



Sin mujeres no hay democracia – Without women there is no democracy

Women's Participation in Conflict and Peace Processes: A Relation With Women's Position in Post-Conflict Society?

A Case Study of Guatemala

Master Thesis

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Photo on front page taken by Charlotte van Raaij in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, 1 December 2019.

I. **Abstract**

This thesis looks into the question: *How did women's participation in the Guatemalan civil war and peace processes affect women's position in Guatemalan society today?* The academic debate shows that conflict can provide for a window of opportunity to women, finding themselves in empowered positions. However, in the majority of cases this does not continue in post-conflict societies. With the case study of Guatemala this thesis investigates if there is a relation between women's participation in conflict and peace processes, and women's position post-conflict, and tests the theories about women's momentum of opportunity in conflict. In the case of Guatemala, there is no such a relation to be found. Guatemala's peace processes are known to be highly inclusive, however, women have not experienced positive effects from this inclusion when it comes to their political and social-economic participation. Women's empowerment was superficial, their objectives were not taken seriously in the peace negotiations, and society's traditional values have not changed by the inclusion of women. Too little has been done to implement the commitments of the peace agreements on women's rights to make sure women's position post-conflict would benefit from this participation and make traditional stereotypical gender norms decrease. In future situations women need to be on fully equal standards with their male colleagues involved in the peace process and establishments need to be made about how to achieve the regulations that are written down in peace accords, in order for women's position in post-conflict society to significantly increase.

Keywords: Guatemala, women's rights, women's participation, peace processes, civil war

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III. List of abbreviations

ASC	Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil (Assembly of Civil Society)
ADEMI	Asociación de Mujeres Ixpiyakok
AFEDES	Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFR	Council of Foreign Relations
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CONAVIGUA	Cordinadora Nacional de las Viudas de Guatemala
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
GAM	Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo
GND	Grand National Dialogue
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
UN	United Nations
URNG	Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the topic

“It is true that men and women share a set of circumstances during armed conflict that exposes them to particularly adverse conditions and to the abuse of their human rights. However, there are certain gender-based risks, dangers and disadvantages, which particularly and disproportionately affect women”¹

Giulia Tamayo (2000)

Over the course of the 20th century the nature of conflict has shifted from armed forces to the private sphere of civilians, and especially women are heavily affected by it.² Women in conflict find themselves under extreme conditions, as sexual violence has become a tactic of war to disrupt communities, and gender inequalities are aggravated by conflict.³ Women are falling prey to systematic rape – often in order to disrupt communities – sexual slavery and forced pregnancy, to name only a few war crimes that disproportionately affect women. This aids to the view of women as helpless victims in times of conflict, while the reality shows us differently. It is often overlooked that in conflicts throughout the world women play significant roles in and outside forces, and constitute up to 30% of the armed forces.⁴ However, stereotypes of passive and peaceful women and aggressive and belligerent men still exist and even when women take on non-traditional roles, stereotypes remain present or return post-conflict.⁵ Patriarchal societies cause traditional gender roles of men as ‘fighting and leadership actors’ and women as ‘better in the home’ to prevail, even when women have proven their capabilities outside those set roles.⁶

One example of a conflict invoking stereotypes in a patriarchal society can be found in Guatemala. The civil war in Guatemala lasted for 36 years, from 1960 until 1996 and was fought between the guerrillas and the government. In Guatemala’s society and throughout its conflict, as in many other conflicts, women were amongst the most heavily affected.⁷ During the “scorched earth” campaign of dictator Ríos Montt, which happened from 1979 until 1985, whole indigenous villages were targeted and during massacres rape was no exception.⁸ Despite the problematic circumstances Guatemalan women have found themselves in, the peace processes between the warring parties, which resulted in the signing of the accords in 1996,

¹ Caroline O. N. Moser & Fiona C. Clark, ‘Gender, conflict, and building sustainable peace: Recent lessons from Latin America’, *Gender & Development* 9 (2001), p. 30.

² Mary Kaldor, *New and old wars; organized violence in a global era*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2001., and Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019.

³ Noeleen Heyzer, ‘Foreword’, in E. Rehn and E. Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women 2002.

⁴ Robin Arnett, ‘Women in Conflict’, open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 2015.

⁵ Elisabeth Rehn, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (2002).

⁶ Impunity Watch Policy Brief, *Masculinities, Violence against Women in Leadership & Participation in Transitional Societies: Burundi & Guatemala*, (2017) p. 4, retrieved from: http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/Masculinities_VaW_Leadership_and_Participation.pdf.

⁷ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Indigenous women and their human rights in the Americas*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II. Doc. 44/17 (2017), pp. 64-66.

⁸ Virginia Garrard-Burnett, ‘Aftermath: Women and Gender Issues in Postconflict Guatemala’, by: *Center for Development Information and Evaluation U.S. Agency for International Development*, Washington 2000, p. 5.

seemed to be a turning point. The processes have set high standards for the transition to democracy, social reconciliation, and a just and stable society, and most importantly, they are known to be highly gender inclusive, participatory and human rights-oriented.⁹ However, despite high standards in the accords, in post-conflict Guatemala women's emancipation seems not to have succeeded.

1.2 Research objective and research question

The research question that I aim to answer by conducting this research is: *How did women's participation in the Guatemalan civil war and peace processes affect women's position in Guatemalan society today?* In the process, I answer questions such as 'Why is this a matter that needs attention?', 'How are women obstructed or supported in their participation?', and 'What challenges do women face?' Peace processes are still male dominated, even though there is the awareness that the ones included should be representative of the country's inhabitants. With half of the population being female, most peace processes are far from representative in this aspect. This research will contribute to understanding why women often do not succeed in holding on to their empowered momentum post-conflict.

The objective of this research is to gain insight into women's participation during conflict and peace processes and to understand if and how they can turn this into empowering opportunities, or how women are obstructed in doing so. I focus on women's political and social-economic participation because these types of participation give an image of women's position in society. This research will follow along the lines of sub-questions, which are the following: '*What did women's emancipation and gender roles look like during Guatemala's conflict and peace processes?*', '*What was the role of women in the peace processes in terms of participation and the attention for women and gender that has been reflected in the peace accords?*', and '*What implications did these processes have on women's participation in Guatemala's society on a political and economic level?*' The chapters in this thesis align with these sub-questions.

I have aimed to find an answer to the research objectives by conducting interviews in Guatemala, where I have been for a period of nine weeks. Here, I conducted semi-structured interviews on the topic of my thesis with a various range of people. The objectives of this research have been translated into the form of interview questions. With the answers to these questions I will measure how my hypotheses are applicable to the case of Guatemala. The interview questions I used were drawn up according to two hypotheses, which I discuss in further detail in chapter 3. By conducting this research, I aim to contribute to the understanding of women in non-traditional gender roles and their participation in conflict and peace processes.

⁹ Sumie Nakaya, 'Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia', *Global Governance*, 9 (2003), p. 463., and Virginia Garrard-Burnett, 'Aftermath: Women and Gender Issues in Postconflict Guatemala', by: *Center for Development Information and Evaluation U.S. Agency for International Development*, Washington 2000, p. 4.

1.3 Scientific relevance

This thesis is a contribution to studies on women in conflict zones during and post-conflict. There are plenty of studies on the subject of women's participation in conflict and in peace processes.¹⁰ However, the question if there is a relation between women's participation in conflict and peace processes, and their position in post-conflict society, receives little attention. With my research I want to attempt to answer this question by using Guatemala as a case study. In the answer to this question lie relevant information and lessons for the future on what can be improved and needs to be taken into account when including women in peace processes, giving different attention to women in combat than to men in combat, and why women's position post-conflict improves or not. Finding out more on the relation between women's participation in conflict and peace processes and their position in society post-conflict can contribute to an improvement of the understanding of how women need to be included, how their views need to be taken into account and in what way peace accords need to contain women's objectives in order for them to actually have an effect. Gendered analyses remain important and necessary, as Thompson states very strongly:

“Practice has shown that if we don't understand the specific circumstances, experiences, roles, vulnerabilities, and capacities of men and women in war, we construct homogeneous strategies of response that do not address gender-based differences and generally tend to disadvantage women.”¹¹

This is true not only for the scientific relevance but also for the societal relevance of this thesis, since understanding both men and women's experiences of war contributes to a more comprehensive and inclusive collective memory and knowledge of a nation.

In the debate on women in conflict, awareness on the complications of only discussing women in conflict as victims and ignoring their participatory actions has grown throughout the years; a more positive alternative of the term 'victim' is the term 'survivor', which implicates that one is not passive.¹² With this research I contribute to the growing discourse on women as active participants in conflict and post-conflict processes. A balanced ratio is needed in science between awareness of women who suffered from conflict and of awareness of women who actively participated in conflict, to obtain a balanced reflection of reality.

1.4 Societal relevance

Thompson's argument also goes for the societal relevance of this research. This thesis contributes to a societal understanding of the importance of equality between men and women and attempts to make people realize that society is still exposed to stereotypes that harm communities. Stereotypes of traditional roles for men and women do not only harm women, but whole societies, since it numbs everyone; they limit women of reaching their full potential since they are rejected from 'manly' roles, and they limit men in expressing their true selves as they have to keep up with stereotypes of strong, brave and belligerent men.

¹⁰ Caroline O. N. Moser & Fiona C. Clark, 'Gender, conflict, and building sustainable peace: Recent lessons from Latin America', *Gender & Development* 9 (2001), pp. 29-39., and

Lorraine Bayard de Volo, 'Women and War in Latin America, 1950-2000', *History Compass* 4 (2009), pp. 1181-1200., and Christine Bell, 'Women, Peace Negotiations, and Peace Agreements: Opportunities and Challenges' in: Fionnuala Ní Aoláin ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018.

¹¹ Martha Thompson, 'Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections', *Development in Practice* 16 (2006), p. 342.

¹² Krishna Kumar, 'Aftermath: Women and Women's Organizations In Postconflict Societies. The Role of International Assistance', by: *Center for Development Information and Evaluation U.S. Agency for International Development*, Washington 2001, p. 14.

Research on the relation between women's participation in conflict and peace processes as well as on women's position in society today, contributes to creating the awareness about the importance of involving women in the discourse on conflict and peace processes. If adhered to in future post conflict situations and peace processes, past mistakes can be taken into account and peace processes can be implemented as inclusively as possible with valuable knowledge of previous pitfalls.

Furthermore, the social relevance lies in the importance of creating an inclusive collective memory of a nation. This thesis contributes to this by discussing women's experiences and participation during war and peace processes, which is a topic that is often overlooked as it is the norm to discuss conflict from the male view.¹³ There is overwhelming evidence that war affects men and women differently.¹⁴ If what is taught and memorized to future generations is only male's contribution to, and experience of, significant historical processes, women's contribution, whether it is positive or negative, will be diminished and the collective memory of a nation will be crooked and non-inclusive.

Conflict heavily affects women and gender relations. It displaces substantial numbers of people, and refugees and internally displaced populations consist primarily of women and children.¹⁵ Furthermore, women's participation in conflict also contributes to the redefinition of their identities and traditional gender roles, as women – just as men – are often both the perpetrators and victims of violence.¹⁶ Kumar mentions that although the political and societal system is so much disturbed during conflict, it can also serve as an opportunity to provide space for gender equality, which might open up possibilities for women's empowerment in the economic, political, and social lives of their countries.¹⁷ This happened partly during WWI in the United States, where women replaced men in the majority of jobs such as factories, government and defence, and eventually led women to join the suffrage movement in demanding for more rights.¹⁸ However, such changes in society are rarely maintained. Therefore, by looking into why women's empowerment in Guatemala was not realized, this thesis contributes to the understanding of what can be expected when it comes to changes in gender roles, and it provides insights in what needs to be done to achieve such changes.

During the interviews that were conducted for this thesis I have discussed women's position, women's rights, and the discrimination women face, with a variety of people. Some of them were very much aware and educated about the topic and worked for NGOs concerning women's empowerment, but there were also interviewees who were not much involved or educated on the topic. I hope our conversations have encouraged thoughts about the issues we discussed and are present in the society they live in, which might improve little things in their lives for the better. If our conversations have encouraged something as small as a comment someone makes on another person's machismo behaviour, I am of the opinion that my thesis has had a significant societal impact.

¹³ Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press 2004.

¹⁴ Chris Coulter, Mariam Persson, & Mats Utas, *Young female fighters in African wars: Conflict and its consequences* (Policy dialogue no. 3). Stockholm: The Nordic Africa Institute 2008, p. 7.

¹⁵ Krishna Kumar, 'Aftermath: Women and Women's Organizations In Postconflict Societies. The Role of International Assistance', by: *Center for Development Information and Evaluation U.S. Agency for International Development*, Washington 2001, pp. 7-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹⁸ Annette McDermott, *How World War II Empowered Women*, (July 2018), retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/news/how-world-war-ii-empowered-women>.

