpaid work not only limits their economic opportunities but also restricts their ability to attend community meetings or engage in peacebuilding activities. The societal expectation that women should prioritize family care often leads to their exclusion from decision-making processes related to peace and security. As a result, their voices and perspectives, which are crucial for effective peacebuilding, are frequently overlooked. All in all, the interplay of poverty, household

responsibilities, and societal norms creates a challenging environment for women seeking to participate in peacebuilding. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that include economic empowerment, recognition of women's roles, and the promotion of supportive social norms. Only through such measures can women's full participation in peacebuilding be realized, ultimately contributing to more sustainable and inclusive peace processes.

As a way forward, the Center for conflict resolution (2005) emphasizes the need for women inclusion in peacebuilding processes ranging from conflict monitoring and early-warning systems. This should aim at incorporating fully the indicators which are gender-sensitive that can help to avert the prevalence of sexual violence during conflict and post-conflict situations. There is also a need to ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of humanitarian assistance in camps where women have been shown to be especially vulnerable. The impact of internal displacement on sexual abuse and the spread of HIV/AIDS in sustaining insecurity have been recognised by the resolution, but there has been an inadequate response in terms of helping victims to deal with the resulting trauma or the high rates of domestic violence in post-conflict societies. Programmes should thus be developed to address the psychological effects of violence and conflict on the lives of women. Further, health and education programmes alone will not be sufficient to address these issues since there remains an imperative to recognise how militaristic approaches to governance and security cultivate attitudes condoning gender-based violence. Donors and international organisations must move beyond rhetoric and allocate sufficient funds towards the protection of women during conflicts.

2.6 Models used to increase women participation in peacebuilding.

2.6.1 Direct Participation at the negotiation tables

The Crisis Management Initiative (2016) defines peace negotiation tables as structured environments where conflicting parties come together to discuss and resolve their differences through dialogue and compromise. These tables serve as the focal point for peace processes, facilitating negotiations that aim to end conflicts and establish lasting peace. the level of women's participation in peace processes has shown a mixed evolution.

The UN Development Found for Women (2005) elaborates why women should sit on peace tables. The report highlights that violence of contemporary conflicts increasingly reaches civilians in their

villages and homes. Civil wars and internal conflicts often pit neighbours against each other. Following conflicts, there is a need to rebuild trust between the state and society, as well as among social groups. For this reason, peace cannot be imposed from above; all members of society need to participate in the peacemaking process. Including civil society in general, and women in particular, gives legitimacy to the decision-making process and ultimately creates the necessary conditions for a sustainable peace. Women are major stakeholders in the resolutions of conflicts and in the establishment of peace. During conflict, they can be both combatants fighting alongside men, as well as victims of specific attacks or sexual violence. In general, they are also the ones who maintain their families and communities during and after wars.

The few positive examples of women's involvement in peace talks around the world have proven to have catalysing effects: they build ties among opposing factions and increase the inclusiveness, transparency and sustainability of the peace process. They can bring different perspectives from that of men to negotiations and raise issues that would otherwise be disregarded. Women's contributions to peace negotiations also have lasting effects as they lead to long-term advances in women's equality. Women can foster reconciliation and provide an example for moving society forward as they sustain peace agreements at all levels (UN Development Found for Women, 2005).

UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (2010) makes a distinction between women's participation in official positions during formal negotiations and their intervention within mediation teams in informal negotiations. The integration of women in peace negotiations has been successful so far mostly at the informal level. Women are highly represented in civil society groups that foster peace and mobilize communities and societies to demand that conflicts come to an end. This informal role is pivotal and needs to be supported; however, due to the complexity of peace negotiations, the role of women cannot be limited to the phase of informal mediation. They should be involved in the negotiations by the early phases, even before peace processes officially begin. Acting in formal and informal capacities through all the phases of peace negotiations, women will not only influence the agreements but also continue participating in their implementation and monitoring during the post-conflict phase (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2010).

Ottolina et al. (2014) state that to achieve and stabilize peace, women need to be involved in the negotiations of peace agreements. The presence of women at the negotiation table often influences

the language of peace agreements and should ensure the inclusion of provisions specific to women. The agreements resulting from an inclusive peace process would lower the risk of the outbreak of further conflicts and ensure better implementation. Conversely, Østby (2008) also agrees that while there has been no significant improvement with regard to women's participation in official positions (chief mediators, signatories), their representation within mediation teams and the number and frequency of consultations between the mediation team and women's groups have been increasing.

Important to note is that negotiations at the peace table are rarely straightforward. They involve navigating complex power dynamics, building trust among parties, and addressing underlying issues that may have led to conflict. The process often requires compromises and consensus-building, which can be challenging, especially when historical grievances are present. Thus the quality of the negotiations significantly impacts the effectiveness of later implementation efforts. Generally, while effective peace negotiations often involve a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society, women's groups, and local communities, women inclusion at the negotiation table can enhance the durability of peace agreements, as it ensures that various perspectives and interests are considered.

2.6.2 Observer status

The report by the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative (2016) of UN Women indicates that women have historically played a crucial yet often sidelined role in peacebuilding processes, frequently relegated to observer status rather than being active participants in negotiations. This observer status allows women to be present during negotiations, providing them with firsthand knowledge of the discussions, which can be leveraged for advocacy and lobbying for their interests. However, this role has limitations, as observers typically lack formal authority and may not be included in decision-making processes, which can undermine their influence and the effectiveness of their contributions.

Birungi (2024) notes that the observer status serves as a common modality for including women in peace processes, although it is not the most prevalent method. While it allows women to maintain a presence and potentially exert normative pressure on negotiating parties, the selection of observers is often limited and can reflect biases, resulting in a lack of representation. The effectiveness of women in this role can vary significantly depending on the context and the

mechanisms in place for their inclusion. For instance, when women are able to form unified coalitions and present joint positions, they can enhance their influence even from an observer role. She notes an example of the 2003 Accra peace talks on Liberia, where the Liberian Bar Association, the Inter-Religious Council for Liberia, and the Mano River Women's Peace Network played active roles as observers, coordinating effectively with outside groups to hold the negotiating parties accountable and maintain the momentum for a peace agreement. The regional Mano River Women's Peace Network had become well known for its roles as observers in the peace process.

All in all, while observer status can provide women with a platform to influence peace negotiations, it is essential to address the systemic barriers that limit their participation and to implement strategies that ensure their voices are not only heard but also integrated into the decision-making processes. Paffenholz (2014b) affirms that the observer status can be particularly effective if the included group enjoys a high moral standing in the country and can act as a guarantor for the agreement. However, due to the lack of formal power devolved to observers, a sympathetic mediator is often essential to ensuring the success of this model. Otherwise, it is easy for observers to be sidelined.

2.6.3 Consultations

Women can play a vital role as consultants in peacebuilding processes by leveraging their unique perspectives and experiences, as well as by overcoming various barriers to participation. Consultations are another channel for women to influence negotiations without participating directly in the talks and to generate a broader sense of ownership over the peace process among a greater proportion of the society. Consultations are the most common form of broader inclusion across peace processes. An official consultative forum can serve as a formal advisory body to the negotiation process, with a direct communication channel between the consultative forum and the official talks (Paffenholz, 2014b).

To be effective consultants, many women express a need for training in negotiation, conflict analysis, and mediation skills to effectively participate in peace processes. Providing women with the necessary tools and knowledge can enhance their confidence and efficacy in these roles. Mentorship and Networking: Building networks among women peacebuilders can facilitate knowledge sharing and support. Programs like the International Peace Training Institutes aim to

empower women by connecting them with mentors and resources that enhance their capabilities in peacebuilding (True, 2013).

Goetz & Treiber (2012) underscore the challenge of involving women in decision-making positions during formal peace negotiations and processes. Post-conflict scenarios often create the space for women to demand equality under the law and their right to security. However, while many African women are engaged in peacebuilding at the community level, they are often excluded from government-led peace negotiations, resulting in their input not being fully incorporated into peace accords. Democratic processes are thus required to ensure that civil society and women's groups are more fully represented in peace processes from the outset.

Yet a report by UN Women (2020) observed that women are often extraordinarily capable of identifying and analysing long-term risks and triggers of violence. Therefore, it recommends that women be given a greater role in early warning mechanisms, allowing them to provide both the human and the technical support they are capable of. On the human side, women could act as advisers and monitors. On the technical side, advantage could be taken of women's specific competencies and abilities to conduct technical data analysis and intelligence reviews as consultants.

Generally, to effectively engage women as consultants in peacebuilding, it is essential to address the barriers they face while simultaneously promoting their unique contributions. By fostering an environment that values and supports women's participation, peacebuilding efforts can become more inclusive and effective, ultimately leading to more sustainable peace outcomes.

