

**Achieving Visibility in War: An Analysis of Women's
Participation in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations
since the End of the Cold War.**

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**Submitted as fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts by Dissertation
University of the Witwatersrand
2010**

Declaration

I bear witness that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Dissertation in the field of International Relations to the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted to any other University or Faculty for any degree or examination.

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2010-07-15

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Abbreviations

ACP	All Peoples Congress
AFWIC	African Women in Crisis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação Nacional
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GPS	Guatemalan Permanent Commissions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INEC	Interim National Commission
IUD	Intrauterine Device
MSF	Médecines Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MPNP	Negotiating Council of the Multiparty Negotiating Process
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centres
SLAUW	Sierra Leone Association of University Women
SLWMP	Sierra Leone Women's Movement for Peace
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
WNC	Women's National Commission

Introduction

War has traditionally been regarded as an exclusively male activity. Throughout time, men have been the ones to wield the sword and command the battlefield. From the military campaigns of Alexander the Great to the George W. Bush led invasion of Iraq in 2003; the theatre of war has been saturated with men and masculinity. Women, however, have either been purposefully ignored or only partially acknowledged in conflict situations. As a result, the majority of written and spoken word produced on the topic of war focuses solely on the experiences and participation of men while women have been practically rendered invisible.

This one-sided representation of war is evident in International Relations theory, the discipline that focuses on state behaviour and researches state-induced warfare. It has only recently been that the discipline has allowed for a gendered analysis of war, with a gradual awareness of women's experiences and participation in war settling into place as of the end of the Cold War in the early 1990's. International Relations theorists have since come to acknowledge that women are as much present as men on the frontlines of war and suffer as greatly as men from the consequences of armed conflict. Consequently, new discourse has systematically been produced on the topic of women in war over the past twenty years.

It is this thesis's purpose to review the literature that has been produced on the topic of women in war since the end of the Cold War from a feminist perspective. Through this approach, this thesis will attempt to not only provide a concise overview of the literature produced on the above-mentioned topic, but through this literature review, to also make the roles of both men and women in war visible. In doing so, this thesis aims to generate an understanding of the ways in which both women and men are involved in and affected by armed conflict, as well as the ways in which gender roles, the relations between men and women are changed during and as a result of conflict.

Research Aim and Rationale:

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive review of the literature produced on women's experiences and participation in conflict and post-conflict situations since the end of the Cold War. As mentioned earlier, women have been either completely excluded or only mentioned briefly in literature produced on the topic of war. This exclusion of one half of the world's population is problematic, as it suggests that the majority of the literature produced on war only allows for a partial analysis of war and as such, potentially excludes vital areas of importance relevant to both men and women in conflict situations.

The objective of this study is two-fold: First, this study focuses on the discourse produced on the topic of women in war and consequently, aims to generate a comprehensive literature review on this topic from a feminist perspective. The motivation for compiling such a literature review lies in the need to both gather knowledge and generate understanding of women's experiences of war. As previously mentioned, the topic of women in war has been receiving increased attention since the early 1990s, which is a very short length of time in the academic world. As a result, studies dedicated to researching the role of women in war are few in numbers and only growing in quantity slowly. Most of the existing studies, furthermore, tend to focus on only one or two aspects of women's experience of conflict. A concise study that reviews women's experience from the pre-conflict to post-conflict period has not yet been compiled. From this point of view, this study will be able to accumulate a great deal of important information into one study. This will be of valuable not only to fellow academics, but also to a broad range of interest groups.

The compilation of a comprehensive literature review approach will also be of valuable in the sense that it will give academics and practitioners a good idea of what information has been compiled and what areas still require further research. It will also identify which researchers are making valuable contributions to this field of interest and can potentially identify new areas of study. Furthermore, the use of existing literature will give this study a sense of reliability and validity, as the data gathered will not only be authentic,

but due to their published status will also have a sense of authority. This will be specifically important in terms of policy analysis, the policies' of both states and the United Nation in this case, as this requires a notion of ability to be taken seriously. Finally, this approach will also reveal how gender and feminist methods of analysis have been applied to the topic women in war and how this application is subsequently reflected within literature.