* Machismo: exaggerated masculinity, the Spanish term for macho behavior.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis will focus on women's empowerment during and after the Guatemalan conflict, investigating the challenge of women's emancipation in peace processes and post-conflict society. In the second chapter I will start with a literature review and set the theoretical framework for the thesis. I will be looking into the literature that exists on the topic of women in conflict and peace processes and I discuss what is still missing in the research. In the third chapter I discuss the methodology and design of the research. Here, I explain the study, the methods I used to collect my data, and the process of the data collection and analysis. In this chapter I will also be evaluating the whole process. The fourth chapter is where I discuss my collected data from the interviews in relation to the literature on the topic. I will start by explaining the concepts 'participation' and 'peace processes'. Then I dive into the data discussion which also includes unexpected findings, such as the role of education and the struggle of the indigenous. Finally, in the fifth and concluding chapter I will reflect on the process of writing this thesis, discuss the findings of the research as a whole, and provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of the literature and theories

2.1 Introduction

*'Clearly the nature of war has changed. It is being fought in homes and communities – and on women's bodies in a battle for resources and in the name of religion and ethnicity. Violence against women is used to break and humiliate women, men, families, communities, no matter which side they are on. Women have become the worst victims of war – and the biggest stakeholders of peace.'*¹⁹

Women bear especially grave consequences of war, as war amplifies society's inequalities. However, as I will show later in this chapter, in some cases women manage to turn conflict into a window of opportunity for restructuring relationships in society. With this thought in mind I will be looking at the impact of conflict on the relationship between men and women – understood as gender. I will investigate this topic more specifically through the level of participation of women in the Guatemalan 36-year conflict and the peace processes following the conflict. This chapter will start with looking into the impact of conflict on gender, from which I will jump into the more specific topic of women in conflict. I discuss how stereotypes still determine the debate on women in conflict, and how in most post-conflict societies there seems to be a return to the stereotypical status quo of inequalities between men and women. Then I will get into the topic of women's participation in conflict and peace processes, followed by explaining the case in Guatemala. Hereafter women's participation in Guatemala's conflict and peace processes are discussed, involving the implementation of the peace accords as well, to end with concluding remarks on this chapter.

2.2.1 Gender inequalities in conflict

The topic of conflict is not just an issue of militaries, politics or economics, as is often perceived, but also one of gender. Because of gender inequalities men and women experience conflict in different ways. The relation between gender and conflict means that during the war and in the aftermath, topics related to perceptions of what is 'male' and what is 'female' affect for instance political and economic issues. Debates recognize women's disproportionate suffering in conflict²⁰, the existence of stereotypes of men and women²¹, the male view of conflict resolution that is the norm and women's views that are being ignored²², and the inequalities in representation of men and women in peace processes²³. Moreover, impacts of

¹⁹ Noeleen Heyzer, 'Foreword', in E. Rehn and E. Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women 2002.

²⁰ Judith Gardam, 'Women and the law of armed conflict: Why the silence?' *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 46 (1997).

²¹ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (2002), and Nicole Ann Dombrowski, 'Soldiers, Saints, or Sacrificial Lambs? Women's Relationship to Combat and the Fortification of the Home Front in the Twentieth Century', in: N. A. Dombrowski ed., *Women and War in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London: Garland Publishing 1999.

²² Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press 2004.

²³ UN Women, *Facts and figures: Peace and security* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>, and

Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019.

conflict can either exacerbate gender stereotypes – for example by reinforcing domesticated forms of femininity and pushing women even more back into their homes²⁴ – or reduce gender stereotypes – for example by transforming traditional roles as women become the main breadwinners of the family²⁵.

One of the first clear historical examples depicting gender in war is WWI. With millions of men being away from home to fight, women were needed to fill up the jobs left behind and the new jobs available in the war industry. This is known as the ‘added worker effect.’²⁶ Women filled traditional masculine domains and roles such as positions in the agricultural or manufacturing market, but also worked on the front lines of the war as nurses, doctors, ambulance drivers, translators, and in some cases, on the battlefield.²⁷ Moreover, many organisations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army depended on enormous amounts of female volunteers. Many women saw the war as an opportunity for them to gain more independence and human rights, as they did not yet have the right to vote. This led to the suffrage movement to demand for the right to vote in the United States, England and many other countries, in which they eventually succeeded. However, in many cases today, women are still being excluded from peace processes and politics and pushed back into stereotypical roles in society.²⁸ Although women are in general amongst the ones most gravely affected in wartimes due to their vulnerability to sexual violence and exploitation – which will be discussed later in this chapter – an important side of the narrative is neglected when only this issue of women in conflict is discussed.

Scholars who do focus on this are often working through feminist or gender sensitive analyses. When discussing, it is important to be clear about what exactly feminist and gender analyses means, and what their differences are. Feminist researchers analyse through the lens of inequalities that exist between men and women on all levels; cultural, social, economic and so on. Feminist research criticises the patriarchal system and the inequalities this brings along and, in its essence, always argues for equality between men and women. Gender studies analyse what is perceived as ‘male’ and ‘female’. Cultural and social factors and environments set such perceptions. So when grappling with the concept of ‘gender’, stereotypes are avoided, and an examination of the different roles that are attributed to men and women in war and peace takes place.²⁹ In this thesis I will look at gender issues in the following way: when a study talks about ‘gender awareness’ or ‘gender sensitivity’ this means both male and female aspects of the topic are taken into account. When a study says there is a *lack* of gender awareness this means there is no

²⁴ Alice Szczepanikova, ‘Chechen women in war and exile: changing gender roles in the context of violence’, *Nationalities Papers* 5 (2015), p. 753 and p. 765., and Nadjé Al-Ali, ‘Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi women between dictatorship, war, sanctions and occupation’, *Third World Quarterly* 4-5 (2005), pp. 738-758.

²⁵ Alice Szczepanikova, ‘Chechen women in war and exile: changing gender roles in the context of violence’, *Nationalities Papers* 5 (2015), p. 753.

²⁶ The World Bank, ‘Violent Conflict and Gender Inequality. An Overview’, *Policy Research Working Paper* 6371 (2013), p. 22.

²⁷ The National WWI Museum and Memorial, *Women in World War I*, (n.d.) retrieved from <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/women>, and

Lene Hansen, ‘Security, Conflict and Militarization’, in: G. Waylen ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018, p. 13.

²⁸ Maxwell Adjei, ‘Women’s participation in peace processes: a review of literature’, *Journal of Peace Education* 2 (2019), p. 134., and Cornelia Weiss, ‘Transforming reality: employing international law to end practices that exclude women as peacemakers, peacekeepers, and peacebuilders’, in: Cecilia M. Bailliet ed., *Research Handbook on International Law and Peace*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited 2019, summary., and Jessica Trisko Darden ed., *Insurgent Women: Female Combatants in Civil Wars*, Washington: George Town University Press 2019, pp. 18, 28, 66.

²⁹ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts’ Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women’s Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (2002), p. 2.

attention for the fact that women and men experience conflict in different ways, and experience different effects of conflict.

2.2.2 Stereotypes and conflict

During conflict women break with stereotypes all the time by picking up arms, participating politically or becoming the main breadwinner of the family.³⁰ However, many stereotypes still exist around women in war. In her book Elshtain draws on stereotypical symbols of men being violent and aggressive in fighting for the nation and women peacefully weeping as the opposite of the male warrior.³¹ This does not denote the reality of what men and women are and undertake in wartime. Another returning phenomenon is telling the story of conflict only from the male point of view. In *The Curious Feminist*, published by Cynthia Enloe, she looks into social, economic, racial and wartime matters.³² With a feminist angle, Enloe questions social constructs that are generally taken for granted, such as the phenomenon of one-sided accounts from the male view or women's role in conflict as being solely the passive victim. Applying this to my case study, this raises the question to what extent this happened in Guatemala, which I will elaborate on further in chapter 4. Enloe underlines the importance of understanding and dealing with conflict – both during and in the aftermath of conflict – in two ways: from a masculine and feminine perspective. These two perspectives differ greatly from one another, and she argues 'paying close attention to how ideas about womanhood and manhood shape individuals' behaviour and institutions' policies will produce a much more realistic understanding of how this world operates.'³³ What lacks from her work is a more specific analysis about the effects of women's participation in times of war and peacebuilding on society. This is relevant because it would provide for more insights on the effects of men's and women's actions in times of war and its aftermath, and what the biggest differences are. In the case of Guatemala, after the signing of the peace accord a total of 766 women were demobilised in DDR (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) programs.³⁴ However, like Enloe argues, these programs were lacking any gender perspective, which has made it especially difficult for women to reintegrate into post-conflict society.³⁵

Even when women break with pacific and passive stereotypes in times of war, the expectation remains that demobilization means the status quo of active working men and passive staying at home women will be restored.³⁶ The issue of this unchangeable status quo and reversion to feminine stereotypes is supported by the example of WWI discussed earlier, when after the war had ended women lost their jobs and had to return to the household. Several scholars such as McKay, El Bushra & Piza Lopez, and Blacklock

³⁰ ICRC, *Women and War*, (11 October 2018), retrieved from: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/women-war>, and Aljazeera, *Sri Lanka's female Tigers* (3 August 2007), retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2007/07/200852517307514678.html>.

³¹ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War*, New York: Basic Books 1987, pp. 3-13.

³² Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press 2004.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³⁴ Wenche Hauge, 'Group identity – a neglected asset: Determinants of social and political participation among female ex-fighters in Guatemala', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 2 (2002), p. 295.

³⁵ University of Birmingham, *Female ex-combatants need help to improve post-conflict lives – study*, 20 May 2019, retrieved from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2019/05/female-ex-combatants-need-help.aspx>.

³⁶ Nicole Ann Dombrowski, 'Soldiers, Saints, or Sacrificial Lambs? Women's Relationship to Combat and the Fortification of the Home Front in the Twentieth Century', in: N. A. Dombrowski ed., *Women and War in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London: Garland Publishing 1999, p. 7.

& Crosby acknowledge this happens in the majority of post-conflict situations.³⁷ When you follow the stereotype of a woman in a conflict zone, she is a non-empowered passive victim. Such stereotypes are maintained by the machismo existing in Guatemala. However, in reality, and also in the case of Guatemala, women often take up leadership roles and positions that used to be taken by men. In their chapter Blacklock and Crosby discuss how this took place in the context of Guatemala. Guatemalan women faced great difficulties when the conflict had come to an end and society tried to return to its normal routine again. Many women in Guatemala organised themselves into empowered movements during the conflict, and once back found themselves conflicting with male leadership within their communities, realizing they were only allowed to be empowered for an amount of time, instead of really being in control of their lives and surroundings post-conflict.³⁸

2.2.3 Loss of momentum in women emancipation after conflict

Conflict affects women in different ways than it affects men, but can also provide women with opportunities for changes in stereotypical gender roles. About 80 per cent of the world's millions of refugees and other displaced persons, including internally displaced persons, are women and children.³⁹ The United Nations is the world's guiding organisation when it comes to agreements and declarations aiming at gender equality and improving women's rights, particularly in conflict areas. The UN has produced several major guiding documents and commissions aimed at improving women's rights and achieving gender equality on a global scale. The first commission set up for this goal was the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946, serving as 'the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.'⁴⁰ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) set up in 1979 monitors the implementation of the convention around the world. It is seen as the 'women's bill of rights' and serves as a cornerstone to all the UN Women programmes.⁴¹ More than 185 countries are parties to the Convention.⁴² Other initiatives are the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA), which was preceded by conferences in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985), and international women's day on the 8th of March and UN resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.⁴³ With this document, the Security Council of the UN marks for the first time the unique and disproportionate impact of violent conflict on women.⁴⁴

Next to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence, women and girls in conflict areas are highly

³⁷ Susan McKay, 'The Effects of Armed Conflict on Girls and Women', *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 4 (1998), p. 383, and

Judy El Bushra and Eugenia Piza Lopez, *Development in conflict: The gender dimension*, New York: Oxford University Press 1994, p. 46., and

Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence. Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004.

³⁸ Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence. Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004, p. 60.

³⁹ United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995), New York: Author, p. 89.

⁴⁰ UN Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, retrieved from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>.