2.6.4 Inclusive commissions

Inclusive commissions in peacebuilding play a crucial role in fostering sustainable peace and stability in post-conflict societies. Commissions are mostly set up after peace agreements to implement major provisions of the agreements, such as constitutional commissions, transitional justice commissions (like truth and reconciliation commissions), and cease-fire monitoring commissions.

The report on the Global State of Democracy by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2017) indicates that inclusive peacebuilding processes that engage a broad spectrum of society (including marginalized groups, women, youth, and civil society) tend to

produce more legitimate and widely accepted outcomes. This is particularly important in post-conflict settings where historical grievances and power imbalances can lead to renewed violence. When diverse voices are included, the resulting agreements are more likely to reflect the needs and aspirations of the entire population, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of the peace process and increasing public support for peace initiatives.

Grassroots women's groups have also shown ingenuity in advocating their inclusion in peace commissions for peacebuilding. Women have used song and dance peacefully to demonstrate for inclusion in these processes (Otis, 2017). Thompson (2006) cites an example of Rwanda where in 2001, an association of Rwandan women ex-combatants from diverse political groupings (including former members of the Rwandese Patriotic Army and the Rwandan Defence Forces) formed 'Ndabaga', which adopted the role of 'broker' between female ex-combatants and the country's National Demobilisation Commission (NDC). With more than 443 members, these women worked together towards individual and collective demobilization of themselves and other ex-combatants. Women encouraged their brothers, husbands, and sons to return to their country. Despite capacity constraints such as a lack of resources to cover basic costs and offer skills training for its members, 'Ndabaga' has continued to grow in standing. Many of its founding members have become active in Rwandan politics, with some of its members now serving in Rwanda's parliament.

Generally, inclusive commissions contribute to the strengthening of governance structures by promoting transparency and accountability. When diverse stakeholders are involved in decision-making, there is a greater likelihood that governance will be responsive to the needs of the population. This inclusivity can also help restore the social contract between the state and its citizens, which is essential for effective governance and the rule of law.

2.6.5 Problem-solving workshops

Problem-solving workshops involving women in peacebuilding are structured discussions aimed at addressing the underlying causes of conflict by bringing together representatives from conflicting parties in a non-official setting. These workshops are designed to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among participants, often with the guidance of conflict resolution experts, and focus on generating innovative solutions to entrenched issues (Center for Peacebuilding (2012)).

Paffenholz (2014) affirms that these workshops bring together representatives close to the leaders of the conflict parties and offer them a space for discussion without the pressure to reach agreement. The workshops are unofficial and generally not publicized. They can be one-off events or last as long as several years. When belligerents refuse to meet publicly, these workshops may be the only common meeting space. Participants can pick up where the official negotiators leave off, exploring alternatives, producing position papers, and even drafting agreements that can function as starting points for official negotiations. It is important that mediators be aware of such initiatives, and make effective use of the results of the debates at these workshops. Often women's representation in these workshops is low as a key criterion for invitation is the closeness to decision makers. Kelman (2022) states that such workshops have been conducted in various contexts, including the Middle East, where high-level women from Israeli and Palestinian backgrounds participated in a series of workshops aimed at initiating dialogue and building trust.

While problem-solving workshops offer significant potential for fostering peace, challenges remain. Women's participation in peacebuilding often faces barriers such as societal norms, discrimination, and violence. Addressing these challenges requires targeted advocacy, safe spaces for dialogue, and ongoing capacity-building efforts to empower women as leaders in peace processes. All in all, the problem-solving workshops involving women in peacebuilding are crucial for developing inclusive and sustainable solutions to conflicts. They provide a platform for women to engage meaningfully in peace processes, contributing to broader efforts aimed at achieving lasting peace and security.

2.6.6 Public decision making

Public decision-making in women's peacebuilding efforts encompasses the inclusion of women in various formal and informal processes that shape peace and security policies. This inclusion is crucial for ensuring that women's perspectives and needs are represented in peacebuilding initiatives, which are often dominated by male voices. Women's participation in public decision-making is essential for achieving gender equality and enhancing democratic governance. Various studies and reports highlight the significant benefits of incorporating women into leadership roles, as well as the barriers they face in this pursuit (Maley, 2006).

Paffenholz (2014) notes that public decision making is a powerful tool to get public buy-in for an elite pact while also allowing for the participation of women, who usually represent more than half

of the electorate. In this model, he adds, peace agreements or new constitutions can be submitted to ratification by the electorate, and the results are usually binding. Peace agreements are frequently negotiated by the moderates within the parties; thus, a public endorsement of the deal helps to protect the agreement from hardliner constituencies. It can also provide some democratic legitimacy to the process, particularly if it means that the process earns public support, thus bolstering the sustainability of the agreement. The decision to put a peace deal to public vote needs to be carefully considered, however, as a vote against the agreement blocks its implementation and usually puts the process on hold.

Incorporating women into public decision-making processes in peacebuilding is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic necessity for achieving lasting peace. This not only fulfills a fundamental right but also enhances governance and societal well-being. By addressing the barriers to women's participation and implementing supportive frameworks, societies can foster more inclusive and effective peacebuilding efforts that reflect the diverse needs of their populations.

2.6.7 Mass Action

Mass action has emerged as a vital tool for including women in peacebuilding efforts, particularly in contexts where formal negotiation processes have historically marginalized their voices. This approach emphasizes grassroots mobilization and collective action, enabling women to assert their agency and influence peace processes. Paffenholz (2014) states that mass action can create a general pro- or anti-peace agreement atmosphere. These campaigns can also give the negotiating parties insight into the perceived legitimacy of their position (whether in favor of or against the process). It is not easy for mediators to influence mass mobilization but all track-one actors must monitor developments in this area to see how the public is reacting to the process and how viable their proposals for peace would be over the long term.

Matilda & Simonsson (2024) cite one of the most notable examples of mass action in peacebuilding as the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace (WLMAP) movement, which played a crucial role in ending the civil war in Liberia. Led by Leymah Gbowee and supported by the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), this movement mobilized women across diverse backgrounds to engage in non-violent protests, sit-ins, and advocacy efforts. Their actions not only drew attention to the urgent need for peace but also challenged the prevailing narrative that women were

merely victims of conflict rather than active agents of change. The culmination of their efforts contributed to the resignation of then-President Charles Taylor and the establishment of a more inclusive peace process in Liberia, ultimately leading to the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first female head of state (Matilda & Simonsson, 2024)

Institute for Inclusive Security and International Alert (2009) affirms that women are particularly well placed to exert influence on a peace process through mass action. Though women are usually in the minority among governments and armed groups that typically get a seat at the peace table, as well as among other high-level power holders that may influence the negotiations in other ways, women are often particularly active members of civil society and grassroots movements advocating for peace. In addition, in conflict zones women often have more freedom of movement than men as they are not typically perceived as belligerents.

Generally, mass action serves as a powerful mechanism for women to assert their roles in peacebuilding. By organizing collectively and advocating for their interests, women can challenge existing power dynamics and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peace processes. The experiences of movements like WLMAP highlight the potential of grassroots activism to effect change, demonstrating that when women unite for a common cause, they can significantly influence the trajectory of peace in their societies. The varied forms/models of participation aforementioned are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they occur and can be established in parallel or at different stages of the process, depending on the context. These models can be used and adapted to increase the participation of women, but they also apply to the inclusion of other marginalized groups whose participation could increase the chances of resolving conflict and creating a lasting peace.

2.7 Conclusion

The majority of the reviewed literature (Porter, 2003; Anderlini, 2000; El-Bushra, 2007) places women's role primarily on representation in formal peace processes and hard security rather than peacebuilding more broadly, as well as dichotomous thinking that privileges national and international levels as centers of power without adequate consideration of the importance of local level peacebuilding and how local initiatives can potentially be connected to broader structural changes. In this regard, there is still a study deficit on the importance of local peacebuilding in

connection to more extensive peace processes (Gilzelis and Joseph, 2016). Women's participation in local decision-making, which often serves as an entry point, must be linked to broader engagement in peacebuilding. Empirical research plays an important role in moving beyond dichotomous thinking, which occurs when the local is undervalued or conceptualized as the feminine extension of women's relegation to the domestic sphere or when local-level engagement is viewed as a catch-all solution, separate from larger systemic and structural change. As a result, this study not only evaluated women's participation in peacebuilding in general but also highlighted their responsibilities in implementing specific efforts for local peacebuilding.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to collect and analyse data for the study. The methodological framework comprises the research methodology, research design, study population, sampling, data collection methods and instruments, data collection procedure, and data processing and analysis. This framework was informed by the research question of what role women play in peacebuilding in Uganda.