The second objective of this thesis is to generate an understanding of how women are affected by conflict, in which ways their traditional gender roles are changed during this period and then, whether their conflict experiences as active agents influences their status in society in the post-war environment. The aim of this research project is to make women visible in war by studying the experiences, challenges and victories exclusive to their gender. Attention will be given to women's traditional exclusion from male-dominated conflict situations and will then go on to focus on women's experiences of such activities and how their experiences differ from those of men. By taking this approach, this research project will be able to not only generate a greater understanding of women's experience of war, but also of war itself. Instead of a partial representation, this thesis will offer an opportunity to literally see how the 'other half lives' during war.

In order to achieve the above aim, this thesis has set a series of questions regarding women's experience of war to be answered by this study. The questions are as follows:

1. In the post-Cold War environment, women have been described as both victims and survivors of war. How have women come to develop their own sense of agency during war?
2. Gender-based violence has become a characteristic of modern day warfare. In which ways are women targeted due to their gender?
3. War does not end with a cease-fire agreement. What has women's role been in reconstruction processes and have they been able to participate in these processes equally with men?

4. Women are known to make certain gains from the changed gender relations during conflict situations, but these are usually of a temporary nature. What causes these gains to be reversed in the aftermath of the conflict?
5. The International community has taken an active interest in women's experience of conflict, the primary result of this interest being the adoption of UNSC 1325. Has UNSC 1325 been able to positively assist women in both the conflict and post-conflict period?

Methodology and Theoretical Overview:

In order to form a concise overview of this multidimensional topic, this research effort aims to approach the literature reviewed in a systematic and methodological fashion. It is therefore necessary to briefly explain the manner through which the literature reviewed has been approached and processed, as well as elaborating on the methods of analysis used.

Scope and Limitations of Study:

Although comparatively little literature has been produced on the topic of women in war, it remains a daunting task to compile a review of a topic that can in essence be described as very broad. This thesis has therefore decided to order the literature reviewed according to a series of themes, which were identified on the basis of their prominence in the body of literature researched. To elaborate, while researching the topic of women's experiences of war, a number of central themes were identified due to their recurrence in a broad range of work. For example, violence against women is a central theme in the majority of literature produced on women's experience of war and was therefore identified as a central theme in this thesis and will be explored in depth.

A total of seven themes were identified, after which the data was organised to present a coherent, consistent perspective on women in conflict after the conflict ends. It was realised that the selected themes are all interrelated and systematically flow from one to another. The themes were thus ordered according to their correlation to one another and subsequently demonstrate the time-line in which a conflict occurs, i.e. the pre-war phase,

the conflict itself, the negotiation or peace talk stage and the post-war phase. This thematic approach was chosen above options such as sorting data according to authors or chronologically according to publication date as it emphasises women's experiences throughout war and subsequently also allows for greater correlation and comparison between the different themes.

The themes selected and to be analysed are as follows: The first theme identified by this thesis, is the theme of gender. Much of women's experience of war can be explained by examining women's experiences before the advent of war. This thesis will demonstrate how much of the discrimination and violence suffered by women during war is as a result of socialisation practices prior to the war. The second theme, closely connected to the first, pertains to the different gender roles women fulfil during war. The literature reviewed by this thesis suggests that not only do women fulfil the same traditional, feminine roles during war than they do beforehand; but they also come to take on many masculine roles during conflict situations. The third theme focuses on violence inflicted on women in war, specifically violence focused directly on women due to gender. It will be discussed how gender-based violence has become a method of modern day warfare. The fourth theme focuses on women's experiences as refugees and internally displaced persons during war. Last mentioned theme is a continuation of previous themes in the sense that it demonstrates how women become active agents by taking on roles previously regarded as the exclusive domain of men.