⁴¹ UN Women, *Guiding Documents*, retrieved from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/guiding-documents>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Peace Women, *Security Council Resolution 1325*, retrieved from: <https://www.peacewomen.org/SCR-1325>.

vulnerable to attacks on schools and hospitals, school dropouts due to school closures, general insecurity, economic stress in the family, unequal burdens of care giving and domestic work.⁴⁵ San Pedro presents that countries that are affected by conflict show girls are 2.5 times likelier to not go to school, in comparison with girls in non-conflict situations.⁴⁶ Moreover in times of conflict girls are likely to be forced to marry early, forced to engage in unsafe livelihoods such as transactional sex, being sexually exploited by armed actors, run increased risks to unintended pregnancies and thus unsafe abortions, increased risk of HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections with consequences to women's reproductive health, and so on.⁴⁷ Thereby, recovery programs in post conflict societies are likely to neglect or bypass women, as they are not taken into account by disarmament programmes because they are not seen as combatants, or because women are restricted to their homes due to social norms or insecurity and thus are difficult to reach.

Next to these direct effects of conflict there are indirect effects. As argued by many authors such as Rehn & Sirleaf, these can serve as an opportunity since they can change traditional gender roles when women acquire more mobility, resources and opportunities for leadership, as has happened in post-conflict Rwanda.⁴⁸ However, what those authors do not mention is that indirect effects can also exacerbate gender inequalities by shifting the landscape of opportunities available to women, as explained by a report of the World Bank.⁴⁹ Violent conflict can obstruct changing gender roles; often women experience an increased responsibility for taking care of their families since male relatives are not present, dead or missing, which can cause worsening health conditions both mentally and physically.⁵⁰ Cases of empowered participation and changes in gender norms do often not last long post-conflict, as seen by the findings of McKay, El Bushra and others, since the inequalities between men and women remain and post-conflict societies return to the patriarchal and traditional customs.⁵¹ In the case of Guatemala this robbed women from opportunities to political and economic participation.⁵²

⁴⁵ UNDESA, UNFPA, UNICEF, and UN Women *Girls and Young Women Fact Sheet* 2013, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (2002), p. 2., and Catharine Newbury and Hannah Baldwin, 'Aftermath: Women in Postgenocide Rwanda, by: *Center for Development Information and Evaluation U.S. Agency for International Development*, Washington 2000.

⁴⁹ World Bank, 'Violent Conflict and Gender Inequality. An Overview', *Policy Research Working Paper* 6371 (2013), p. 17.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 18-23.

⁵¹ Judy El Bushra and Eugenia Piza Lopez, *Development in conflict: The gender dimension*, New York: Oxford University Press 1994, p. 46., and

Susan McKay, 'The Effects of Armed Conflict on Girls and Women', *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 4 (1998), pp. 381-384.

⁵² University of Birmingham, *Female ex-combatants need help to improve post-conflict lives – study* (20 May 2019), retrieved from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2019/05/female-ex-combatants-need-help.aspx>.

2.3 Excluding women from peace processes

*'Our world cannot get ahead by leaving half the population behind.'*⁵³

Hillary Clinton, 2016

Numbers of women's low participation in peace processes show that women continue to be excluded. Between 1990 and 2017, women constituted only 2% of mediators, 5% of witnesses and signatories, and 8% of negotiators in all major peace processes.⁵⁴ Data from the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) shows that nearly half of the peace and conflict-resolution agreements in the 1990s have failed within five years and relapses to civil war are alarmingly high.⁵⁵ Reducing these relapses and advance stability could be achieved by including women. San Pedro shows that there is a positive correlation between the influencing capacity of women in peace agreements and the probability that such agreements will be reached and implemented.⁵⁶ Moreover, in the case of including women an agreement has a 35% probability of lasting at least 15 years, which is more than when women are not included.⁵⁷ More and more research shows that women's participation in peace processes proves to contribute to the sustainability and longevity of peace agreements.⁵⁸ However, this strategy is still not normalized.⁵⁹

But why? Research by the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative has shown that policy-makers, negotiators and mediators overall still resist greater inclusion of women in peace processes.⁶⁰ One of the reasons is that women's rights are rarely prioritized in peace negotiations and women are often expected to be advocating women's rights, while in reality women can negotiate all types of issues.⁶¹ O'Reilly et. al. argue that when men in peace process situations are assumed to be qualified for the part, women seeking inclusion have a high risk of being confronted with extensive questions about their qualifications and their credibility.⁶² Furthermore, they argue that when negotiators are considered to be legitimate by society without including women, participants of negotiations opposing women's inclusion will feel no need or pressure to be more inclusive.⁶³ In chapter 4 I will continue on these findings, to find out how female participants of the Guatemalan peace processes have been obstructed in their participation. What is necessary is that the norm of exclusive peace processes is being shifted to inclusive, and the parties

⁵³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, 'Foreword', in: Melanne Vermeer & Kim Azzarelli, *Fast Forward. How Women Can Achieve Power and Purpose*, Boston & New York: Mariner Books 2016.

⁵⁴ UN Women, *Facts and figures: Peace and security* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/facts-and-figures>, and

Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, *Why It Matters* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/why-it-matters>.

⁵⁶ Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Ibid., and

Jana Krause, Werner Krause and Piia Bränfors, 'Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace', *International Interactions* 6 (2018), pp. 985-1016.

⁵⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, *Why It Matters* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/why-it-matters>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, *Making Women Count in Peace Processes* (January 2016), retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/sites/default/files/%20IPTI-Making-Women-Count-At-Glance-4-pager.pdf>

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Maria O'Reilly, Andrea Ó Súilleabháin and Thania Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*, New York: International Peace Institute (2015), p. 4.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 8.

included recognize the importance and value of women's participation in these processes. If women's role in conflict continues to be neglected, one continues to work with peace agreements that get jammed because of the same reason sooner or later; the agreement does not represent half of the population and its objectives that are involved. While it should be, including both the male and the female half of the population is not the norm.⁶⁴ In the case of Guatemala however, it seemed like things were done differently, since women were included in the peace processes.

2.4 The Guatemalan conflict and its peace processes

Guatemala's peace processes are known for their inclusivity. The conflict, which started in 1960 and ended in 1996, has been one of the heaviest in Latin-America. After a popular uprising in 1944 the democratic elected president Jacobo Árbenz came to power. The United States government, thriving under its capitalistic system, was not in favour of Árbenz as he stood up against some major companies active in Guatemala, one of them being the United Fruit Company, which had taken possession of people's land in order to expand their businesses. Under Árbenz, land reforms known as Decree 900 gave land back from the companies to the indigenous, which alienated the companies and the United States even more. Under the pretext of Árbenz being a communist the CIA succeeded to engineer a coup, putting in power Carlos Castillo Armas in 1954. Celebrated land reforms were reversed and inequalities aggravated. In 1960 violence escalated and the following war would last for 36 years. Eventually, more than 3 decades of civil war were needed for the government and the rebel forces to start the peace processes, which finally led to the peace accords of 1996.

Alvarez and Prado explain that civil political participation was not a part of Guatemala's politics until the mid-1980s with the start of the Grand National Dialogue (GND).⁶⁵ The GND came to life to discuss with the government and civil society actors how a transformation from a warring country to a peaceful country could be made.⁶⁶ These dialogues did not lead to a definitive settlement, but they did mobilize public involvement in peacemaking, were known to be very inclusive as a diversity of representatives from different layers of society was included, and set the stage for the actual peace processes a few years later.⁶⁷ Women's organizations were not included in the GND only until 1993 after numerous debates.⁶⁸

After a tumultuous period and an interruption of talks, negotiations continued in the form of the Assembly of Civil Society (Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil, ASC) in 1994. This was probably the most successful and representative body that the peace process had because it was so inclusive and most of its proposals were directly adopted in the final official peace accords.⁶⁹ Although the inclusion of civil society

⁶⁴ Maxwell Adjei, 'Women's participation in peace processes: a review of literature', *Journal of Peace Education* 2 (2019), and D. Agbajodi, 'The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding', in: *Understanding Africa's Contemporary Conflicts*, edited by R. Bowd and A.B. Chikwanha, 233-254 (2010), Pretoria: African Human Security Initiative.

⁶⁵ Enrique Alvarez and Tania Palencia Prado, 'Guatemala feature study', in: Catherine Barnes (ed.) *Owning the process. Public participation in peacemaking*, Accord 13, Conciliation Resources (2002), p. 39.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-46.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-50.

⁶⁹ Case study on Guatemala, *Observations and Reflections on the Negotiation and National Dialogue Process* (2017), retrieved from: <https://www.berghof->

continued, in first instance women organisations were not invited to these talks. When they finally were, this meant for the first time in Guatemala's history gender issues could be discussed.⁷⁰ On 29 December 1996 the government, the URNG and the Guatemalan army signed the Agreement of a Firm and Lasting Peace.

2.4.1 Women's participation in Guatemala

Guatemala is not famous for a grand female participation in the war, but women's participation in the peace processes were celebrated. However, this did not have the effects many had hoped for. During the conflict, around 15% of the Guatemalan guerrilla forces were women, having diverse roles such as political representatives, radio communicators and medics.⁷¹ The most famous woman to have participated in the armed struggle in Guatemala is Rigoberta Menchú, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. Montenegro discusses that in the 80s, the period of gravest intolerance and repression, women played an important role in organizations like Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM) which stood up for human rights and demanded information about detained and disappeared family members.⁷²

During the peace processes, a total of 32 women's organizations were included within the ASC, and a total of 9 women were present in the other sectors.⁷³ However, in the actual official negotiations only 2 women were included; Raquel Zelaya as part of representatives for the government, and Luz Méndez as part of the URNG (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca) forces. In the official negotiations it was Luz Méndez who has represented the proposals of the women's sector of the ASC in the formal negotiations.⁷⁴ However, Méndez's attempts were constrained by resistance of several political parties and the business sector, and negative attitudes of male participants.⁷⁵ Eventually, the agenda of women's organizations has been heavily marginalized in the final accords. As Nakaya notes, after the completion of the peace accords women's participation diminished even further, especially in women using their vote and in the representation of the political system.⁷⁶ She does however not elaborate on what exactly caused this.

Literature about women's participation in war, especially in guerrilla groups, is available and also specifically on Guatemala's case literature is to be found, for example by Hauge and Thoresen.⁷⁷ Extensive

[foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Other_Resources/NationalDialogue/Guatemala Case Study - National Dialogue Handbook.pdf](https://www.foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Other_Resources/NationalDialogue/Guatemala_Case_Study_-_National_Dialogue_Handbook.pdf), p. 12.

⁷⁰ Enrique Alvarez and Tania Palencia Prado, 'Guatemala feature study', in: Catherine Barnes (ed.) *Owning the process. Public participation in peacemaking* (Accord 13, Conciliation Resources, 2002), pp. 50-51.

⁷¹ University of Birmingham, *Female ex-combatants need help to improve post-conflict lives - study*, 20 May 2019, retrieved from: <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2019/05/female-ex-combatants-need-help.aspx>.

⁷² Nineth Montenegro, *The Challenge of Women's Political Participation in Guatemala* (2002) p. 2, retrieved from: <http://ideadev.insomnation.com/sites/default/files/publications/chapters/women-in-parliament/mujeres-en-el-parlamento-mas-alla-de-los-numeros-2002-EN-case-study-guatemala.pdf>.

⁷³ Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, *Women's role in Guatemala's peace process (1994-1999)*, (n.d.) retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/infographic-women-role-guatemala-peace-process-1994-1999>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Sumie Nakaya, 'Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia', *Global Governance* 9 (2003), p. 466.

⁷⁷ Wenche Hauge, 'Group identity - a neglected asset: Determinants of social and political participation among female ex-fighters in Guatemala', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 2 (2002), pp. 295-316., and

Wenche Hauge, and Beate Thoresen, 'The Fate of Former Combatants in Guatemala: Spoilers or Agents for Change?', in: *The Paradoxes of Peacebuilding Post 9/11*. Toronto: University of British Columbia Press 2008, pp. 210-235.

literature is written on the importance and legitimization of women's participation in peace processes in general⁷⁸, as discussed earlier in this chapter. However, all of this research lacks analyses specifically on the effects of women's participation in general and in the Guatemalan war and peace processes. This raises the question if there exists such a relationship at all, which I will investigate further in chapter 4. Women have played a role in Guatemala's peace processes, but in the accords, this is not reflected. According to the gap in the debate it looks like this means that there are no effects of participation in war and peace processes and women's position today, or that there is no relation at all.

2.4.2 Implementation of the peace accords

Despite the positivity with which the peace processes and accords were met, generally its implementation has failed.⁷⁹ Particularly when it comes to women's rights there is barely any improvement to be seen, which can partly be linked to the fact that the accords never had the policy framework it needed for them to be implemented in the constitution. Alvarez and Prado explain this lack of constitutional implementation was caused by slow and blocked implementation procedures and the defeated national referendum that was needed to carry on constitutional reforms.⁸⁰ Stanley and Holiday discuss in their article more explanations for why the accords failed. They attribute its failure to two central features; first they argue that the accords have more the *form* of comprehensive peace than the substance of it.⁸¹ Second, the accords depended heavily on drastic constitutional reform changes, but since the parties signing the accords lacked the power and unity to deliver political support for achieving such changes, the actual implementation never happened.⁸² What lacks in their argument is an analysis on what exactly was missing in the accords which contributed to its failure. They also do not take into account the fragile and corrupt society in which the accords were signed, nor is there a specific examination of efforts that were done concerning women's rights.