3.2 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative research approach that endeavored to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there (Patton, 1985). It is an approach that begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). This approach is appropriate for this study because understanding the role played by women in peacebuilding involves individual experiences and stories that are sometimes diverse and complex. Therefore, through personal experiences and narratives, the researcher understood the phenomenon of peacebuilding and the role of women in achieving it.

3.3 Research Design

The study used the exploratory case study design, enabling a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context (Yin 1984). According to Yin (1984), this design investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Exploratory case study design also emphasizes inquiries into experience and thus allows for the intimate study of individuals' experiences over time and in context (Clandinin & Caine, 2008). The design is appropriate for this study since it emphasizes that examination of the data is most often conducted within the context of its use (Yin, 1984), that is, within the situation where the activity occurs. The design is also appropriate because detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies help explore or describe the data in real-life environments and explain the complexities of real-life situations that may not be captured through experimental or survey

research. The researcher used this design by going to the field and listening to women leaders and staff of organisations engaged in peacebuilding as they tell their stories through interviews and conversations.

3.4 Study Population

Polit and Hungler (1999) refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects, or members that conform to a set of specifications. The study population thus comprised the Organisation Director, Staff at the Head Office, and leaders of selected Women's Associations. The study also included members of a selected women's association who are engaged in peacebuilding initiatives at a grassroots level. The insights of these participants brought more understanding about peacebuilding, including its associated challenges.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique, which refers to the deliberate choice of a participant due to the participant's qualities. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. It looks at a subject from all available angles, achieving a more significant understanding. Also, it involves selecting participants across a broad spectrum related to the study. The researcher has chosen this technique because it primarily emphasizes saturation by obtaining a comprehensive understanding and continuing to sample until no new substantive information is acquired (Zhi, 2014). According to Amin (2005), purposive sampling is preferred in selecting people holding positions of responsibility that allow them to be more knowledgeable about issues in their jurisdiction areas.

To determine the sample size, the researcher used the organization's existing structures to carry out the study. In this sense, the researcher targeted the director, staff at the main office, and leaders of subscribing women's associations. The researcher also targeted one women's association and held a focus group discussion to elicit data concerning peacebuilding at a local level. The purposive sampling technique involved selecting 45 respondents from the entire population. The sampling techniques used in this study are appropriate because the samples yield research data that can be generalized to larger population. In addition, the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study.

Table 1. Showing Categories of respondents and Sample Size

Categorization of respondents	Sample size
Director	1
Organization Staff	15
Women Association Leaders	9
Women Association Members	20
Total	45

The selection of these four specific categories ensures a comprehensive, multi-level perspective on women’s participation in peacebuilding. The Director provides strategic, policy-level insight into the organization’s overarching goals, challenges, and institutional positioning within national peace processes. Organization Staff offer crucial operational and programmatic knowledge, detailing the implementation, coordination, and day-to-day realities of peacebuilding initiatives. Women Association Leaders serve as key intermediaries, supplying valuable information on advocacy, network mobilization, and the translation of grassroots concerns into organized action. Finally, the Women Association Members constitute the essential grassroots voice, yielding firsthand, experiential data on the local impacts, barriers, and lived realities of peacebuilding efforts, thereby grounding the study in community-level evidence and ensuring the findings reflect the perspectives of those directly affected by and engaged in the work.

3.6. Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study employed primary and secondary sources. While primary data was firsthand information collected from the respondents in its original state, secondary data constituted readily existing data collected from the library, reports, the Internet, and published articles (Ajayi, 2017). The researcher used three data collection methods: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focused group discussions (FGDs), and documentary review.

3.6.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews are in-depth interviews of people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of interest. The interviews are loosely structured, relying on a list of issues to be discussed. Key informant interviews resemble a conversation among acquaintances, allowing a

free flow of ideas and information. Interviewers frame questions spontaneously, probe for information, and take notes, which are elaborated on later (USAID, 1996).

Key informant interviews were used on respondents who know what is going on in the respective areas of responsibility. Key informant interviews aim to collect information from a wide range of staff, including the organization director and leaders of women's associations. With their particular knowledge and understanding, these respondents can provide insight on the peace-building agenda and give recommendations for the associated challenges (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2014). The researcher, therefore, asked questions, listened to, watched, and interpreted the different accounts of the participants regarding the aforementioned research objectives. These interviews were conducted with an interview guide that included semi-structured questions to enable the researcher to solicit detailed information.

3.6.2. Focused Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGD) are facilitated discussions with a small group of people with specialist knowledge or interest in a particular topic (Yayeh, 2021). It involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or ideas (Nyumba et al., 2018). Applying the FGD technique allows the researcher to quickly collect an appropriate amount of data. FGD permits richness and flexibility in data collection that are not usually achieved when applying an instrument individually, simultaneously permitting spontaneous interaction among the participants. The focus group discussion was held with four groups, that is, one group comprising of Organisation staff at head office, and the other three comprising of members of a selected women's association.

3.6.3. Documentary Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) documents. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). The researcher used this method by compiling the documents relevant to my research study, including those answering the research questions. Since I have access to Makerere University Library, the

researcher used to print documents like manuals, background papers, books, and journals available, as well as authorized electronic documents.

The researcher created a data collection form to summarize data gleaned from the document reviews. The form included the type of document to be reviewed, a way to reference each document, and information that answers each applicable research question. The researcher used the form to compile and analyze the research findings.

3.7. Procedure for data collection

The researcher applied for ethical approval at Makerere University. As a way of preparing for the fieldwork, the researcher had already secured all the data collection instruments (audio recorder and notebooks). Upon arrival in the field, the researcher introduced herself to the authorities, seeking consent to undertake the study. Furthermore, individual respondent's consent was sought by explaining why data is needed. Once consent was granted, the data collection exercise began by interviewing individual respondents until a predetermined sample was covered or when the saturation point was realized.

3.8. Data Analysis

Hatch (2002) states that data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organizing and interrogating data to allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding.

Since data analysis is an interactive process, where data are systematically searched and analyzed to provide an illuminating description of phenomena, the researcher used two approaches to data analysis, that is, Thematic and Narrative analyses. Using more than one type of analysis can strengthen the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings via methodological triangulation (i.e., consistency among qualitative analytic procedures (Denzin, 1978).

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Creswell, 2012). In the Narrative analysis, the respondent's stories (narratives) are

analyzed and re-storied (retold) into a framework that would make sense to readers (Gibbs, 2007). Qualitative data responses from interviews and FDGs were transcribed and coded, and then the codes or units were linked with data to form overarching themes/concepts. Some of the detailed information was collected, analyzed and presented as paraphrases or quoted up narrative on permission of the respondents.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Sieber (1993) affirms that research ethics are principles about how researchers and research organizations should conduct themselves when dealing with research participants, other researchers and colleagues, the users of their research, and society in general. Ethical considerations should pervade the research process (Bank and Scheyvens, 2003; Sriram et al., 2009). The fundamental ethical concerns considered in this study are, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, safety, and managing plagiarism (Moreno, Goniu, Moreno, & Diekema, 2013).

3.9.1 Seeking Consent

Consent is one of the major ethical issues in conducting research, which implies that a person knowingly, voluntarily, intelligently, and clearly and manifestly gives his or her consent (Arminger, 1997: p. 330). To ensure informed consent, the researcher vividly explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and the benefits and risks involved. Furthermore, the researcher informed the respondents that they have a right to opt out of the study at any time. This further gave them confidence that the study was truly for the claimed purpose, hence gaining confidence to provide data (Bell & Willmott, 2016).

3.9.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality was ensured by disclosing to the participants how data was utilized and emphasizing that no personal information, such as snapshots, was disclosed in the report without their approval. In addition, the researcher promised the participants that all the information obtained was safely kept and only accessed by the researcher (Surmiak, 2018). Anonymity was ensured by not exposing the respondents' names; as such, they were not required to indicate them or sign anywhere on the data collection instruments (Brokowski & Adli, 2019).

The researcher deliberately guided against plagiarizing other people's work. Plagiarism occurs when someone tries to pass off someone else's work, thoughts, or ideas as their own, whether deliberately or unintentionally, without appropriate acknowledgment. Plagiarism was managed by citing and referencing all the works that were not original to me. Furthermore, borrowed literature was paraphrased to avoid copy and paste exercises.

3.9.3 Do no Harm

Safety is crucial, especially for leaders and members who interact with the community and are thus vulnerable to multiple situations and hazards, including their safety. The researcher ensured that the study did not infringe on the interviewees' or respondents' rights and safety by conducting interviews and discussions in safe places. This is important in advocating, promoting, and protecting their rights (Blumberg et al., 2005). Any risks shall be well explained to the respondents while conducting the research.