The fifth theme explores women's participation in decision-making processes after the end of war. This theme, once again, demonstrates how women experience prejudice and discrimination due to their gender, but still strives to overcome their obstacles through using the skills they develop during conflict situations. The next theme focuses on women's experiences of the post-conflict period and specifically explores whether they were able to hold onto any of the gains they achieved during the war or do they once again suffer from the gender discrimination focuses on in the first chapter. The final theme discusses the international community's response to women's plight during war and focuses on the success of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

The above themes mentioned themes do, however, limit this study in the sense that only the topics above are researched and discussed. There are thus certain topics pertaining to women in war that are not discussed in this thesis. However, it is this thesis's opinion that it is more of more value to study a few themes in-depth, rather than briefly discuss a larger number of topics briefly. Furthermore, considering the limitations of this study itself, there was only a limited amount of space available to adequately address the topic of women in war.

Qualitative Analysis:

This thesis has chosen to use methods of qualitative data analysis to support its analysis of literature produced on the topic of women and war. Qualitative analysis was chosen above other methods of analysis for the following reasons: First of all, the method has a unique capability to capture and discover meaning within a situation. This is particularly useful to a study such as this one, as this thesis will examine literature produced at different times, by different authors and which focuses on a variety of different conflict situations. Secondly, Qualitative Data Analysis emphasises the importance of the social context for understanding the social world. This will be particularly valuable when looking at the experiences of women across national, racial and ethnic lines. Although this thesis focuses generally on women in conflict situations, it does acknowledge that not all women's experiences are the same. As such, this thesis will discuss trends among women in conflict situations, but does recognise that these trends are not universal.

The third reason for choosing a qualitative data analysis approach pertains to the nature of the sources available to this study. As previously mentioned, a large amount of literatures has been reviewed and examined in this study; Most of which was in the form of books, journal articles, newspaper articles, and transcripts. This includes literature produced for academic purposes and those prepared by international and national relief and development organisations, as well as non-governmental organisations, for research and policy purposes. Methods of qualitative data analysis allowed this study to adequately address such a large amount of diverse information, analyse this data in depth

and then, generate a more detailed understanding of the scenarios being discussed within this literature.

Case Study:

A further method of qualitative analysis to be used in this thesis is that of a case study. It was decided to use one single case study to demonstrate the different themes analysed throughout this thesis. It was a difficult process to identify a single case study, which not only encompassed as many of the themes discussed in this study as possible, but also had enough literature available on the experiences of women during the said conflict. Care was taken to avoid selection bias and as such, a number of conflict situations were taken into consideration. In the end, Sierra Leone was chosen as an adequate case study. The decade long civil war in Sierra Leone is a prime example of both women's victories and their struggles during armed conflict. It is also a good example of a conflict where women were actively involved in the processes of the armed struggle from the beginning until the end.

Sierra Leone is furthermore reflective of the human rights violations and gender based violence that women are exposed to during conflict, especially sexual violence. The country was specifically chosen due to the specific way that the conflict affected the women; it is a good example of how women can be both victimised and empowered during the war. The civil war in Sierra Leone had women submitted to rape, sexual slavery, forced labour, torture, mutilation and enforced recruitment into the many armed factions active during the war, such as the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Ben-Ari and Harsch (2005:1) argue that the war was internationally known because of the 'horrific atrocities', especially the widespread amputations of villagers' limbs. Much of this violence was directly aimed at women. One civilian recalls, "Violence against women was not just incidental to the conflict, but was routinely used as a tool of war. Sexual violence was used in widespread and systematic way as a weapon, and women were raped in extraordinarily brutal ways" (Nowrojee in Ben-Ari & Harsch, 2005:1).