According to peace negotiator Luz Méndez, the lack of political support for achieving changes was the major shortcoming: *"If I can go back to the time of negotiations and advise women in the ASC, I would recommend that they include provisions in the final peace accord which mandates democratic elections in the immediate aftermath of the peace accord, so that the provisions of agreements would be implemented. Without structural changes in the political landscape, and the visible dividends of peace, women's groups are failing in the struggle to maintain activism in the face of poverty, sporadic political violence, and continued*

⁷⁸ Sumie Nakaya, 'Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia', *Global Governance* 9 (2003), pp. 459-476., and Patricia Pessar, 'Women's Political Consciousness and Empowerment in Local, National, and Transnational Contexts: Guatemalan Refugees and Returnees', *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power* 4 (2001), pp. 461-500., and Noeleen Heyzer, 'Foreword', in E. Rehn and E. Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women 2002.

⁷⁹ University of Notre Dame Peace Accords Matrix, *Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace* (n.d.), retrieved from: https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/accord-firm-and-lasting-peace#footnoteref2_j4kihgi.

⁸⁰ Enrique Alvarez and Tania Palencia Prado, 'Guatemala feature study', in: Catherine Barnes (ed.) *Owning the process. Public participation in peacemaking* (Accord 13, Conciliation Resources, 2002), p. 38.

⁸¹ William Stanley and David Holiday, 'Broad Participation, Diffuse Responsibility: Peace Implementation in Guatemala', in: Stephen John Stedman ed., *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2002, p. 46.

⁸² Ibid.

gender discrimination.⁸³ Thus, what is actually written down in the accords on women's rights has proven to have no significant influence in the actual improvement of women's position in Guatemala. One provision on women is included: 'VI. The Role of Women In Strengthening Civilian Power'.⁸⁴ Then there are two agreements involving women: under 'II. Struggle Against Discrimination' there is an agreement on 'Rights of indigenous women'.⁸⁵ Under the provision 'I. Democratization and Participatory Development', there is an agreement on 'Participation of women in economic and social development'.⁸⁶ The commitments lack quantitative targets, price tags, deadlines, or specifications on sharing of power, which are necessary to transfer the provisions from theory to practice and being able to implement them.⁸⁷ Close et. al. argues that "inclusion efforts to support greater gender equality risk being mainly symbolic if they are not sustained or complemented by other initiatives that incentivise deeper changes in gender norms."⁸⁸ This is what has happened in the case of Guatemala: its efforts on gender equality in the accords have become mainly symbolic.

2.5 Conclusion

The literature discussed in this chapter has provided for insights on the matter of women's participation in conflict and peace processes, some of which I will continue to use in the analysis in chapter 4 of this thesis. San Pedro, Rehn & Sirleaf and others make the observation that conflict can provide for opportunities to women, while Darden, Weiss, Adjei and others argue that post-conflict situations in the majority of times push women back into traditional gender roles. This raises the question if and how this has happened in Guatemala, which I will look into further in chapter 4. Enloe argues that conflict is talked about and dealt with through the male point of view, hereby neglecting the female point of view. In chapter 4 I apply this line of argument to the case of Guatemala's peace processes to see if and how this has happened here. Elshtain discusses stereotypes and argues that during times of conflict the cultural discourse often refers to women as 'passive victims', which serves as an explanation of women being pushed into traditional gender roles. Moreover, discussions of Rehn and Sirleaf, Dombrowski and others about stereotypes of men and women in conflict contribute to drawing up the context in which women in conflict find themselves, which in Guatemala is heavily maintained by the existence of machismo in society.

When it comes to peace processes, research of scholars such as Heyzer, San Pedro and Pesser argue for including women in peace building processes since it is not only beneficial for women but for the whole country, since this provides for more sustainable and peaceful societies. Agbajobi, McKay and Adjei argue for the importance of women's participation not in the stereotypical way – as is often said that women are less belligerent than men – but simply because they represent half of the population. It is still not

⁸³ Sumie Nakaya, 'Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia', *Global Governance* 9 (2003), p. 466.

⁸⁴ Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace, the Government of Guatemala – the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca – the United Nations, 29 December 1996, p. 96.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Latin American Network Information Centre, *Promise and Reality: Implementation of the Guatemalan Peace Accords* (n.d.), retrieved from: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/hemisphereinitiatives/promise.htm#imple>.

⁸⁸ Sophia Close, Catherine O'Rourke and Zahbia Yousuf, 'Gender, inclusion and political settlements. Implications for peace processes', in: Andy Carl (ed.) *Negotiating inclusion in peace processes* (Accord 28, Conciliation Resources, 2019), p. 28.

normalized to include both halves of society, in most cases women are still being excluded from many peace processes. Despite this seemingly positive and inclusive peace process, empowerment did not take ground afterwards, and the accords have failed Guatemala's women in increasing participation and decreasing the inequalities between men and women. The discussions of Alvarez, Prado, Stanley & Holiday and their explanations of the failure of the accords continue to support my argument in chapter 4 where I will be assessing the accords' failure.

What is still missing in the debates discussed in this chapter is the discussion of how women's participation in conflict and peace processes affects women's position in post-conflict societies. It is not widely discussed why, in societies where women have found themselves empowered during conflict and peace processes, this empowerment is not continued in the post-conflict society. Hence, I aim to fill this gap in the debate by looking into the case of Guatemala where I have conducted interviews over a period of nine weeks. The interviews and further research on Guatemala's peace processes provided me with information on the position of women in Guatemala, the extend of women's participation in the war and peace processes, and what implications the so-called inclusive peace processes have had on Guatemala's women.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 The study

The purpose of this thesis is to look into the issue of women's position in Guatemala today, and how women's participation in the war and peace processes are related to this. As discussed in the theoretical framework the majority of post-war societies show us that when women are active in conflict, women's post-war position in society does not succeed to maintain empowered positions, and consequently women are pushed back into the pre-war stereotype roles of mothers and housemaids.⁸⁹ There is international consensus for inclusive peace processes, and Guatemala's peace processes are known to be one of the most inclusive, participatory and human rights-oriented when it comes to gender equality and women rights.⁹⁰ Consequently, one might expect Guatemala's post-war society to be successful in living up to women's rights and increasing gender equality. Existing research on the question if there is a link between women's participation in the conflict and the peace processes, and women's position in Guatemala today is lacking. As such, this thesis will look into the question if Guatemala's post-war society continued to see women in empowered positions because of this.

To find an answer to this question this thesis is based on both primary and secondary data. Theories have been used in the second chapter to explain the topic and its issues and discuss relevant debates and arguments, and data from the interviews are used to gain insights in how the matter is experienced by Guatemalans themselves. To demarcate the research and the concept of participation this thesis will deal with participation on the political and social-economic level. Political participation shows to what extent people are involved in their country's governmental health and status, which can affect the government feeling the obligation to adhere to its citizens' human rights. Secondly, social-economic participation shows to what extent people are involved in the society they live in, and to what extent they can do this in an economically independent manner. Altogether, enhanced participation and rights in these two domains underlie women's equal citizenship to men, which provides for an overview of women's position in a society within the scope of this research.⁹¹

3.2 The method

To obtain data for researching the problem statement I have used semi-structured interviews. I used this type of interview in order to find out if there is a consciousness and understanding amongst the population

⁸⁹ Nicole Ann Dombrowski, 'Soldiers, Saints, or Sacrificial Lambs? Women's Relationship to Combat and the Fortification of the Home Front in the Twentieth Century', in: N. A. Dombrowski ed., *Women and War in the Twentieth Century*, New York and London: Garland Publishing 1999, p. 7., and Susan McKay, 'The Effects of Armed Conflict on Girls and Women', *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 4 (1998), p. 383. and, Judy El Bushra and Eugenia Piza Lopez, *Development in conflict: The gender dimension*, New York: Oxford University Press 1994, p. 46. and,

Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence. Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004.

⁹⁰ Sumie Nakaya, 'Women and Gender Equality in Peace Processes: From Women at the Negotiating Table to Postwar Structural Reforms in Guatemala and Somalia', *Global Governance*, 9 (2003), p. 463., and Andy Carl ed., *Inclusion in peace processes* (Accord 28, Conciliation Resources, 2019).

⁹¹ Valentine M. Moghadam and Lucie Senftova, 'Measuring Women's Empowerment: Participation and Rights in Civil, Political, Social, Economic, and Cultural Domains', *International Social Science Journal*, 184 (2005) p. 390.

in Guatemala about women's participation in the war and a possible relation with women's position in society today. The goal of my interviews was to involve the thoughts and sentiments about the war, the peace accords and women's position in society today of Guatemalans themselves. It is important to me to not only look into figures and theories of scientists about the matter, but also look into how people experience the topic scientists are writing about. This is where the interviews contribute to the thesis. In order to translate my research question into interview questions that can contribute to the answer, I used the following hypotheses:

- 'Women's participation in the war and the peace processes contributed to women being more politically active than before the war.'
- 'Women's participation in the war and the peace processes contributed to an improvement of women's social-economic participation and their position today.'

I made a distinction between the consequences of women's participation in the peace process for both political and social-economic participation. The importance of this distinction is that it shows participation on the political level, which is often more public and shared with other people, but also on the more local and private level, which is shown by social-economic. According to these hypotheses I made up the semi-structured interview with the following questions for hypothesis 1:

- How did women's participation in the war and peace processes manifest itself?
- How does women's participation in politics manifest itself?

And the following questions for hypothesis 2:

- Has women's role during the war and peace processes been overlooked?
- Has society's attitude towards women changed after the war?
- Are economically independent women accepted in society?
- What challenges do women face?
- How does women's social-economic participation manifest itself?

The answers to the interview questions served to measure the understanding of women's participation and position in Guatemala, and how this is reflected in the participants' community. Informants were free to discuss broader themes, and whenever interesting points were made, I tried to continue the conversation by asking questions on that particular point to retract more information from the informant. I transcribed and translated each interview right after I conducted it, to make sure I would be able to transcribe with the interview fresh in my mind. This helped with making the transcriptions clearly organised and ready for coding.

3.3 Data collection

The interviews were taken in the area of Lago de Atitlan, in several villages near the lake. The inhabitants of this area are indigenous, and next to Spanish speak their own Maya language. The interviews were conducted in Spanish. A total of 11 people was interviewed for this thesis. Since I was in Guatemala for a short amount of time, I was limited in the number of people I was able to interview, as I had to spend time looking for participants, improving my Spanish and transcribing the interviews. The interviews were

conducted in Spanish, as the majority of the informants did not speak English, or not sufficiently enough to express their thoughts in an adequate manner. As my Spanish was better than their English, I choose to conduct the interviews in Spanish. However, in some cases this provided a certain barrier during the interview, which provided for a certain level of barriers in the communication. Due to the limited number of interviews this thesis lacks several perspectives. I would like to have included women who had been active in the war, and women who are active in politics. I would have explored the topic of development in participation and emancipation and how these women experienced this.

In my selection process I tried to have a varied group of people; variation in age, gender and profession, since I felt this would provide for diverse and informed perspectives on how women's empowerment in Guatemala worked out. I spoke with three people who were working for an NGO in the area of women's empowerment. Other participants were the ex-mayor of San Pedro La Laguna, activists, women who joined communities that helped their economic independency, former primary school teachers and a single-mother of three children. In order to perfect the results further I chose to interview both experts and non-experts, to learn about both professional and non-professional views on the matter (however of course each informant is an expert on his or her own life). The informants were interviewed in informal settings in their own environment, which varied from their workplace to their homes or a coffee bar of the informants' choice. The interviews took place in different villages in the same area of Lago de Atitlan.

The form of the interviews was semi-structured. Before my departure to Guatemala I made up a list of questions as provided earlier, according to which I eventually also conducted the interviews. During the interview I gave the informant the freedom to talk about other matters as well, sometimes continuing to ask for more information on that topic or sometimes steering the informant back to the topic I wanted to talk about. The interviews lasted between 25 minutes to 90 minutes, and they were recorded via the audio function on my phone. During the interview I also took notes when I wanted to remember or highlight particular statements.