3.9.4 Gender Considerations

The researcher ensured that both men and women participated in the study. Underrepresentation of gender in research can result in adverse consequences. Disaggregating the data by gender was done to improve gender-sensitive reporting of research.

3.9.5 Seeking appropriate approvals

Seeking appropriate approvals was done, scheduling activities at appropriate times and places, seeking privacy, and using appropriate language were key during data collection. The field research assistants are men and women; during interviews, some of the women respondents were interviewed by a woman by consent.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Some limitations hampered the study. The study was conducted when no official pronouncement for the end of the COVID-19 Pandemic had been issued. This implies that the Pandemic is still present and requires attention. To overcome this challenge, the researcher organized the meetings per the standard operating procedures of the Ministry of Health and the Uganda Police Force.

The accuracy and, hence, the reliability of secondary data may be easily ascertained by the researcher. Hence, errors in the results arising out of this inaccuracy cannot be ruled out, although the researcher tried to use comparative sources of secondary data in a bid to minimize such errors.

There was a challenge of the difficulty in securing appointments with the key informants. Some of them kept postponing interview schedules affirming that they were busy with other routines. Since indeed they were key in providing valuable insights I adjusted my schedule until I met them all.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and their interpretations of the study and shows the distribution tables and percentages used to present the findings. The findings were presented to the research objectives. The objectives of the study were to assess women's participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda; to highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda; and to establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda. The findings for this study were obtained from Coalition for Action (CoACT) on 1325 and its associated women organizations, with relevant data collected from director/association leaders, head office staff, and association members.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

The respondents' demographic data was collected and duly analysed to determine the nature of the respondents who participated in the study. This covered age, name of the organisation, position held, gender, and level of education period taken in the organization.

4.1.1 Age of Respondents

The study was interested in establishing the age of the respondents, and the table below shows the age distribution of the respondents for the study.

Table 1: Age Bracket of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-29	10	22
30-49	26	58
50 years above	09	20
TOTAL	45	100%

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Table 1 above shows that most respondents were between the ages of 30-49, represented by (58%) followed by those between 18-29, accounting for 22%, and only 9, 20%, were 50 years above. Age is paramount in the research study as it provides a basis for the maturity of the respondents. The findings show that most respondents were between 30-40 years of age, which implies that the respondents were mature and capable of reasoning and understanding the study subject matter.

4.1.2. Sex of Respondents

The study was interested in establishing the respondents' sex, and the table below shows the distribution of the respondents.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	28	62
Male	17	38
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data (2024).

The data from Table 2 above shows that most respondents were female (62%), while 38% were male. This implies that women who are involved have a role in peacebuilding organisations. Having both sexes participate in the study is important as it helps avoid bias and avoids getting

biased information. Since the study was comprised of both genders, the findings can be dependable since they are free from bias.

4.1.3 Level of Education

The study sought to establish the level of education of the respondents.

Table 4: Level of Education

Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ordinary Level	4	8.8
Advanced Level	6	13
Tertiary	35	77.7
Total	45	100

Source: Primary Data (2024)

The above table shows that 4 (8.8%) of the respondents stopped at the ordinary level, 6 (13%) of them reached the advanced level, and 35 (77.7%) of them reached the tertiary level. The findings show that the majority of the respondents had reached tertiary level, that is to say, they had diplomas degrees and master’s degrees from different fields, among others. The educational background of respondents is important in research because it justifies their capability of understanding the phenomena under study and being able to provide valid information for the study.

4.1.4 Period Worked with the Organization

Table 5. Shows the period the respondents has worked with the organization

Period with Organisation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<1 year	5	11
1-3 yrs	13	27
4-6 yrs	12	29
6>	15	33
Total	45	100

Source: Primary data, (2024)

Table 5 above shows that most respondents had spent over six years with the organizations, and only 5 (11%) had spent less than a year with the organisation. The period taken by a respondent is essential in research as it ensures one's knowledge about the organisation's operations, policies, and procedures. And more so the duties performed by the organisation. Since most respondents had spent more than one year in the organisation, this implies that they are well conversant with the organisation's operation and capable of giving valid information.

4.2. Objective One: To assess women's participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

The first objective of the study was to establish the level of women's participation and involvement in institutions and mechanisms for peacebuilding in Uganda. A number of questions were used to ascertain this objective and they are discussed below.

4.2.1 Understanding of the Term Peace Building.

The term disability was understood differently by different respondents who did not give the same definition of the word. Nonetheless, one respondent said it is basically a way in which people create a good and conducive living environment after tensions between two groups or persons. During a key informant interview with the association leaders, one of them defined peacebuilding as follows:

..... a process taken to encourage people to a talk to one another and repairing the relationship that were damaged. This process usually requires a third part to bring conflicting parties on a roundtable to discuss their differences. It also includes empowering members to explore their potential to fulfil their life goals without oppression and marginalization (Interview on 25th July, 2024).

Furthermore, it was also observed that only one director could appropriately define peacebuilding, bringing in the different contexts of cultural and structural conditions, ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. He states that the process involves violence prevention, conflict management, resolution or transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation or any healing before, during, and after any given case of violence. This is in agreement with (Schirch, 2022). Peacebuilding includes a set of values, relational skills, analytical tools, and processes to create sustainable, just, and peaceful communities. Peacebuilding is found in every community and in every culture.

According to Burrows (1965), Peacebuilding, sometimes called capacity building, is a popular term in many parts of the world where efforts are made to stop fighting or rebuild a country devastated by conflicts and war. These efforts centre mostly around the rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced people and finding their livelihood. All these commendable efforts fail to make communication a central component in their processes or take it for granted that it is there, and thus, often fail to accomplish what they set out to do. In the early 1990s, peacebuilding was boosted when the UN Secretary-General explicitly made peacebuilding a core concept for the UN to work with.

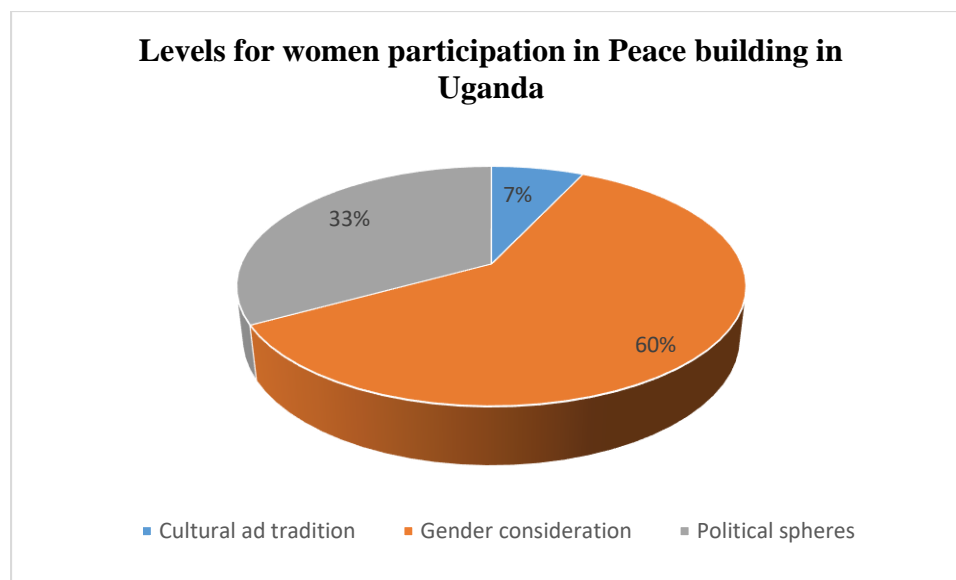
However, peacebuilding has been understood well amongst the people in that they understand the importance of peacebuilding in society and advocate for it. For example, during one of the Focus Group discussion meetings with the head officers and association members' one the respondents said that

Peace building is a way of bring back harmony and building good relationships among people and communities. Once such harmony is achieved, then we experience socio-economic transformation in our communities” (FDG, on 25th July 2024).

4.2.2 Existing levels for women participation in Peace building in Uganda

The study had interest in knowing the existing levels for women participation in Peace building in Uganda.

Figure 11: Existing levels for women participation in Peace building in Uganda.



Source: Primary Data (2024)

The findings obtained from the above figure 6 show that the women have participated in different levels of peacebuilding in Uganda. Thus, the findings indicate that their participation is very low at the cultural and traditional levels, only at 7%. This is so because, at the cultural level, there still exists a lot of gender discrimination. Another level is gender consideration. Thus, women have been considered to participate in peacebuilding by gender consideration by 60%. The involvement of women in peacebuilding is at rampant growth, and women have been successful in leading negotiations and bringing back peace in communities. Another level is the political sphere; women have participated in peacebuilding at this level by 33%. Women have participated in some political offices and spearheaded peacebuilding amongst individuals, institutions, and governments.