The women of Sierra Leone also experienced the changing of traditional gender roles in the absence of men. With many men leaving their homes to fight in the war and many more dying, women were left to provide for their families and maintain their households. This shift in gender roles led to women developing skills that would have otherwise been denied them, some of which were later used in peace movements. Sierra Leone is a good example of women mobilising themselves in grassroots peace processes. These women were actively involved in informal peace processes and through their demonstrations, put pressure on political leaders to come to hold democratic elections. Women's activism did not stop here. In the first parliamentary election after the war, a group of women organised themselves as Women Organised for a Morally Enlightened Nation (WOMEN) to encourage women to participate in the upcoming elections (Sørensen, 1998:10).

Chapter Outline:

The topic of study in this dissertation can at best be described as multidimensional because it is both a literature review and an examination of women's wide-ranging and differential experiences during war. As previously mentioned, it was decided to structure this study according to themes identified in the literature reviewed. These themes reflect not only the current debates on women in war and areas being studied at the moment, but have also been ordered according to the different phases of war: The first of which concerns the conflict period itself and will deal with women's diverse experiences before and during war. The second is the so-called end of conflict phase and includes women's participation, or rather lack thereof, in peace negotiations and post-conflict decision making processes. The third phase of war consists of women's experiences after a war has officially ended and their society begins the reconstruction phase and returns to a level of post-war stability or peace. As such, the chapter outline is as follows:

The first chapter, *Gender, Feminism and War*, focuses on Feminist Theory and discusses feminist arguments regarding gender, socialisation and gender roles both during times of peace and in times of war. As such, this chapter analyses the foundations of feminist theory concerning gender and also discusses the current feminist debates on the so-called

social construction of gender roles, the power dynamics that exist between men and women as a result of their irrespective gender roles and the roles men and women are expected to fulfil during times of war as a result. As such, this chapter lays the foundations for discussions to follow on women's experience of war due to their sex and gender and explains why women have traditionally been excluded from decision-making structures during conflict situations.

The second chapter, *Women's Roles during War*, is concerned with women's experiences during the conflict period. Here, focus will be directed at the literature concerning the various roles that women fulfil during war, what difficulties they face while adapting to wartime circumstances and what gains they stand to make from changed gender relations. This chapter continues from Chapter 1 by discussing the traditional roles that women are expected to fulfil during war, but also explain how their roles adapt to accommodate wartime circumstances. This chapter starts off by first considering the traditional roles fulfilled by women during war and then goes on to discuss how women develop a sense of agency during conflict by fulfilling new, non-traditional roles. From here on, attention is paid to the wartime gains women make as a result of their wartime agency and how these gains can also be reversed in the post-war period.

The third chapter, *Violence against Women in War*, focuses on the systematic and organised violence experienced by women during war. The post-Cold War period has seen a rise in gender-based violence; i.e. hostility aimed specifically at women because of their sex. For example, the organised rape of women in war has come to be regarded as weapon of war in the contemporary period. This chapter will subsequently focus on the many challenges women face due to not only their status as civilians, but also as a result of their sexuality. Specific attention will be given to gender-based violence and sexual violence, such as occurrences of wartime rape and sexual slavery. Domestic violence during war will also be discussed, as well as human trafficking in conflict situations.

The fourth chapter, *Women Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*, discusses women's experience as displaced persons. A continuation of both the second and third

chapters, this section examines the reasons behind women's flight, as well as their experiences while fleeing; Many women are subjected to exploitation and violence during the initial phases of displacement and as a result, have to adapt their gender roles in order to survive the experience. This chapter will furthermore pay attention to women's positive and negative experiences in displacement camps, including the skills training they receive in camps and the gender based violence that they are subjected to while living in camps. Attention will also be given to women's experiences once they leave the refugee and IDP camps and return home or seek refuge abroad.

The fifth chapter, *Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Decision-Making Processes*, focuses on women's inclusion and participation in post-conflict decision making processes. As also mentioned in Chapter 1, attention is given to why women have traditionally been excluded from these processes and what the current arguments for their inclusion are. Attention is given to women's involvement in both informal and formal peace processes and their various levels of participation are discussed. For one, attention is given to women's involvement in grassroots movements. This chapter also looks at cases where women have been involved in peace processes and as such, discusses whether women have been able to use opportunities such as these to consolidate their wartime gains.