3.4 Data analysis

Once I translated and transcribed the interviews, I coded them manually in a Word file. To code the interviews, I have used 8 different types of codes. These are the following: 'names', 'position of women (during the war and now)', 'peace processes and accords', 'participation of women (during the war and now)', 'social-economic position', 'relation between participation then and now', 'international pressure' and 'Guatemala in general.' I gave the codes colours and names according to what information I wanted to retrieve from the interviews. The most important and relevant statements made by the informants all fit into one of the codes. Next to this I made a separate code for names my informants mentioned, as it turned out the same names were mentioned repeatedly, with the remarks that those people have served as example, as inspiring persons, or as promiscuous persons in Guatemalan politics or the conflict. Then I used the same code system of colours for my literature review chapter. This way it was easier for me to start writing my data chapter; I could see which parts of my chapters linked with which quotes from my dataset. Based on this I started writing my data chapter.

3.5 Evaluation

Overall, I am content with how the process of interviewing went. The language barrier was less than I expected; there was one interview where I did not understand enough of what the participant was saying in order for me to respond back with different questions than the ones I had already made in advance. My host family and Spanish teacher helped me looking for interviewees, which provided me of a network of people who were willing to participate.

However, there are several limitations to the research. The first limitation is the time I spend in the field, which was nine weeks. Considering the time that goes into finding participants, planning moments with them to conduct the interviews, transcribing the interviews, while at the same time studying Spanish, nine weeks is not much. This limited time period also prevented me from travelling to other areas outside of the Lago de Atitlan area, to conduct interviews and obtain more nation-wide data. The advantage of this area was that there were quite a lot of local NGOs concerned with women's emancipation, some of which I interviewed. The fact that this was my first time travelling solo, and outside of Europe, contributed to me not feeling comfortable enough to travel through the country by myself. I also did not have the means and time to look for interviewees who were for example specifically involved in politics, or had specific knowledge of what I was investigating.

Then there is the limitation of the location where I conducted the interviews. The reason I chose Lago de Atitlan as area of investigation had more to do with practicalities than with motivations for the research. If I were to do it another time, I would spend more time looking into what areas were affected most by the conflict, and then choose my area of destination as this can provide for relevant information from women who participated in the conflict or peace processes. In some parts of Guatemala, the conflict was stronger than in other parts, and during my interviews I came to know that in the area of Lago de Atitlan the intensity of the conflict has been average. Perhaps in areas where the conflict has been more intense, I would also have had the ability to talk to women who had participated in the conflict. Unfortunately, I have not been able to conduct interviews with women who had been active in the war or had specific knowledge of women's participation in the war and peace processes.

Finally, there are much more factors that can be taken into account when looking into women's position in Guatemala today and its relation to women's participation in the war and the peace processes. It might be possible to look into other factors when conducting a more professional, funded research, with a pre-established network in the country. If I had more time and resources for this investigation, I would have used it to expand my network and travel throughout the country to visit women who had participated in the war and the peace processes, and who are politically active today. I would have tried to include some high-profile interviews as well. This would have contributed to my data collection in making it more inclusive, in the way that it provides more insights of experts on the topic, and perhaps it could would have brought about certain insights that I did not take into account beforehand.

Chapter 4: Discussion of data

Ethical considerations: The confidentiality of recovered data will be maintained at all times, and identification of participants will not be available after the study.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I attempt to answer the question if the position of women in Guatemala today has gained anything from women's participation in the war and the so-called inclusive peace processes, according to interviews with Guatemalans, and literature on the topic. First, I will discuss the phenomenon that conflict can serve as a window of opportunity for women. Then I will involve the issue of education, since my interviewees made clear they see this as an important factor that needs to be taken into account. After this, I will discuss in more detail the status of political and social-economic participation of women in Guatemala. Then the struggle of the indigenous will be discussed, because the interviewees gave the information that this topic is highly relevant in Guatemala's society, in history, and still today. Finally, I will discuss the peace processes more specifically, and end the chapter with a conclusion of my findings.

4.2 Explaining the concepts

I will be using the terms 'participation' and 'peace processes', which both can be interpreted broadly. It is important to unpack and define these. My definition of participation in relation to peace processes is the following: *the voluntary act of joining a process, where you have the ability to raise your voice, wield a certain level of authority and respect and are able to affect or influence the situation*. This means that when I discuss women's participation in peace processes, the women in question need to be able to exercise all of those points in order for them to be actually participating, whether it is in national politics or in a human rights organization.

For the definition of political participation, I follow Jan van Deth's explanation and definition. He defines the term loosely as 'citizens' activities affecting politics.'⁹² The following points recur regularly in the discussion on the definition of political participation: it is an activity, or action, it is understood as citizens acting in their role as politicians on a national and local level, but also in their role of citizen (for example in human rights organizations).⁹³ And finally political participation should not be enforced by rules, threats or the law, but should be done voluntary.⁹⁴ Following this definition, acts such as being active in guerrilla forces or joining demonstrations are political participation. Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier discuss political activities such as protesting, signing petitions or internet activism, in more detail as non-institutionalized participation.⁹⁵ For example citizens can be interested in politics and willing to participating in it but simultaneously wanting to refrain themselves from joining traditional political organisations.⁹⁶ Thereby they are supportive of democracy but more critical of the way the democracy is

⁹² Jan van Deth, 'A Conceptual Map of Political Participation', *Acta Politica*, 3 (2014), p. 351.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 351-352.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Sofie Marien, Marc Hooghe and Ellen Quintelier, 'Inequalities in Non-institutionalised Forms of Political Participation: A Multi-level Analysis of 25 countries', *Political Studies*, 58 (2010), pp. 187-213.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

functioning.⁹⁷ This is directly relatable to my interviewees, since none of them were directly involved in politics in the traditional way (member of a party, running for office), but were aware of the politics in their country and active in other means (working for NGOs, joining protests, activism or ex-mayor).

Next to this I link participation to the social-economic aspect. When I talk about social-economic participation I refer to matters that include paid work, economic independence, the level of education and access to it, and society's take on the matter in relation to women. I measure the extent of those issues according to the responses I received from the interviewees. In the interviews I asked about women and paid jobs, if women can be and are economically active and to what extent those things are accepted in the interviewees' society.

Finally, I talk about the Guatemalan peace processes and accords in this thesis. The peace processes lasted for a period of time (1987-1996) from which the peace accords were made up. Hence, I will follow the Oxford Dictionary definition of peace process, which is 'a series of talks and agreements designed to end war or violence between two groups.'⁹⁸

4.3 Conflict as window of opportunity

In the interviews I asked my participants whether the war might have served as an opportunity for women to gain more independence, on which I received the answer; *"I don't think so, because not everywhere in Guatemala the war happened [as strongly]."*⁹⁹ The majority of the interviewees gave a corresponding answer to this question. All of the interviewees confirm that: *"(...) here women need to be in the house taking care of their family. This hasn't changed much [after the war]."*¹⁰⁰ Next to the effects of the war being limited according to interviewees, one of them elaborated on this saying that *"After the war men didn't agree with participation of women (...) because it was more important for them to have women taking care of the food than women being active in organisations (...) or politics."*¹⁰¹ This latter quote aligns with Blacklock and Crosby's argument that when some women managed to step outside the given roles of society, upon the return of their male relatives after the war women saw their empowered position crumble.¹⁰² The returning men took over their jobs, and some even actively destroyed shops, offices, or whatever else women had built up in their absence, because they did not accept women's empowered position.¹⁰³ As an interviewee stated: *"Women have rights, as long as their husbands accept them."*¹⁰⁴ This shows women's empowerment was only superficial, and a real momentum for breaking with the status quo is still obstructed by traditional society standards.

⁹⁷ Sofie Marien, Marc Hooghe and Ellen Quintelier, 'Inequalities in Non-institutionalised Forms of Political Participation: A Multi-level Analysis of 25 countries', *Political Studies*, 58 (2010), p. 188.

⁹⁸ Oxford Dictionary, *Peace Process* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/peace-process?q=peace+process>.

⁹⁹ Interview 3.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 2.

¹⁰¹ Interview 5.

¹⁰² Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence: Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, London: University of California Press 2004, p. 61.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 11.

Rehn and Sirleaf argue that conflict can improve momentum for women to step outside of the given roles of society.¹⁰⁵ This goes in line with the added worker effect that has been discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. The added worker effect refers to a temporary situation where a woman has more opportunities for paid work because her partner or relative is unemployed.¹⁰⁶ In the case of conflict the men are mostly not unemployed but have left their regular jobs in order to fight in the war. The women that remain take up their jobs. Another way of stepping outside given roles of society is participating in the armed struggle, as has happened in Guatemala. Four interviewees discuss examples of women who participated in the armed struggle.¹⁰⁷ They are of the opinion that examples of such events raise people's awareness and serve as an eye-opener that shows that it is indeed possible to step outside the given roles of society, be it in paid work or by taking up arms.¹⁰⁸ Rigoberta Menchú was mentioned by all four in this context. In Guatemala she is the most famous example of a woman who was able to take conflict as a moment of opportunity to improve her participation and position in society. An interviewee said that: *"When women learn about their rights and history they can also help and inspire other women."*¹⁰⁹ This interviewee explains how independence and knowledge among women spread, and how women like Rigoberta Menchú and Thelma Cabrera (indigenous national politician), but also fellow women in their communities serve as an example to women. However, none of the interviewees believe that it can be said that there has been a window of opportunity for women because of Guatemala's war. With exceptions such as Rigoberta Menchú, the majority of women were occupied with providing for their families and survival or were not allowed by their male relatives to continue empowerment. Thus, even if there had been any momentum for some women to break with the status quo, it was heavily constrained by the patriarchal society.

4.4 Education

The majority of women being uneducated obstructed a momentum for breaking with the patriarchal status quo right after the conflict. An interesting connection was made by an interviewee between the lack of education and the lack of increase in women's participation: *"I don't think women's participation in the war contributed much to women being in politics today, because the problem is that many were analphabetic. The only choice they had [after the war] was to go back to the mountains and take care of their families again [because they were not educated]."*¹¹⁰ Thus, according to this interviewee one of the reasons for the lack of possibilities for women to change traditional gender roles and gain more independency was because they were uneducated and had no platform of knowledge to continue building their empowerment on. Women who joined empowered positions by participating in the war lacked the intellectual resources to continue this empowerment. And women who participated in the peace processes lacked intellectual resources in

¹⁰⁵ Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-Building*, United Nations Development Fund for Women (2002), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ Shelly Lundberg, 'The Added Worker Effect', *Journal of Labor Economics* 1 (1985), p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 3, 4, 5, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Interview 7.

¹¹⁰ Interview 2.

the field of political representation.¹¹¹ This caused them to be unable to represent themselves and argue for their objectives to their full capabilities, which also prevented a continued empowered position after the peace processes.¹¹² Malhotra and Mather argue that education is an important resource to women to acquire greater independence from patriarchal constraints because it can teach women about emancipation, independence, increasing opportunities for (better) paid jobs, and so on.¹¹³ This argument is confirmed by an example mentioned by an interviewee working for an NGO concerned with women's empowerment. This interviewee knew of a woman who received education about independently growing crops. She then asked her husband for a piece of his land to build her crops on, which he allowed, and is now financially independent and able to contribute to her family.¹¹⁴ Another interviewee, who works for the same NGO said; *"We want women to be independent, one of the ways to do this is through education."*¹¹⁵ It was mentioned that little by little women's position is changing for the better, and for a big part this can be attributed to the increase in people having access to education and being able to form their own, critical opinion. An NGO employee explained how education can cause such development: *"We make sure women are aware of their rights; being educated provides liberation, independence and agency."*¹¹⁶ It does however not appear that women's participation in the conflict and peace processes have contributed to this.

Although education solely is not the answer to issues on women's rights and inequality between men and women, it is a means that can help to a great extent improving women's position in societies as it causes one to be able to form a critical opinion of their own, and thus have a strong voice. Right after the war, education in Guatemala was shattered to a great extent.¹¹⁷ Getting access to education was more difficult for women and girls than for men and boys, which is a tendency that often occurs in conflict affected countries.¹¹⁸ When I asked the interviewees about education, more than half of the interviewees specifically mention that girls have fewer opportunities to education than boys,¹¹⁹ saying that *"especially girls don't go to school."*¹²⁰ In her article Duflo argues that in poor families where not everyone has a chance to education, boys go to school because they are expected to have a better chance in the labour market, and girls are expected to do the house chores, because that is what they will be doing their whole lives.¹²¹ Teenage pregnancies play a big part in this as well, which I will elaborate on further when I discuss the social-economic participation.

¹¹¹ Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 67.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Anju Malhotra and Mark Mather, 'Do Schooling and Work Empower Women in Developing Countries? Gender and Domestic Decisions in Sri Lanka', *Sociological Forum* 4 (1997), p. 605.

¹¹⁴ Interview 8.

¹¹⁵ Interview 7.

¹¹⁶ Interview 8.

¹¹⁷ Margriet Poppema, 'Guatemala, the Peace Accords and education: a post-conflict struggle for equal opportunities, cultural recognition and participation in education', *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4 (2009), p. 387.