In an interview with one director, he said that

Women have done much in the political sphere in ensuring peace in many different places, he further asserts that, now day's women are heading negotiations, big organizations and participating in peace building missions. (Interview on 27th July, 2024).

This implies that women are involved in peace building at the political sphere levels. On the other hand, women are now highly considered in peacebuilding to ground a sound gender consideration. Sixty percent of the respondents assert that, at gender consideration, women have been given sixty percent of the opportunity to involve themselves in peacebuilding.

In a focused group discussion with the association members, one of the members had this to say:

There is high consideration given to women gender to participate in peace building these days than those days. He further said that in fact, women have even led through peace talks in organizations and among governments. (Interview on 26th July, 2024).

Anderlini (2000) also observes that an increase in women's participation enhances the chances that major gender issues are discussed during peace talks and peace accords. Anderlini further shows that in addition to placing gender issues more frequently on the peace agenda than men, women often introduce other conflict experiences and set different priorities for peacebuilding. Women often are the sole voices speaking out for women's rights and concerns, forging coalitions based on their shared interests that transcend political, ethnic, and religious differences and bringing a better understanding of inequality to peace negotiations.

On the contrary, women have not participated much in peacebuilding at the cultural or traditional levels. In an interview with the association leaders, one of the leaders had this to say that “*At cultural levels women have not been given opportunities to participate, as the roles of peace keeping and building are seen as being for men only*” (Interview 26th July, 2024). This revelation is in agreement with Moser and McIlwaine's study (2000) which questioned the common causal factors of women's low representation in formal peace processes. Those scholars contend that the factors range from the patriarchal culture of most African societies, a misconstrued agency of women during times of war and peace to the underreporting of women's peace-building work at informal levels. Negotiations for peace in many African traditions were considered the preserve of men. Women continue to shy away from offering themselves in peace negotiations but also, there are the larger questions of the capacity to meaningfully engage. Women must be given the negotiation skills to be able to participate meaningfully in the negotiation process.

4.2.3 How Cultural and Tradition Affect Women in the Peace Building a gender

By definition, culture is what we do and who we are, encompassing a broad range of actions and activities that can transform, challenge, reassure, and inspire, giving a place and its people a unique and distinct identity. Culture is “a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the member of one group or category of people from another”. Cultural issues may provide fertile grounds for gender inequality in peacebuilding as countries in Africa are highly patriarchal and male-dominated (Alaga, 2010).

A tradition is a system of beliefs or behaviours (folk customs) passed down within a group of people or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Negotiations for peace in many African traditions were taken to be the preserve of men. Women continue to shy away from offering themselves in peace negotiations, but there are also more significant questions about the capacity to meaningfully engage. Women must be given the negotiation skills to be able to participate meaningfully in the negotiation process. In an interview with the director, he said that; “culturally, the role of women in numerous cultures was reduced to only household activities and anything to do with peacebuilding was left for men” (Interview, 30th July, 2024). This finding shows that cultural beliefs often dictate the roles of women in society, which can limit their involvement in peacebuilding. Oluwayemisi (2021) affirms that in many African contexts, traditional gender roles assign women to domestic responsibilities, thereby marginalizing their voices in public and political spheres. This marginalization is evident in the low representation of women in peace negotiations and decision-making positions. For instance, studies (Oluwayemisi, 2021) indicate that women constituted only a small percentage of peace negotiators and mediators in various African conflicts, reflecting the cultural barriers that inhibit their participation.

4.2.4 Women Participation in Political Spheres and Enhancement of Peacebuilding.

Political spheres refer to the arena or platform where all activities related to governance, policy-making, and political decision-making occur. During the early phases of conflict, women experience too many barriers that make it hard to participate in politics. During an interview, one of the leaders of the Association had this to say:

I stood as a district chairperson and I failed twice but managed to go through at the third attempt. I didn't give up because of the encouragement from my fellow women leaders especially those who had made it at higher levels like Members of parliament. As I speak I am a role model to many women down there who usually consult me in many aspects of their lives including socioeconomic development and family handling issues (Interview, 25th July 2024)

El-Bushra (2003) observes that women managed to play political roles at the community and national levels during the conflict in countries such as Uganda but that such gender changes at the micro-level are often not accompanied by corresponding changes in political influence and do not alter patriarchal ideologies. Similarly, Lederach (1997) has also argued that despite the rights won

during the conflict, women's loss of opportunities to exercise political and social leadership immediately after the conflict is among the most extreme and long-lasting of their losses.

4.3 Objective Two: To highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda

The study was interested in finding out the peacebuilding efforts and imitative spearheaded by women in Uganda. Some questions were asked under this objective, and the responses are discussed below.

4.3.1 The Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT)

In an attempt to examine the government-aided initiatives spearheaded by women in areas of peacebuilding in Uganda, the researcher asked respondents to mention them. In an interview with the association leaders, one respondent said that *“women have come up with different organizations to advocate for peacebuilding.....women formed the coalition for action on 1325 to enable them have total inclusion in peacebuilding (Interview 27th July 2024)*. The researcher also discovered that CoACT is an alliance of 42 member organizations, typically women's organizations that work on gender equality and women empowerment, ranging from conflict prevention and peacebuilding to promoting social accountability and inclusive governance and women's economic empowerment. Established in 2014, it arose out of the need to go beyond producing reports of findings of the annual monitoring of the implementation of UNCR 1325, which would gather dust after they were launched, to tracking the adoption of and action on the recommendations of the reports and going beyond awareness raising on 1325 to well-coordinated policy engagement that would lead to concrete action for impact. CoACT envisions a world in which human rights, including the rights of women, are respected by all, enabling women to reach their full potential (Twijikireho, 2019). In a focused group discussion with the association members, a respondent in a focus group discussion said that.

CoACT was formed to enable women succeed in their attempt to participate in peace building especially at local levels. It has indeed supported us with guidance on how to realign our association to peacebuilding targeting use of local structures like the LC system (FGD 29th July, 2024).

CoACT works to make Uganda's International and regional commitments and national laws and policies that promote gender equality and women empowerment fully implemented at all levels of

governance. The organisation was established to build the capacity of the public institutions, women's CBOs, members, and partners to fully implement UNSCR 1325, network and develop partnerships with peace-oriented groups around the world, and will people of goodwill towards peace, building a culture of peace, undertake and engage in such activities as may be deemed relevant or incidental to or connected and consistent with objectivities herein above contained, defend and protect women's rights through the elimination of gender-based violence and any form of discrimination against women and promote & implementation of gender-responsive political, economic and social policies (Twijikireho, 2019).

4.3.2 Lango Women Clan Leaders Association (LWCLA)

Women in the Lango sub-region formed the Lango Women Clan Leaders Association to enable them to participate in decision-making in traditional systems and to influence the participation of women in other aspects of development. The association thus helps girls and women in Lango enhance their rights, using gender, culture, and education for development. It promotes positive cultural practices that do not impinge on the rights of women while denouncing those that oppress and humiliate them. Through such organizing, women have worked to counteract barriers to their participation in leadership, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation.

To promote the recognition of women's rights and support girls' education, some of the women at the LFCLA, who are teachers and members of the Mothers' Union, use their position to help women expand their view of their role in society. The Association has registered achievements in raising awareness, providing sponsorships, and significantly contributing to fora at different levels and through various mass media. It initially targeted secondary education because most girls drop out at that level. Still, it has now broadened its advocacy work on the value of collective responsibility towards children to parents and communities, highlighting the role of different stakeholders (government, school teachers) in creating a child-friendly environment.

4.3.4 Lira Rural Women and Children Development Initiative (LIRWOCDI)

This was formed by a female retired police officer in Lira who then established a protective shelter for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Since 2003, more than four thousand women and child survivors of abuse have passed through this Shelter. With the support of the UN Women and Children's Fund, the shelter also has been able to repair 40 serious cases of Fistula,

and the youngest survivor was four years who was raped by a neighbor. The shelter also provided medical treatment to over 60 young mothers who were sexually abused. The majority of women and girls who are received at the shelter for protection are female survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, forced marriage, child labor, orphans, rescued children from traffickers, potential victims (girl child) of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Fistula.

Despite the achievements, the shelter still faces some challenges as it mainly run on donations from well-wishers. According to the founder, the most pressing needs of the shelter are school fees for orphans to go to school, feeding and clothing, medical care, skills training for young mothers, and a vehicle to ease the movement among others (Loyce, 2014).