The sixth chapter, *Women's Challenges in the Aftermath of War*, considers women's lives after the end of the conflict. This chapter acknowledges that women's experience of war does not end once peace has been negotiated, but continues into the reconstruction and rehabilitation phases that follow the end of conflict. Attention will first of all be paid to the 'return to normalcy' that occurs once a cease-fire is agreed upon and the male soldiers return home. Next, attention will be given to the many reformatory processes that follow the end of war, how women are affected by these and also, if women are involved in these processes. Specific attention will be given to women's involvement in governmental, economic and social reconstruction and whether these reconstruction efforts take women's concerns and experiences into consideration.

The sixth chapter, *The International Community Responds to Women in War*, discusses the international community's response to women's experiences of war and specifically, examines the interventions the United Nations and its subsidiaries have made on behalf of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. The primary focus here is the process leading up to the adoption of UNSC 1325. Literature concerning the Resolution will then be analysed in terms of the Resolutions contents, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and implementation. Attention will also be given to "spin-off" Resolution UNSCR 1820.

The eight chapters will deal with the dissertation's case study and is aptly named *A Case Study of Women in the Sierra Leone Civil War*. This chapter will review women's experiences during the decade long civil war in Sierra Leone and will focus on women's experiences as both active agents and victims. Consequently, attention will be given to the various roles that women fulfilled during the war, their experiences as refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as their involvement in peace activities. The chapter will also discuss women's experiences in the post-war period and will discuss the availability of services for women in the aftermath, including healthcare and educational opportunities.

Finally, this dissertation will end with an extensive summary of its topic of study. This final section will reflect on the data gathered throughout this study and then presents its findings. These final remarks will concisely organize the data into a coherent, consistent picture of how women experiences in war since the end of the Cold War are reflected in current literature. It will subsequently also provide a concise overview of the literature available on the topic and thereby identify areas that require further study and make recommendations on areas of study that can be categorised as topics of interest for future study.

Chapter One

Gender, Feminism and War

Feminist theorists argue that men and women are socialised from birth to perform specific gender roles. These gender roles determine not only how men and women are expected to act in times of peace, but also guide their actions in times of war. As such, understanding women's gender roles is central to understanding women's experience of war. This first chapter will explore feminist arguments regarding the concepts of gender, sex, socialisation and how these relate to phenomenon known as war. To facilitate this discussion, this chapter has been divided into the following three sections: The first section discusses the foundation of arguments on gender, namely the difference between sex and gender and specifically, how gender roles are the result of a process of socialisation. The second section overviews feminist theory, in particular theories regarding the power dynamics that exist between men and women as a result of their gender roles and how these power relations are reflected in the public sphere. The third section focuses on the status of gender roles during war and specifically, how traditional understandings of gender roles are necessary to enable war.

Gender vs. Sex

Men and women both experience and endure war, even though it is traditionally assumed that conflict is primarily a male dominated experience. Symons (1990:478) argues, "The military has always been a male domain. Women's participation, with notable exceptions, has been carefully controlled". Therefore, although both men and women experience war, their experiences are essentially different from one another. These differences can be explained by looking at not only the social differences between men and women themselves, but also at the different roles they fulfil in society. As mentioned above, this section aims to analyse the social origins of men and women's diverse experiences by, first, discussing the difference between the concepts of sex and gender and second, by discussing the specific gender roles assigned to men and women within

society. Because, as this thesis will demonstrate, it is the gender roles that men and women fulfil in society during periods of peace that will determine the positions that they will fulfil during times of war.