¹¹⁸ Paula San Pedro, *Women in conflict zones*, Oxfam 2019, p. 11.

¹¹⁹ Interview 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 11.

¹²⁰ Interview 1.

¹²¹ Esther Duflo, 'Women Empowerment and Economic Development', *Journal of Economic Literature* 4 (2015), p. 1057.

4.5 Political participation

With the exception of one interviewee, none of the participants expressed the thought that women's participation in the war and peace processes has contributed anything to the rare cases of women's political participation today on a national and local level. However, literature does show a contribution of women's participation when it comes to activist human rights groups, which I will elaborate on later. Discrimination and insecurity turn out to be too big of obstacles on women's road to national and local political participation. The lack of education coincides with the lack of political participation. An interviewee stated that: *"When people would know how cruel the war was, they would be very motivated to participate against injustices, especially women. But only educated people know about this and there aren't many. (...) Of course, participation is a part of the memory of war today, but not many people are aware of this and thus are not able to form a critical opinion. (...) The problem is that with people of my generation and younger, not many know our history of the war."*¹²² A lack of information on the war reduces national political opposition. However, the rise of easy access to internet and social media makes it easier for people to educate themselves, and examples on the internet of activist people inspire throughout community's; *"On social media, more and more people can read about important things. And it is easier to hear about female bosses and leaders, which inspires others."*¹²³

During the war all forms of political participation opposed to the state's ideology were repressed, and (political) leaders were actively threatened and assassinated.¹²⁴ When I asked an interviewee what she thought might have contributed to women's national and local participation today, I received the following answer: *"I think what contributed a lot was that women eventually got the right to vote, to be able to say; 'I don't agree with this'. As a result of this came indigenous female leaders who at this moment still continue to work against the corrupt system of Guatemala. For example, in the last elections [2019] an indigenous woman [Thelma Cabrera] joined. (...) she made it to the fourth place in national elections for president. For us indigenous, and especially for us women, this was a very important moment because we see someone like us participating in politics on such a high level."*¹²⁵ Thelma Cabrera is one of very few indigenous women who is participating in politics on the national level. To support indigenous and women with participating politically, the Law on Urban and Rural Development Councils was established in 2002, which gave indigenous people and women the opportunity to run for this office.¹²⁶ During municipal elections in 2003, one indigenous woman was elected out of 158 deputies,¹²⁷ and in 2016 this increased with 4 indigenous women out of 71 deputies being elected.¹²⁸ At a national level, where the latest numbers are from 2016,

¹²² Interview 4.

¹²³ Interview 11.

¹²⁴ Walter Flores, Ana Lorena Ruano and Denise Phé Funchal, 'Social Participation within a Context of Political Violence: Implications for the Promotion and Exercise of the Right to Health in Guatemala', *Health and Human Rights* 1 (2009), p. 39.

¹²⁵ Interview 3.

¹²⁶ Contraloría General de Cuentas, *Ley de Los Consejos de Desarrollo Urbano y Rural: Decreto Número 11-2002* (2002), retrieved from:

https://www.contraloria.gob.gt/imagenes/i_docs/i_leg_ley/LEY%20DE%20LOS%20CONSEJOS%20DE%20DESARROLLO%20URBANO%20Y%20RURAL.pdf

¹²⁷ Meeeylyn Lorena Mejia Lopez, FOCAL, *Indigenous Women and Governance in Guatemala* (2006), retrieved from: https://www.focal.ca/pdf/mujer_indigena_e.pdf

¹²⁸ Global Press News Service, *For female mayors in Guatemala, facing discrimination is part of the job* (2016), retrieved from:

<https://www.seattleglobalist.com/2016/12/12/for-female-mayors-in-guatemala-facing-discrimination-is-part-of-the-job/60012>.

13,9% in parliament is represented by women, of which numbers of indigenous women are unknown.¹²⁹ Despite the lack of significant growth in an equal representation of the nation, no quota or parity laws have been established in Guatemala.¹³⁰ It is difficult for women to become politically active on a governmental level. Gender-based discrimination remains a powerful force in the country and within institutions, especially against indigenous women.¹³¹ Physical violence and verbal harassment against voters during national elections is common, and can put off political participation, just as vote buying happens regularly.¹³² During one of the interviews, a participant expressed the difficulties of women's political participation on a higher level, locally and nationally: "Women can be politically active but it is way more difficult for women than for men, (...) more is expected of women, more is demanded of them. The process is unfair. (...) For example, Thelma Cabrera received a lot of shit when she ran for elections [because people tried to restrain her from participating in elections]."¹³³

It is clear that in Guatemala women are underrepresented in politics, with only 2 out of 14 cabinet ministers being female when president Morales began his term in 2017.¹³⁴ Interestingly enough 6 out of 11 presidential candidates for the elections of 2011 were women, two of them being indigenous, although none of them turned out to be elected.¹³⁵ Numbers from 2018 show that women take up a bare 6.7% in ministerial level positions in the government.¹³⁶ Even though these numbers are not promising, women's limited participation in the war, be it in combat or in cases like activism, and participation in the peace processes has not been without legacy. Two of Guatemala's strongest human rights groups, GAM (Grupo Apoyo Mutuo) and CONAVIGUA (Cordinadora Nacional de las Viudas de Guatemala), were and still are, led by women.¹³⁷ Both were founded by women in the 1980s and continued their political involvement after the signing of the peace accords. There are many more organisations like these that were founded in the 1980s and enjoy a high level of female participation, if not fully led by women, such as ADEMI (Asociación de Mujeres Ixpiyakok) and AFEDES (Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez). Chang argues that such organisations were founded during the war because of women's severe and unique ways of experiencing the consequences of the conflict, which inspired and energized them to this type of activism.¹³⁸ However the interviewees did not mention this type of participation, which might have to do with them not being aware the organizations are founded and led by women.

¹²⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Women in Parliament in 2015: The year in review* (2016), retrieved from:

<https://oig.cepal.org/sites/default/files/wip2015-e.pdf>

¹³⁰ Gender Equality Observatory, *Guatemala – Political and electoral system* (n.d.), retrieved from:

<https://oig.cepal.org/en/countries/14/system>

¹³¹ UN Women, *Institutional strengthening of the office for the defense of indigenous women and the presidential secretariat for women at national and local levels* (n.d.), retrieved from: https://www.unwomen.org/mdgf/C/Guatemala_C.html.

¹³² Freedom House, *Guatemala Profile* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/guatemala>.

¹³³ Interview 10.

¹³⁴ Freedom House, *Guatemala Profile* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/guatemala>.

¹³⁵ UN Women, *Guatemala* (n.d.), retrieved from; <https://lac.unwomen.org/en/donde-estamos/guatemala>.

¹³⁶ Trading Economics, *Guatemala – Proportion Of Women In Ministerial Level Positions* (May 2020), retrieved from:

<https://tradingeconomics.com/guatemala/proportion-of-women-in-ministerial-level-positions-percent-wb-data.html>.

¹³⁷ Gabriele Kohpahl, *Voices of Guatemalan Women in Los Angeles: Understanding Their Immigration*, New York/London: Garland Publishing 1998, p. 52.

¹³⁸ Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 54.

When asked about the definition of political participation, an interviewee defined it as: *“A form of work that helps developing on a personal, communal and environmental level.”*¹³⁹ Another definition was given by an anecdote of an interviewee. While a woman’s son was kidnapped in the middle of the night by the army, she started to scream for help. This raised others’ attention, which caused people to be able to identify the kidnappers as belonging to the governmental army. With this information official complaints could be made with several witnesses backing up the statement.¹⁴⁰ According to the interviewee, the act of the woman raising her voice, literally and figuratively, was a form of political participation, since acts like this form a part of the resistance to the government, which fits into the definition of participation I follow. Another example of political participation given by an interviewee who works for an NGO concerned with women’s empowerment is about having knowledge of your rights: *“We give attention to political participation by educating the women and their kids. This way we empower them and make sure they are aware of their rights and what is going on politically, and that they can play a role in politics. They are aware that they can be politically active and make a change, are aware of their human rights and that their opinions matter. By focussing on women’s autonomy, we see that women participate politically, because they are aware of their rights and thus can demand for those to be complied with.”*¹⁴¹ When people are aware of their rights, they are able to participate because they know there is something worth fighting for. An interviewee told me that within the organisation he works for there is a local female-only political movement: *“Every woman represents a part of her community. They work together on problems and issues that they encounter, for example getting rid of the taboo on domestic violence.”*¹⁴² Local initiatives are a good way of involving women to participate, since it is very low key and accessible, and these types of councils are a means to normalize women’s participation in politics. However, women still face a lot of discrimination in their attempts to political participation, both on the national and local level. Although local participation is more accessible to women, it is not normalized in society that women are politically active.

4.6 Social-economic participation

As discussed in chapter 2.4.2 the peace accords including an agreement on ‘Participation of women in economic and social development’, which provided hope for improving women’s social-economic participation.¹⁴³ The agreement uses words as ‘ensuring’, ‘promoting’ and ‘guaranteeing’, but it lacks precise explanations on how the issues in the agreement will be achieved.¹⁴⁴ From my interviews it turned out that from this agreement not much has come true. An interviewee explains the lack of a significant increase in social-economic participation after the conflict by saying: *“Many women are still scared to stand up for their rights or demand their place [in public space] because there is no security for women.”*¹⁴⁵ Insecurity for women is still a big problem in Guatemala. Gender-based violence is one of the biggest

¹³⁹ Interview without audio recording, location: Santiago de Atitlan, Guatemala, 22-11-2019.

¹⁴⁰ Interview 3.

¹⁴¹ Interview 7.

¹⁴² Interview 8.

¹⁴³ Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace, the Government of Guatemala – the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca – the United Nations, 29 December 1996, p. 55.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 55-56.

¹⁴⁵ Interview 7.

challenges facing the country, and justice is rarely done to perpetrators.¹⁴⁶ Guatemala has the highest number of femicide in the region of Latin America, and domestic violence has pushed many women out of their houses, communities and even the country.¹⁴⁷ With 60,000 complaints, violence against women was one of the most reported crimes in Guatemala in 2016.¹⁴⁸ This level of insecurity impacts women's social-economic participation since women are restricted in their free movement, which makes it harder to for instance start their own company or travel a certain distance for a better-paid job.¹⁴⁹ Adadevoh argues women's oppression to be one of the causes for unsafe environments for women, wherein women's stereotypical gender roles are often extra strong and require women to act certain ways.¹⁵⁰ Being economically independent, starting your own business or other emancipated acts are extra difficult to achieve for women in unsafe environments, because it does not coincide with the stereotype traditional roles that exist.

Bossen presents numbers from 1973, stemming from the midst of the conflict, which show that only 8.4% of women participated economically, compared to 52.1% of men.¹⁵¹ At the end of the war, numbers significantly increased. Statistics from Trading Economics starting at 1990 show 40% of women in Guatemala participated economically, opposed to 88.6% of men.¹⁵² 20 years later, in 2019, 43.08% of Guatemalan women participate economically, opposed to 87.1% of men.¹⁵³ Research from Freedom House shows that amongst indigenous women numbers are even lower: in 2018 35.5% of indigenous women were part of the working population, while 88.1% of indigenous men were.¹⁵⁴ A majority of 64% of indigenous women carry out unpaid domestic chores, without having any access to credit, land or other resources from which they can make a living.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, they have fewer opportunities and access to education because teenage pregnancies are high and access to means of family planning low, which provides for more barriers to social economic participation and independence.¹⁵⁶ Numbers from 2014 inform that 39% of women between the age of 15 and 49 used contraceptive methods.¹⁵⁷ These numbers show that no development has taken place on this matter. After the war women's economic participation

¹⁴⁶ USAID, *Guatemala: Sector Brief Democracy and Governance 2018* (2018), retrieved from:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/sector_brief_-_democracy_and_governance_march_2018.pdf.

¹⁴⁷ USAID, *Guatemala: Sector Brief Democracy and Governance 2018* (2018), retrieved from:

https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/sector_brief_-_democracy_and_governance_march_2018.pdf.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Zoë Gorman and Grégory Chauzal, 'Hand in Hand': A Study of Insecurity and Gender in Mali', *SIPRI Insight on Peace and Security* 6 (2019), p. 13.

¹⁵⁰ Irene Omolola Adadevoh, 'Gender Dimensions of the National Security and Human Security Problematic: Core Theoretical, Conceptual and Historical Issues', in: D. Adelugba ed., *Rethinking Security in Nigeria: Conceptual Issues in the Quest for Social Order and National Integration*, Dakar: CODESRIA 2007, p. 120.

¹⁵¹ Laurel Bossel, *The Redivision of Labor: Women and Economic Choice in Four Guatemalan Communities*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1984, p. 31.