4.3.5 Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA)

This NGO is present in all the districts in the Teso region and has achieved great success in conflict transformation initiatives. It was formed in 2001 by Cecilia Engole following her participation in the Isis-WICCE Institute to respond to the challenges that women and girls face during and after conflicts. Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) designs peacebuilding and conflict resolution projects/programs that are issue-based and organize focused peacebuilding training for TOTs in communities for sustainability and as an effort to create lasting peace. TEWPA's focus is peacebuilding, conflict transformation, democratization, and human rights.

Considering its impact so far, TEWPA has established peacebuilding committees and animators in the community structures, who have continuously been trained in human rights and peacebuilding processes to facilitate their interventions in their various villages. The organisation also organizes dialogues, debates, and Barazas with duty bearers and beneficiary communities to create awareness of women's rights and other issues. TEWPA's approach to the empowerment of women is mainly through holding synergy meetings. The women are organized in consortiums as interest groups for successful advocacy on identified issues of women's concern. TEWPA works with women and men from different ethnic/tribal/political groups to create collective action to influence decision-makers.

In an interview with one of the leaders of TEWPA, she had this to say:

We have trained over 246 Alternative Dispute Resolution Activists (ADRAs), women and men, to mediate land disputes in Teso. So far, over 50 mediation

clinics have been conducted, and over 40 land cases successfully resolved. 325 women Peace Committees have been trained in peacebuilding processes and Human Rights in the Teso and Karamoja regions, and these have, in turn, reached over 1,967 community members who experienced conflicts and who have successfully internalized what their rights and responsibilities are. Likewise, the community members have taken up the responsibility to educate others in their different villages (Interview, 24th July 2024)

Relatedly, Namutebi (2020) notes that TEWPA has also built the capacity of 159 adolescent mothers on life skills to sustain themselves. This is done through making reusable sanitary wear, making liquid soap, and other entrepreneurship skills. The girls were also sensitized to join family planning. The organization has, therefore, succeeded in making communities understand these actions as means that make them peaceful and, therefore, important to sustain. TEWPA has reached over 8,631 community members in Teso region to create awareness on women land rights (Namutebi, 2020).

4.3.6 Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE)

Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE) is a membership organisation aiming to build the capacity of grassroots initiatives for peacebuilding and conflict resolution in its localities. KANWE was started in 2001, with an initial focus on women and children. It was established as an effort to change a culture of violence that it believed had become endemic in the Kasese District. KANWE promotes peace building among women and conflicting parties in the Kasese district through training and educating advocacy, and psychosocial support services. This is done through strengthening the local capacities of target communities to promote peace in their localities, advocating for appropriate peace initiatives and non-violent conflict, and facilitating social integration and post-conflict healing (RFPJ, 2012).

4.3.7 Yumbe Women Peace Mediators' Network

This network of women mediators is involved at different levels of peace processes, including peace dialogues on cattle raids. Women peace mediators and analysts joined forces with the Police and Army in Rengen, Panyangara, Nakapelimoru, Kacheri, and Lolelia sub-counties and participated in cross-border meetings with the communities of Turkana, Bokora, Matheniko, and Jie ethnic groups. These meetings tackled issues of armed cattle raids, the killing of women and children, and the use of guns among armed communities both in Karamoja and Kenya's border

districts. The organization also offers guidance, counseling, and psychosocial support for grieving families affected by raids, SGBV, and death, as well as reporting cases to different stakeholders when identified in the communities before they escalate. It also sensitizes communities on land disputes.

Since 2019, Yumbe Women Mediators' Network has trained over 40 mediators, conflict analysts, and monitors to enhance women's capacity to mitigate conflict and sustain peace. The women peace mediators, monitors, and analysts are community-based volunteers who promote peace in their host and refugee communities.

4.3.8 Women Peace Initiatives- Uganda (WOPI-U)

Women Peace Initiatives-Uganda (WOPI-U) was founded in 2003 by a group of women to bring back peace, development and a violence-free society to Northern Uganda. It was established to respond to the tremendous suffering the LRA conflict had caused, particularly the severe impacts on women. The activities of the organisation include forming peace clubs in communities and schools, broadcasting peace messages to young people and adults in and out of school, and holding radio talk shows on peacebuilding and sexual and gender-based violence.

WOPI-U has supported the reintegration of formerly abducted girls/women by supporting the training of 22 of them in tailoring by purchasing tailoring equipment, including sewing machines. A further 23 women were trained to rear goats. They were supported by procuring two female and two male goats to enable them to develop a breeding program and create a sustainable livelihood (Peace Insight, 2022).

Strengthening joint counseling and guidance services for the community where WOPI-U operates, with an emphasis on women and child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, is at the heart of WOPI-U. It has also trained police officers, other security forces, child protection committees, and clan leaders on their roles in the protection of women's and children's rights. Training women on aspects of human rights with an emphasis on women's rights has also been done (Peace Insight, 2022).

4.4 Objective Three: To establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda

The study was interested in finding out the challenges faced by women in the peacebuilding process in Uganda. Responses show that there are some challenges that women face in the peacebuilding process. For example, in one of the focused group discussions, one of the members said that some cultural beliefs hinder women from participating in peace-building. For example, one of the respondents said that;

Women are, at times, looked at as a weaker sex in some cultures, whose roles are subjected to household activities only. He further asserts that some cultures only recognise men when it comes to peacebuilding (Interview 30th July 2024).

Cultural perceptions also play a crucial role in shaping women's experiences in peacebuilding. In some regions, traditional practices reinforce gender inequalities, making it difficult for women to assert their agency. However, there are also emerging examples of women taking on leadership roles in community peacebuilding efforts, demonstrating their potential as agents of change. Initiatives that focus on building women's skills in negotiation and leadership have shown promise in transforming their roles within communities. Relatedly, another respondent said that;

women are have not been given a enough chance to participate in peace building at the grassroots level, saying that some duties are better performed by men than women.... Thus the denial of giving women chances to activity participate in peace building is a big challenge that has affected women's role in peace building in our communities (Interview, 30th July, 2024).

Agbalajobi (2009) also asserts that women in general are thus marginalized, as they are always poorly represented at the leadership level. Outside parties have had some limited success in enabling women to participate in peace talks. For instance, the Life and Peace Institute was successful in ensuring that women's peace groups gained access to some of the Somalia peace and reconciliation talks (even though they only gained observer status). Merely being invited to attend talks, peace conferences, or other peace fora is insufficient, however, as very few women have the education, training, or confidence to participate fully, even if they are in attendance.

Women need to be encouraged, trained, and listened to when they speak in order to develop self-confidence and self-belief. The literature provided is in agreement with the other authors, even Agbalajobi (2009), who contends that limited women's participation hinders the presence of women in political developments that have limited the participation of women in political activities.

In an interview, a respondent said that;

Women are always discriminated by men, on grounds of sex, age, religion education. For example in Islam women cannot be fronted to negotiate on behalf of men, and also in some cultures women are often thought to be weak (Interview, 30th July, 2024).

Relatedly, in a focused group discussion, one of the association members said:

That some cultural and clan systems deny women the opportunity to participate in all communal activities. He further said that some cultures and clan systems lower women to duties of the home only and by doing so, women are not engaged or consulted when it comes to peacebuilding activities (FGD, on 30th, July, 2024).

However, there is a need for gender identity to be performed differently in different cultural contexts. Since there are various cultures in Uganda, this has greatly hindered the involvement of women in peacebuilding if one culture is okay with it, the other sees it as wrong. Thus, gender identity must always be viewed in relationship with an individual's other identities, such as ethnicity, class, age, nation, region, education, and religion. It is important to note that there are different expectations for men and women in various sectors of society, and gender roles shift with social upheaval. In conflict situations, men and women face new roles and changing gender expectations. Their biological and sociological differences affect conflicts and peacebuilding. Most societies value men and masculinity more than women and femininity (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005).

Financial challenges have also been identified as a major challenge hindering women from participating in peacebuilding in an interview with the association director, one respondent said

Women association lack enough financial resources to fully engage in peace building. The challenge is that even if they see for funding their efforts is not easily recognized (Interview on 30th July, 2024).

This agrees with Pinker (2011) argued that many women's organizations face great difficulties in their continued survival, let alone in achieving all of their objectives, and there is considerable need for extended external support. Such problems include chronic under-funding, which is commonly a more extreme problem even than for other types of community organization. They also often require further training in areas of management, leadership, and lobbying skills. In

practice, new women's organizations often have to deal with not only marginalization and stigmatization by powerful government and non-government organizations but also direct physical harassment from local men and security forces, which is especially likely in post-conflict situations where gender tensions are usually already running high.