Historically, the differences between men and women have been ascribed to biology (Tickner, 1992). Contemporary theorists, however, look beyond this singular classification and make divisions between both gender and sexual variations when attempting to explain the differences between men and women (Tickner 1992, Goldstein, 2001). Goldstein (2001:2) explains that “sex” refers to what is biological and “gender” to what is cultural. Steans (1998:10) agrees with the distinction between the two terms, saying “...gender refers not to what men and women are biologically, but to the ideological and material relations which exist between them”. Consequently, it is argued that one’s sex is determined by one’s genitalia, whereas one’s gender is the result of a lifelong process of socialisation, which starts at birth. Goldstein argues (2001:2), “We *are* a certain sex but we *learn* or *perform* certain gender roles which are not predetermined or tied rigidly to biological sex”. The concepts of gender and sex are thus two separate terms and although interrelated, are not interchangeable.

Of these two concepts, namely sex and gender, comprehending the second term is central to understanding women’s experiences during war. Gender is, first of all, explained as a set of characteristics that are assumed to be inherent to both men and women irrespectively. Tickner (1992) elaborates, saying that gender is a set of culturally shaped and defined characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity and subsequently applied to men and women. To explain, these gender characteristics are assigned to a person at birth according to one’s biological identity, hence the traditional assumption that sex and gender is one and the same thing. Persons who are born as biological males or females are expected to naturally develop ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ character traits and to then behave in ways appropriate to their assigned gender. The terms masculine and feminine therefore do not describe natural characteristics, but are rather gender terms (Steans, 1998:10). Eisenstein (2007:3) clarifies, “Gendering is the process of transforming females to women and males to men when neither of these starting points is

completely autonomous from their transformed state”. In this sense biology is used to justify practices, institutions and choices that could under another system have been different from what they are (Tickner, 1992).

Beyond these developed gender characteristics, the process of gendering also consists of a range of gender roles that are assigned to a person in accordance with their gender characteristics. According to Steans (1998:11), the notion of gender roles was developed as a way of describing the social functions fulfilled by and seemingly also appropriates to men and women. It can therefore also be described a set of shared expectations of a person’s behaviour given their assigned gender. Gender is thus the product of both a set of characteristics and the assigned roles that go along with it. These roles, similar to gender characteristics, are based on the assumption that that men and women have particular, inherent characteristics that make them particularly well suited to the performance of particular gender roles. Subsequently, both gender traits and gender roles are not only seen to be closely connected to one another, but also to be in correspondence with biological sex. Gender roles are as a consequence assumed to be natural, but are in fact learned from birth.

Gender characteristics and gender roles are taught to individuals from an early age onwards. Although these gender characteristics are not consistent across time and space, almost all societies and cultures have certain emotional and psychological characteristics which are held to be essentially male or female and are accordingly imprinted into each generation. This reproduction occurs through a process called socialisation, which refers to the procedure whereby individuals learn the culture of the particular society they live in (Pilcher & Imelda, 2004:161). With regards to gender differences, the notion of socialisation gives emphasis to the process whereby individuals learn to become masculine or feminine in their identities, appearance, values and behaviour. Pilcher & Imelda (2004:160) argue that the primary stage of socialisation occurs during infancy and childhood, through interaction between adults and children. A person is thus specifically taught to adopt certain characteristics and traits appropriate to their respective genders. In reality, children are encouraged from an early age to conform to behaviour appropriate

to their assigned gender through a system of rewards and punishment operated by adults (Pilcher & Imelda, 2004:161).

Conceptions of masculinity and femininity are very specific and socialisation is often exercised in children's lives through a process of 'role-learning'. Young boys are taught from a very early age to adopt masculine characteristics, such as rationality and bravery, and then also to behave in ways according to these characteristics. They are conditioned to reject all things viewed as feminine and instead an emphasis will be placed masculine activities such as sport and fighting (Etchart & Baksh, 2005:18). Young boys will be discouraged from engaging in home-making, housework and childcare activities which are regarded as female tasks and will rather be encouraged to pursue more 'manly' activities. The same is true for young girls, who will most likely be taught to adopt feminine characteristics, like being expressive, warm and often submissive. Caprioli & Boyer (2001:5) says, "In general, women are taught to be less competitive and more focused on issues of interdependence and egalitarianism". Young girls will subsequently, similar to boys, be discouraged from engaging in masculine activities such as contact sports and will instead be expected to play 'house' and to wear pretty dresses (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004:161). The concept of future motherhood will be especially emphasised in the socialisation of young girls and they will generally be given baby dolls to play with from infancy. These childhood games of 'role-playing' become normalised throughout childhood and will eventually become set gender roles into adulthood.