¹⁵² Trading Economics, *Guatemala - Labor Force Participation Rate, Female* (May 2020), retrieved from:

<https://tradingeconomics.com/guatemala/labor-force-participation-rate-female-percent-of-female-population-ages-15-64-modeled-ilo-estimate-wb-data.html>, and

Trading Economics, *Guatemala - Labor Force Participation Rate, Male* (May 2020), retrieved from:

<https://tradingeconomics.com/guatemala/labor-force-participation-rate-male-percent-of-male-population-ages-15-64-modeled-ilo-estimate-wb-data.html>.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Freedom House, *Guatemala Profile* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/guatemala>.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Guttmacher institute, *Sexual and Reproductive Health Of Young Women in Guatemala* (n.d.), retrieved from:

<https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/sexual-and-reproductive-health-young-women-guatemala#>.

increased, but since 1990 until 2019 there has not been any significant growth. Less than half of the female population of Guatemala is represented in these numbers and thus participates economically.

An explanation for the lack of development in the numbers mentioned above is the general lack of opportunities to grow in the labour market. Women's participation in the economic place is usually in commerce, social services, agriculture, the textile industry and the food industry.¹⁵⁸ Generally the jobs require a low level of education and no opportunities for growth. Combined with a constant low pay this obstructs women in developing on a social-economic level. In my interviews I spoke to several women who are aligned to organisations working to develop women's economic independence. Some positive remarks on this topic were made in the interviews: *"Today it is accepted for women to be [economically] independent, but it did take a long time. Families start to realize that women aren't limited [in their capabilities] and that more freedom benefits everyone."*¹⁵⁹ Once relatives see the economic benefits of women's participation it contributes to the normalization of women's independence. What I was told in interviews, Duflo notes as well; men grant more economic opportunities and rights to their wives when they see them participating in economic growth.¹⁶⁰ This is because the family's economic situation might improve, but also because this is very likely to affect their family's lives in other positive ways such as providing for an improved chance on (better) education. However, this situation is still far from ideal, since women's empowerment to be reached, participation should be the norm instead of depending on others peoples' allowance.

The increase of women's economic participation of only 3,08% over the course of 29 years is among others due to the inequalities and discrimination women still face. This is visualized by one of the interviewees with whom I discussed her own social-economic situation: *"I think it is more or less accepted for women to be economically independent. We still deal with machismo. Many people think a woman needs a man in her life to succeed and to be accepted in society. So my situation is difficult. I'm a single independent mom of three and many people don't approve of this, people reject this."*¹⁶¹ Because this interviewee does not live with the father of her children, by many she is seen as an outcast in the community where she lives. More negativity towards and among women exists, as I came to know from another interviewee. This interviewee commented on why women's participation is still so low in Guatemala, attributing it among other things to the lack of unity among women: *"There's no unity between women (...) many women judge other women who try to improve their situation and stand up for their rights. The conscience that, if we support one another everyone's situation will improve, is not there."*¹⁶² Angelina Chiroy, an example of a woman who was elected community mayor in 2016, confirms this by saying that when she was elected, women in her community, and even her own family, were questioning her for taking the job.¹⁶³

Another contribution to the general lack of women's social-economic participation that was mentioned in the interviews is the role of the Catholic Church, which takes in a major place in Guatemalan society. As Menjívar notes, conservative church activities can contribute to maintain inequalities between

¹⁵⁸ Sergio Ruano and Ada Zambrano, 'Guatemala: Country Gender Profile', *Japan International Cooperation Agency* 2006, p. 29.

¹⁵⁹ Interview 7.

¹⁶⁰ Esther Duflo, 'Women Empowerment and Economic Development', *Journal of Economic Literature* 4 (2015), pp. 1059-1060.

¹⁶¹ Interview 10.

¹⁶² Interview 7.

¹⁶³ Global Press News Service, *For female mayors in Guatemala, facing discrimination is part of the job* (2016), retrieved from: <https://www.seattleglobalist.com/2016/12/12/for-female-mayors-in-guatemala-facing-discrimination-is-part-of-the-job/60012>.

men and women indirectly.¹⁶⁴ None of the interviewees were very positive about the role of the church in their community, and it is not perceived as contributing to the improvement of women's position.¹⁶⁵ One interviewee said: *"Another problem is religion, because it teaches you to close your eyes for reality. (...) Many say 'it's a plan of God'."*¹⁶⁶ Another interviewee said: *"In society's like San Pedro (...) religion determines a lot, which causes many people to undermine and disrespect women"*¹⁶⁷, *"The church has a lot of influence and is strongly connected to politics, which doesn't help women's position either."*¹⁶⁸ However, it needs to be noted that there are also initiatives led by churches or religious organisations that work to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality.¹⁶⁹ In the cases of the examples of the interviewees it depends on the church's take on women's rights whether they will obstruct or contribute to women's rights.

4.7 The struggle of the indigenous

The fact that women's rights were and still are not prioritized can be attributed to another fight that is happening simultaneously in Guatemala: the struggle of the indigenous. All of the interviewees mentioned it, and they made noticeable that they still experience a lot of discrimination because of their indigenous background. Several interviewees gave the impression that this struggle is more apparent and that it takes up a bigger place in their lives than the struggle of women's rights. It seems like there is something more important that has to be dealt with, something that is felt by the whole of the indigenous community, which gives a bigger feeling of unity. The fight against discrimination of the indigenous could be seen as a more accessible fight to join for women, because it includes the support from both men and women, which is not always the case with the fight for women's rights.

First this battle needs to be fought, before can be moved on to the battle for women's rights. An interviewee mentioned that Thelma Cabrera met a lot of hostility while running for elections, attributing this to the fact that she is indigenous.¹⁷⁰ As I discussed earlier in this chapter, the representation of indigenous people in the government is extremely low. Politician and indigenous rights activist Leticia Teleguario worked at the ministry of *trabajo* from 2016-2018 under the government of Morales, and according to several interviewees she was given this allocation in the government, because it is a position of very little power: *"(...) after the war some governmental positions were taken by indigenous but only as a cover-up, those positions weren't of any value or power. Today, the least important ministry [ministry of trabajo] has an indigenous female minister."*¹⁷¹ Lopez shows this is a well-known strategy, saying that the few indigenous candidates that are allowed to run for the office of mayor are an attempt to satisfy the

¹⁶⁴ Cecilia Menjivar, *Enduring Violence: Ladina Women's Lives in Guatemala*, Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press 2011, p. 196.

¹⁶⁵ Interview 2, 4, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Interview 4.

¹⁶⁷ Interview 11.

¹⁶⁸ Interview 2.

¹⁶⁹ Global Ministries, *Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala* (n.d.), retrieved from: https://www.globalministries.org/lac_partners_consejo_ecumenico_guatemala.

¹⁷⁰ Interview 10.

¹⁷¹ Interview 3.

indigenous vote for other positions.¹⁷² Moreover, the question is how suitable those people are, as they are often handpicked by the political parties that are already in power.¹⁷³ It seems like indigenous women have to fight for their indigenous rights first, before they will be able to fully commit to fight for women's rights.

4.8 The peace accords

Despite the participation of women and women's groups in the peace processes and the agreements made on women's participation in the accords, the final peace accords did not have the effects that were hoped for. As discussed in chapter 2.4.2 there is one provision on women about the role of women in strengthening civilian power,¹⁷⁴ and an agreement about discrimination against women and an agreement on the rights of indigenous women.¹⁷⁵ In the agreement on 'Participation of women in economic and social development' the importance of women's participation at local, regional and national decision-making levels is stressed, which generates hope for the improvement of women's political and social-economic participation.¹⁷⁶ However, concrete statements on how to achieve this participation are lacking. Moreover, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame developed a peace accords matrix in which they measure the extent of implementation of a peace accord ten years after it was signed, which they applied to the Guatemalan case.¹⁷⁷ Joshi et. al. conclude that the implementation of the topics on women's rights from the peace accords has been intermediate.¹⁷⁸ The first two years implementation was minimal; a Women's Forum in 1997 was organised, and a National Policy for the Promotion and Development of Guatemalan Women and the Equal Opportunities Plan was submitted to the government for implementation in 1998.¹⁷⁹ From 1999 until 2008 implementation has been intermediate. Among others, the Presidential Secretariat for Women was established to advise and coordinate policies regarding protection of women, Guatemala signed CEDAW and a Coordinated Agenda for Maya Women was adopted.¹⁸⁰ However, the government has rejected to review draft legislation on the protection of women against discrimination in the labour force, there are still no legal protections against sexual harassment or discrimination against working mothers, and issues such as domestic violence, unequal opportunities and political underrepresentation continue to be problems for Guatemalan women.¹⁸¹

As discussed earlier, during the war various activist women's groups were founded. During the peace processes the ASC was included, which gave women the opportunity to participate. Chang argues

¹⁷² Meeelyn Lorena Mejia Lopez, FOCAL, *Indigenous Women and Governance in Guatemala* (2006), retrieved from: https://www.focal.ca/pdf/mujer_indigena_e.pdf.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Accord for a Firm and Lasting Peace, the Government of Guatemala – the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca – the United Nations, 29 December 1996, p. 96.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 55-57.

¹⁷⁷ Madhav Joshi, Jason Michael Quinn and Patrick M. Reagan, 'Annualized implementation data on comprehensive intrastate peace accords, 1989-2012', *Journal of Peace Research* 52 (2015), pp. 551-562., retrieved from: <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/accord-for-a-firm-and-lasting-peace#easy-footnote-bottom-2-19341>.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

that against this backdrop women's social and political activism increased, and the peace processes contributed to the development of the women's movement in Guatemala.¹⁸² However, women's participation during the peace processes failed to hold on to its momentum after the peace accords were signed. Following Chang's argument this can be attributed to three things. First of all, the majority of women joining activist movements were not educated sufficiently on a political level, which was necessary to represent themselves in negotiations and have a convincing voice that would be taken serious by the other parties.¹⁸³ Second, there was an ideological division among the various women's organizations. The more traditional ones had the objective to focus on themselves as mothers, daughters and wives, and fought for justice for their families, while other, more progressive organizations, had the objective of fighting for gender equality and structural changes in society.¹⁸⁴ And finally, the ASC was involved in the peace processes, but not in the actual negotiations of the final accord. This reinforced the dilution of many proposals that were made by women's organizations, and obstructed those proposals from getting appointed an adequate position in the final peace accord, sufficient enough to stress the importance of women's incentives.¹⁸⁵ These points caused the peace accords to not be very thorough on the issue of women's rights. After the signing, the few provisions on women's rights that were there, had to be implemented in a society that was still in the midst of great institutional instability, and as discussed in the literature review by Alvarez, Prado, Stanley and Holiday, the actual implementation of the peace accords never happened.¹⁸⁶

The two women that were present in the actual formal negotiations of the peace accords have not been able to fully advocate for the objectives of women's organizations, which aligns with the results of the Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative research that show a high extent of reluctance to women's participation from those involved in peace processes.¹⁸⁷ Raquel Zelaya Rosales served as a representative of the government, and Luz Méndez served as a representative of the URNG. In an interview with Women's UN Report Network Méndez explains her inability to fully contribute to the negotiations because of the patriarchal system: *"Since the beginning I realized that actually I was not seen as equal, even by my own comrades. (...) Several negotiators initially were reluctant to accept specific commitments in favour of women, such as the penalization of sexual harassment or the creation of an office for the defence of the indigenous women, to be included in the peace accords. They said they had never seen such types of issues included in peace agreements. (...) Although the peace accords have been weakly implemented, the negotiating process*

¹⁸² Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 60.

¹⁸³ Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 67.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁸⁶ Latin American Network Information Centre, *Promise and Reality: Implementation of the Guatemalan Peace Accords* (n.d.), retrieved from: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/hemisphereinitiatives/promise.htm#imple>, and William Stanley and David Holiday, 'Broad Participation, Diffuse Responsibility: Peace Implementation in Guatemala', in: Stephen John Stedman ed., *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2002, p. 46., and Enrique Alvarez and Tania Palencia Prado, 'Guatemala feature study', in: Catherine Barnes (ed.) *Owning the process. Public participation in peacemaking* (Accord 13, Conciliation Resources, 2002), p. 38.