In a focused group discussion with the association members, one of the members had this to say:

One of the biggest challenges women have face is lack of financial strength and this has affected them from achieving their desired goals. He further says that even the organisations they have formed lack enough financial support and this makes them fail to achieve their desired goals (FGD, 30th July, 2024).

Abugre (2008) says that outside support could increase the chances of success of those organizations that have the potential to play a highly significant, if not central, role in peacebuilding. There are, nonetheless, tensions in providing external support. The provision of funding for grassroots organizations can often create tensions and that is certainly potentially true for some women's organizations.

In an interview with association leaders on the challenges hindering women, “*one respondent said that women have been discriminated by men as a weaker sex. And this has hindered their participation in peacebuilding*” (Interview, 30th July, 2024).

However, there are those women's organizations that explicitly attempt to challenge women's oppression and gender inequality in post-conflict situations (such as those that facilitate women's participation in war crimes tribunals and truth processes). Many of these organizations also attempt to build bridges between groups of women with very different experiences of conflict, who might otherwise be separated by their ethnic, regional, or political identities. All of these types of organizations can, therefore, be of fundamental importance in addressing common weaknesses in existing peace-building strategies: the lack of attention to women's needs, the marginalization of gender analyses, and the absence of efforts to challenge particularly ‘unpeaceful’ forms of masculinity in institutions and in society more widely.

This is in line with Paffenholz (2014) who affirms that women are often burdened with overwhelming domestic responsibilities, which are exacerbated by high levels of violence against them. This violence and sometimes marginalization sends a societal message about women's roles

and limits their participation in political and economic spheres. Many women refrain from seeking political office due to the fear of backlash from men who may feel threatened by their increased visibility and empowerment. Moreover, women's economic empowerment is frequently met with hostility, as traditional gender roles are challenged. This creates a cycle where women's contributions to peacebuilding are undervalued, further entrenching their marginalization in both community and national governance.

Additionally, in a focused group discussion, one member asserted that “*one association a member said that women have not been recognised in our communities fully, even the things that oppress women have not been given much attention*”(FGD, 30th July, 2024). However, women's organizations have the potential to achieve many of the goals of peacebuilding to increase women's (and thereby household) income; to increase women's abilities to participate in public, political processes and civil society more generally; to increase the number of women who become leaders and representatives; to reinforce efforts to challenge masculine cultures in institutions and society more widely (Bumsumtwi-Sam, 2012). The arguments from previous researchers are in agreement with my argument that women's oppression and inequality, especially in Africa, have limited their capacity for peacebuilding efforts.

Relatedly, access to formal peace processes remains a significant challenge for women in Uganda. Although international frameworks like UN Security Council Resolution 1325 advocate for women's inclusion in peacebuilding, practical barriers still exist. Women often find it difficult to gain entry into negotiations and decision-making roles, limiting their ability to influence outcomes effectively. Furthermore, the lack of cohesive coalitions among women's groups hinders the development of a unified agenda that could amplify their voices in peace processes. This fragmentation makes it challenging to mobilize effectively for their rights and representation.

In an interview with the association members, one of them had this to say:

Women have lacked enough support in their endeavours, as men don't see much value in women inventions. The men have it mentally that women can't make it, so by doing so once the men are not involved they usually don't provide that full support, whether morally and financially.....(Interview, 30th July, 2024).

Generally, the above findings reveal that women in Uganda face numerous challenges in peacebuilding, particularly in the context of post-conflict recovery and ongoing gender-based

violence. These challenges are deeply rooted in the societal, cultural, and structural dynamics that have historically marginalized women. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes legal reforms, community engagement, and support for women's organizations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations that emerged from the study, which sought to establish the role of women in peacebuilding: a case study of the Coalition for Action (CoACT) in UNSCR 1325 in Uganda.

5.1. Summary of Key Findings

5.1.1 Objective One: To assess women's participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda

The study found out that women have participated in peace building at different levels. The study also found that women are very knowledgeable about the peace-building process and are working hard towards peacebuilding in their communities. Women have participated in peacebuilding at cultural and traditional levels, they have worked hard to be considered in peacebuilding and also in the political spheres.

The study also discovered that the level of women's participation in peacebuilding in Ugandan cultures, women's representation, peace developments, and policy are largely believed to be useful enough to emancipate women in peacebuilding in the country. However, the discontent of the minority cannot be ignored. Less educated or uneducated women do not participate much in the peacebuilding efforts; the contribution to mediation and negotiations of local conflicts is mostly limited to the women who are educated, with the non-educated having less or no contributions.

5.1.2 Objective Two: To highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda.

Study findings showed that there are a number of peacebuilding efforts and initiatives that are spearheaded by women. The different peacebuilding efforts include Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT), Lango Women Clan Leaders Association (LWCLA), Lira Rural Women and Children Development Initiative (LIRWOCDI), Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) and Kasese National Women's Exchange (KANWE).

5.1.3 Objective Three: To establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda

The study findings indicate that there are challenges women face in peacebuilding, and they include limited women representation at the grassroots, a high degree of bureaucracy, marginalization by cultural and clan systems, women's oppression, and gender inequality, among others. There are also funding limitations, rigidities in religious systems, and limited technical support for women. The results are supported by the previous studies that set to conduct research on similar studies, such as Pinker (2011), who argued that many women's organizations face great

difficulties in their continued survival, let alone in achieving all of their objectives, and there is considerable need for extended external support. Such problems include chronic under-funding, which is commonly a more extreme problem even than for other types of community organisation. Agbalajobi, (2009) argued that there is a general tendency for the leaders of institutions and political organizations to be the only participants at peace settlements, with very little grassroots participation. He adds that women, in general, are thus marginalized, as they are always poorly represented at the leadership level. Outside parties have had some limited success in enabling women to participate in peace talks.

5.2. Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to identify the role of women in peacebuilding. The study objectives were to assess the level of women's participation and involvement in institutions and mechanisms for peacebuilding in Uganda, to highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women in Uganda, and to establish the significant challenges faced by women in Peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

The study concludes that the state of women's role in peacebuilding is moderately high, though with challenges in representation in socio-political spheres and areas of negotiations. The study indicates the average participation of women in solving local conflicts. The results further indicate that the peacebuilding efforts are in place and still fairly good, and indeed, the efforts have yielded good results in terms of peacebuilding.

The study on the third objective concludes that the state and nature of the challenges are a cultural, financial, and limited representation of women on grassroots, hence the need to effectively address the challenges established.

5.3. Recommendations

Government should implement the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 (2000) to complement other women's initiatives for peacebuilding in Uganda since the NAP on UNSCR 1325 is a more efficient and strategic way of integrating gender into constitutional, legislative, and institutional reforms. This will allow the updating of gender policies and action plans in place in view to ensuring that the principle of gender parity in decision-making positions is applied. This

eventually enhances recognition of the role and contribution of women to national peace and reconciliation efforts, especially by strengthening women's organizations and those of civil society.

The government should partner with key stakeholders like CoACT 1325, and other international agencies engaged in peacebuilding efforts. It is critical to work in solidarity and partnership with national stakeholders on the one hand and with bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation agencies on the other hand. At the national level, partnerships with civil society organizations, women's groups, the media, and other international agencies must be clearly defined. This helps to generate collective political support for the application of UNSCR 1325 and therefore increases its chances for success.

The Ministry of Finance, together with other MDAs should have deliberate efforts to support mobilize and allocate funds for women's peace building efforts. For women's meaningful participation and gender equality to receive the necessary political, technical and other support required in peace processes, greater resources are required. Related to this, there is a need to increase longer-term, flexible and core funding to support increased preparedness, strategic planning and early action by women's organizations, movements and gender equality advocates in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

There is need for the government to foster formal and informal linkages across spaces for peacebuilding. Multiple formal and informal mechanisms that enable linkages between spaces for peacebuilding should be established wherever possible to feed and develop ideas and suggestions, brainstorm challenges and problem-solve. Such mechanisms might include periodic brainstorming and consultation sessions, study tours, two-way briefings, co-facilitation and more. These might occur starting from the very beginning around agenda setting, in relation to technical discussion areas and to support the implementation of ceasefire arrangements, framework agreements and other issues that arise. Consideration should be given to both the number of such initiatives as well as the amount of influence afforded.

The government should explore all entry points to ensure women's direct and meaningful participation in high-level peace processes. The rise of regional women mediator networks and the repeated emphasis on direct participation by participants in conference discussions reflects a growing impatience among women leaders. Including more women creates broader inclusivity and

ensures gender expertise is part of the knowledge and experience applied to support efforts toward peace.

There is a need for incorporating women's agencies in the peace agreements since it will enable them to work creatively with innovation and vigor to bring change through the execution of peace processes. This can be done through policy formulation to include women in designing the peace process, facilitating the women in discussions, and having them in active engagement with the reconciliations in the process of peace development and the building of a strong environment for the reconciliations.

The government through its partnerships and network should embark on developing and sharing gender-sensitive knowledge. This should focus on technical areas that arise in the context of high-level mediation processes and also endeavor to expand shared learning and capacity-building initiatives in these areas for men and women. Relatedly, the government should include, in national action plans on resolution 1325 (2000), strategies for working with and reaching out to the media and contribute to raising the awareness of journalists so as to improve reporting on the resolution and its core topics of prevention, protection and participation, as well as on the overall women and peace and security agenda.

The government should promote participatory approaches to identify women and peace and security priorities, fund and implement those priorities, and monitor progress at the local and national levels. Best practices in multi-stakeholder and partnership-based approaches to implementation, monitoring and accountability activities related to resolution 1325 (2000) should be documented and scaling-up options outlined.

The government through the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) should train and prevail over media reporting on peacebuilding efforts around the country. The media should be able to raise the awareness of and alert journalists and media workers to gender issues in order to further gender-sensitive reporting. The media should avoid stereotyping the roles of women and men, provide coverage of the diverse roles played by women in conflict and in building, securing and maintaining peace and report in depth on the impact of gender issues, including women's and men's representation, on the success of conflict-resolution and peace talks.

Coalition for Action (CoACT) 1325 should ensure that member grassroots women's groups and associations that have shown ingenuity in advocating their inclusion in peace processes, have their efforts documented, and gender-sensitive transitional tools and guiding principles should be developed. It should increase efforts and streamline strategies to emancipate women who have long been sidelined by cultural and sometimes religious perspectives/norms. In line with this, the Government should strengthen institutions (MDAs) to support such women networks by enforcing interventions for gender equality in all aspects geared towards peacebuilding.

5.4 Areas for Further Study

There is a gap to be filled in research on the significance of local peacebuilding in relation to broader peace processes. Women's participation in decision-making at the local level, often as an entry point, needs to be linked to engagement in peacebuilding more broadly. Relatedly, more research can be conducted on women and peace in Uganda, with a focus on cultural barriers to women's engagement in sociopolitical arenas. These domains provide an entry point for women's empowerment, as well as improved possibilities for inclusion and engagement in long-term peacebuilding.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Key Informants (Director/Association Leaders)

Introduction and Participant's Consent

Dear Respondent

My name is Tuhirirwe Deborah Rwabwogo. I am a student of Makerere University pursuing a Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies. I am collecting data on a topic '**The Role of Women**

in Peacebuilding: A case study of Coalition for Action (CoAct) on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in Uganda’. As a Director/Leader, you are kindly requested to participate in this study by responding to these questions. Information provided will only be used for the study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Consent: I agree to participate in the study Yes No

Part A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

1. Age of respondents (Years)	18-29 yrs	1
	30-49 yrs	2
	>50 yrs	3
2. Name of Organization/Association		
3. What is your Position in the Organization	Director/CEO	1
	Chairperson	2
	Committee Member	3
	Others Specify	4
4. Gender/Sex of Respondent	Male	1
	Female	2
5. What is the highest level of Education?	Ordinary Level	1
	Advanced Level	2
	Tertiary	3
	University	4
6. How long have you been working with this organization/association?	<1yr	1
	1-3 yrs	2
	4-6 yrs	3
	6> yrs	4

Part B: Guiding questions for the interview

a) Objective One: To assess women’s participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

- a. What do you understand by the term Peacebuilding?
- b. What are the existing levels of women participation in Peacebuilding in Uganda? (probe on each of the mentioned levels)
- c. How does culture and tradition affect women in the peacebuilding agenda (any examples)

- d. Is gender consideration an issue that is embraced by peacebuilding mechanisms and institutions in Uganda? If yes, How?
- e. How has women's participation in the political sphere enhanced peacebuilding efforts in Uganda?
- b) Objective Two: To highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda.**
 - a. What are the existing government initiatives that are spearheaded by women in areas of peacebuilding? (Clearly note down given initiatives and what exactly they do/have achieved in the area of peacebuilding)
 - b. What are the NGO peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women in Uganda? (Clearly note down given initiatives and what exactly they do/have achieved in the area of peacebuilding)
 - c. Where is the link between Government and Non-Government initiatives for women's participation in peacebuilding?
- c) Objective Three: To establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda**
 - a. What are the challenges that hinder women's participation in the peacebuilding agenda? (Probe on culture, decision-making, laws, and policies)
 - b. What can be done to enhance women's participation in peacebuilding in Uganda?

Thank you for participating in the study!

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Head Office staff and Association Members

Introduction and participant's consent

Dear Respondent

My name is Tuhirirwe Deborah Rwabwogo. I am a student of Makerere University pursuing Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies. I am collecting data on a topic '**The Role of Women in Peacebuilding: A case study of Coalition for Action (CoAct) on the United Nations**

Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in Uganda'. As a Director/Leader, you are kindly requested to participate in this study by responding to these questions. Information provided will only be used for the study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Consent

I agree to participate in the study Yes No

Part A: List of Participants per Organization/Association

Name of Respondent	Position/title	Age	Gender	Sign

Part B: Questions based on Research Objectives

1. Objective One: To assess women’s participation and involvement in the peacebuilding processes in Uganda.

- a. What do you understand by the term Peacebuilding? (Allow members to answer randomly)
- b. What are the existing levels of women participation in Peacebuilding in Uganda? (probe each of the mentioned levels and check whether some of them operate with those levels)
- c. How does culture and tradition affect women in the peacebuilding agenda (any examples/experiences)
- d. Is gender consideration an issue that is embraced by peacebuilding mechanisms and institutions in Uganda? If yes, How?
- e. How has women's participation in the political sphere enhanced peacebuilding efforts in Uganda? Probe on experiences

2. Objective Two: To highlight the peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women under CoACT on UNSCR 1325 in Uganda.

- d. What are the existing government initiatives that are spearheaded by women in areas of peacebuilding? (Clearly note down given initiatives and what exactly they do/have achieved in the area of peace building)

- e. What are the NGO peacebuilding efforts and initiatives spearheaded by women in Uganda?
(Clearly note down given initiatives and what exact they do/have achieved in the area of peace building)
- f. Where is the link between Government and Non-Government initiatives for women participation in peacebuilding?

3. Objective Three: To establish the major challenges women face in peacebuilding processes in Uganda

- c. What are the challenges that hinder women participation in peacebuilding agenda? (Probe on culture, decision making, laws and policies)
- d. What can be done to enhance women participation in peacebuilding in Uganda?

Note: Experience sharing by individual respondents is highly encouraged.

Thank you for participating in the study!

Appendix C: Introduction Letter for Field work

MAKERERE

P. O. Box 7062 Kampala, Uganda
Cables: MAKUNIKA



UNIVERSITY

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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF LIBERAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND PEACE STUDIES**

17th May 2024

RE: INTRODUCING MS.TUHIRIRWE DEBORAH RWABWOGO

This letter serves to introduce Ms. Tuhirirwe Deborah Rwabwogo our student of Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies. Her registration number is 2021/HD03/2197U. She is researching on the "The Role of Women in Peacebuilding: A Case Study of Coalition for Action (CoACT) on 1325 in Uganda"

We are requesting you to accord her the necessary support to enable her undertake research on the above topic. We thank you for your time and support.

Yours sincerely

Assoc. Prof. Veneranda Mbabazi
Head of Department of Religion and Peace Studies
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Makerere University
v.mbabazi@mak.ac.ug or venembebazi@yahoo.com



No	Item	Unit Cost	Total
A	Proposal preparation		
	Internet costs/library		100,000
	Typing	500	20,000
	Printing	100	100,000
	Consultations	500,000	500,000
	Airtime		40,000
	Transport	4000	40,000
B	Data collection		
	Printing	1000	100,000
	Materials		100,000
	Wages/Allowances/gifts		800,000
C	Data analysis		
	Data sorting and entry		500,000
	Consultation		1,000,000
D	Report writing		
	Printing	100	100,000
	Internet costs/library		100,000
	Consultations		500,000
E	Miscellaneous		300,000
	Total		4,250,000

Appendix E: Timeframe for the Study

Activity	Jan – March 2024	Mar – Apr	May - June	July - Aug. 2025	Sept 2025	Oct. 2025
Proposal development						
Proposal review						
Proposal approval						
Data collection						
Data analysis and reporting						
Development and Review of the draft report						
Submission of dissertation for external examination						
Defence of Dissertation						