¹⁸⁷ Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, *Making Women Count in Peace Processes* (January 2016), retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/sites/default/files/%20IPTI-Making-Women-Count-At-Glance-4-pager.pdf>.

and the accords were a remarkable ground for women's empowerment, and nothing or nobody can take this away from us."¹⁸⁸ This confirms the argument that Enloe makes about conflict being often discussed through the male view, ignoring the female view.¹⁸⁹ As being a part of the formal negotiation process Méndez recognizes that the accords have not been adequately implemented. Luciak states it very clearly: "considering the potential of the (...) accords from a gender perspective and the expectations they raised for a transformation of society toward greater gender equality, its achievements are limited."¹⁹⁰ The argument of Close et. al. that I discussed in chapter 2 is true in the case of Guatemala; the efforts to improve women's position turned out to only have a symbolic function, since they are not sustained by initiatives that actually provide for changes and improvement in women's position.¹⁹¹

4.9 Conclusion

Despite women's participation in the Guatemalan conflict and peace processes it seems not to have had continues effects on women in Guatemala today. Political participation has not significantly increased more than 20 years after the signing of the peace accords, neither has women's social-economic participation. As I discuss in chapter 2, Blacklock and Crosby argue that some Guatemalan women were empowered during the war, but post-conflict were pushed back into their traditional roles again.¹⁹² According to the interviewees the window of opportunity conflict can provide for did not realize its full potential in Guatemala because its traditional society did simply not accept the few empowered positions of women at the end of the conflict. This paradox can be explained because women's empowerment was superficial. Women may have fulfilled leadership roles during the war, or have been included and were given a voice during the peace processes, but when society returned back to normal those women also had to return to their traditional gender roles.

Then there is the issue of the shattered educational system, and the difficulty for women and girls to access education, which also stood in the way of women developing any empowered positions. Moreover, although women do participate politically in the form of human- and women's rights groups, high levels of discrimination embedded in society obstruct women from participating politically on the national level. Third, because of profound insecurity women find themselves unsupported to take steps for developing social-economically, and fully participate on this level. However, cautious positivism can be expressed here as is mentioned by Duflo, since it seems like Guatemala's traditional society starts to except women's social-economic participation when it is proven that this has further reaching economic benefits for the family.¹⁹³ Finally, the struggle of the indigenous stands in the way of the fight for women's rights.

¹⁸⁸ Women's UN Report Network, *Guatemala – Interview with Luz Mendez, Guatemala PeaceWoman & Peace Negotiator During the Civil War* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://wunrn.com/2015/01/guatemala-interview-with-luz-mendez-guatemala-peacewoman-peace-negotiator-during-the-civil-war/>.

¹⁸⁹ Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press 2004.

¹⁹⁰ Ilja A. Luciak, 'Women's Coalition-Building and the Guatemalan Peace Accords', in: Donna Pankhurst ed., *Gendered Peace: Women's Struggle for Post-war Justice and Reconciliation*, New York: Routledge 2009, p. 237.

¹⁹¹ Sophia Close, Catherine O'Rourke and Zahbia Yousuf, 'Gender, inclusion and political settlements. Implications for peace processes', in: Andy Carl (ed.) *Negotiating inclusion in peace processes* (Accord 28, Conciliation Resources, 2019), p. 28.

¹⁹² Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence. Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004, pp. 60-61.

¹⁹³ Esther Duflo, 'Women Empowerment and Economic Development', *Journal of Economic Literature* 4 (2015), pp. 1059-1060.

Guatemala's instable society appears to allow only one fight at the time, and the struggle of the indigenous has a priority.

Irrespective of the positivism with which the Guatemalan peace processes and final accords were received, the accords have failed Guatemala's women. All that is mentioned above are issues that should have been taken care of by the peace accords and the process following it. Despite of women's participation in the peace processes, this did not happen, which can be explained by following Chang's arguments. She argues that women were not able to hold onto their momentum in the peace processes because they were not able to express and defend themselves on a political level as they lacked adequate education on how to do this.¹⁹⁴ Also, there existed a strong ideological division amongst the women's groups which made it more difficult to reach common grounds and hold on to their momentum.¹⁹⁵ Additionally, the ASC was not included in the formal negotiations which caused a dilution of many of the proposals made by women's organizations.¹⁹⁶ And finally, as shown by several researchers, the peace accords have never been implemented, which caused that the provisions that were in the accords had never had the opportunity to be executed in practice.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 67.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁹⁷ Latin American Network Information Centre, *Promise and Reality: Implementation of the Guatemalan Peace Accords*, retrieved from: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/hemisphereinitiatives/promise.htm#imple>., and William Stanley and David Holiday, 'Broad Participation, Diffuse Responsibility: Peace Implementation in Guatemala', in: Stephen John Stedman ed., *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2002, p. 46.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Reflection

The aim of this research was to find out if there is a relation between women's participation in conflict and peace processes, and women's position today. The ambition when I started this research was to better understand how changes in gender roles could be perpetuated post-conflict, and to provide insights for international and Guatemalan women's organizations on how to contribute to women maintaining their empowered status post-conflict. Throughout the progress of writing this thesis I have developed my knowledge and insights about the topic. Initially I was going to look into a causal relationship between women's participation in the war, women's participation in the peace processes, and women's position today. However, I have come to realize throughout the research that instead of looking into a causal relation between those three, it would be better to look into women's participation in the conflict and women's participation in the peace processes as two separate variables in relation to women's position in Guatemala today. There is not much to say about women's participation during the war in the context of my research, because women's participation in the conflict has been minimal, and not much has changed in the years after the conflict. On the other hand, while doing the research, I noticed there is much more to say about women's participation in the peace processes, which is why there is a somewhat bigger focus on this topic throughout the thesis. To answer the research question, I have looked at the case of Guatemala and its 36-year lasting conflict. I have travelled to Guatemala to conduct interviews with a variety of people on the topic. When talking about participation, I focused on political and social-economic participation because this gives an image of women's position in society.

5.2 Findings

The main finding of this research is that, even though women are included in peace processes, this does not mean that women are simultaneously involved in participative positions in the post-conflict society. Guatemala shows an inclusive peace process, but the actual peace negotiations showed a lack of inclusion. My research has shown, that because of various failures of the implementation of women's objectives in post-conflict society, women's position did not benefit from the participation in the peace processes. To guarantee women's participation and improvement of their position in future post-conflict society, its changes to reach this goal need to be guaranteed in the post-conflict environment, be it by a peace accord or by other binding documents and regulations. In Guatemala, some laws and regulations have been imposed in order to support women's political participation, but no significant measures, such as quotas or parity laws, have been established in order to achieve an equal representation of men and women in politics. The minimal inclusion of women in the peace processes was applicable only to high profile women (Luz Méndez and Raquel Zelaya Rosales) and led to statements in the peace accords on the necessity of women's participation in politics and social-economic life, but shows that on the lower level of society these statements are not reflected.

Furthermore, the lack of inclusion that was shown in the final negotiations on the peace accord shows us that even if women were formally included in the process, they were not taken seriously by their male colleagues. As statements have shown, the two women participating in Guatemala's final peace negotiations did not enjoy an equal position nor representation to their male colleagues. Luz Méndez took on the responsibility to ensure that the objectives of women's organizations were included in the accords, but her attempts were constrained by several political parties, the business sector, and negative attitudes of male participants. This caused women's objectives to be marginalized and not receive the attention and means in the accords that they needed.¹⁹⁸

Finally, this thesis finds that traditional values in society do not change by the inclusion of women in peace processes. As the case of Guatemala has shown, the opportunity to empowerment that conflict can provide for has been minimal. In chapter 2 of this thesis I discuss Blacklock and Crosby's argument about the empowerment of some Guatemalan women during the war, but after the war women were pushed back into their traditional roles again and men took up their jobs.¹⁹⁹ However, according to my interviewees there barely has been such an empowerment, and thus there also was no traditional role to return back to because women never really left those roles. Examples of women like Rigoberta Menchú who became empowered during the war are exceptions. This thesis finds that the average Guatemalan women was not really empowered. During the peace processes the women who participated were not taken seriously and that their objectives were not taken into account or had significant effects post-peace process. Instead, the women participating in the peace processes were given a voice and were tolerated for the time being, and after the signing of the peace accord their participation turned out to be superficial. This explains the contradiction between a lack of real empowerment, and simultaneously a reversal to traditional gender roles. Guatemala's traditional roles are imbedded in society and continue to obstruct any improvement in women's position.

5.3 Why the lack of education and the struggle of the indigenous stand in the way of women's participation

From the interviews it became clear that the lack of access to education, and the struggle of the indigenous, have stood and still are, standing in the way of an improvement in women's participation and position in Guatemala's society. The difficulty for women and girls of accessing education during and right after the war has obstructed them from developing on an intellectual level, and thus lacks women who have the education to empower themselves. Moreover, in the peace processes women lacked the necessary education to be able to express themselves adequately and argue for the importance of their objectives in a convincing way to the other involved parties.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative, *Women's role in Guatemala's peace process (1994-1999)* (n.d.), retrieved from: <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/content/infographic-women-role-guatemala-peace-process-1994-1999>.

¹⁹⁹ Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby, 'The Sounds of Silence. Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala', in: Wenona Giles ed., *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2004, pp. 60-61.

²⁰⁰ Patty Chang ed., 'Guatemala', in: P. Chang ed., *Women Leading Peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*, Georgetown: Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 2015, p. 67.

Furthermore, the interviewees made it clear that to many, the struggle of the indigenous has a higher priority over the fight for women's rights, which serves as an explanation for why women's participation in Guatemala has not developed significantly since the signing of the peace accords. It seems that the struggle of the indigenous is more accessible to join for women, because it enjoys general support in the communities that they live in, in contrast to the fight for women's rights that in most communities do not enjoy much support. Instead of running the risk to alienate friends and relatives in Guatemala's traditional society by standing up for women's rights, many women decide to prioritize the fight for indigenous peoples' rights.

5.4 Implications of the findings

Where the scientific debate broadly covers women in conflict and peace processes, it does not pay much attention to the question why supposedly successful peace processes do not always provide for an improvement in women's position in the post-conflict society. This research fills this void by arguing that the inclusion of women in peace processes needs to be strictly guaranteed in several stages of the peace process, and provisions on women's rights in peace accords need to include clear remarks on how they are going to be achieved, in order to achieve a sustainable change in women's position post-conflict.

Second, the scientific debate discusses the window of opportunity for women during conflict. With the outcomes of this thesis I have shown that this has happened only minimally in Guatemala's conflict, and empowerment was mainly superficial. However, solely including women in significant peace processes does not guarantee a change of stereotype norms and values in the post-conflict society. This is merely a superficial change which does not equal political and economic participation for the larger part of common Guatemalan women.

Moreover, a lack of proper access to education for women and girls, and the struggle of the indigenous play a big role in why women's position in Guatemala did not enjoy effects of women's participation in the peace processes. This provides useful insights for actors in future peace processes as it teaches lessons about what it is that needs to be ensured, avoided, and taken into account in the future to increase a perpetuation of women's empowerment post-conflict. Such lessons are about the necessity of access to education to help facilitate empowerment, and the need to take other matters into account that play in society such as the struggle of the indigenous, which on first sight might not seem to have direct effects on women's participation and empowerment.

The scientific debate argues for an inclusion of women in peace processes. With this research I argue that women need to be on equal terms to men in a peace process in order for it to have positive effects on women. This implicates a drastic change for future peace processes, where women would have to take up at least half of the actors participating in order to achieve equal inclusion. However, it is not only a matter of numbers; it is also necessary that the women included are taken seriously and their statements are taken into account. For this to happen a radical shift towards equal respect for both women and men, and their abilities in society is necessary, so that women who are participating in peace processes do not experience the lack of respect that was experienced by Luz Méndez.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

The reason I wanted to look at women's participation in conflict is because often, when talking about women in conflict, we tend to focus on how women are victims. With this thesis I want to contribute to a change in the conversation by discussing women in conflict as active agents who participate and experience conflict in their own ways.

In future research it would be useful to take the difference between ladino women and indigenous women into account. I did not do that here, because it went beyond the scope of this research. It does however deserve scholarly attention, since the struggle of the indigenous is still very apparent and critical in Guatemala, and interviewees made clear that indigenous women stand for even bigger obstacles than ladino women. It would provide useful information to see how indigenous and non-indigenous women are, or are not, affected differently by women's participation in conflict and peace processes. To what extent is women's participation an issue of class, or masses versus elites?

Since I have looked into economic and political participation, the question that remains unanswered in the debate is if there are relations and effects with other types of participation and positions in society. Future research could focus on more aspects than political and social-economic participation to broaden the understanding of women's participation and position in society.

Finally, a new question this research raises is what the effects and developments on men's position in society are when women participate in war and peace processes. This thesis focused on women and their opportunities and struggles, but this does not mean that men do not suffer from stereotypes and conforming to traditional roles. Perhaps a better representation of women in peace processes would be beneficial for men's position in society as well. Looking into effects on both men and women provides for a complete picture of the topic, and is of value to parties who work in the field of post-conflict build-up of societies. With adequate knowledge about this, peace-building programs can develop programs more specifically on the need of both men and women. A balanced representation of men and women is needed, also in research. And thus, this thesis argues that women's experiences in conflict, and thus their views in peace processes, need not be overlooked.

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