The result of the socialisation process described above is an entrenched system of gender characteristics and gender roles for both men and women. A very specific understanding consequently exists of what it means to be masculine or feminine and what is expected from these two gender demarcations. As Steans (1998:12) argues,

The real target is gender: not the anatomical difference between the female and the male sex but the complicated aspect of social being known as gender. When tradition teaches that those of the female gender perform certain tasks in society while those of the male gender perform others, the separation is not made between specific, individual women and men. Gender roles are archetypal models of how human function in society.

As a result, men are expected to be breadwinners, head of households and importantly, soldiers while women are expected to be homemakers, mothers and are generally excluded from the processes of war. These gender expectations consequently influence not only the way men and women see both themselves and one another, but also determine how they will function within society during times of peace and in times of war.

Feminist Theory: A Gendered Method of Analysis

The demise of the Soviet Union and subsequent end of the Cold War resulted in a need to broaden the theoretical basis of International Relations, the traditional study of war, beyond its realist foundations. Feminist Theory took advantage of this opportunity to introduce a gender method of analysis into the discipline (Peterson, 1998:581). In the relatively short time that has passed, feminist theory has successfully argued that socially constructed gender differences between men and women shape not only how both genders understand their own experiences, but also to how these gender differences shape international relations itself. This section will discuss feminist theories that examine the socially constructed nature of gender relations and the unequal power dynamics that result from this. Specific attention will be given to the ways in which international relations can be seen as a purview of men and how this has affected both the development of the field and the recommendations it offers for achieving security.

In comparison to other disciplines, such as history, law and philosophy, international relations has been slow to take on gender questions (Grant, 1990:9). The discipline's tardiness on including a gender perspective has been ascribed to a so-called 'gender blindness' within the discipline's structures and the consequent assumption that a gender perspective would be irrelevant and unnecessary. This 'gender blindness' is, however, one of the cornerstones of feminist theory, which maintains that women are unduly demarcated as 'hidden actors' within the international system. The assumption underlying this argument is that the discipline of international relations is founded upon the experiences of men and that women are excluded from its structures both physically

and theoretically. Rebecca Grant (1990:9), for one, has argued that women have been suppressed within international relations because the discipline incorrectly proposes that it is gender neutral in nature and is subsequently unaware of its inherently, unequal structures. Tickner (1992) adds to Grants argument, saying that most fields of knowledge have become accustomed to equating what is human with what is masculine and that it is therefore seldom realised that women and their experiences have been looked over or excluded. As a result, feminist theory's primary aim is to question the non-existence and irrelevance of women in international relations and to challenge the workings of both gender and power within the structures of international relations.

Feminists argue that women's suppression in the field of international relations, as within many other disciplines, is the direct result of unequal societal structures. For many of these theorists, this inequality stems from the gender characteristics and gender roles assigned to individuals at birth (Tickner, 1992). Feminists reject the notion that gender roles are natural and inherently in correspondence with biological sex. Instead they argue that gender characteristics and roles are assigned by society and are the result of a life-long process of socialisation. They thus reject suppositions like, men are naturally more aggressive than women or that women are naturally more fearful than men (Burris in Conover & Shapiro, 1993:1080). For many feminist theorists, there is nothing natural about gender whatsoever. As an alternative, they believe that most, if not all, of these characteristics are taught to individuals from an early age and are therefore the result of early differential socialisation and knowledge connected to gender experiences: "...differences between women's and men's orientation to war are founded in childhood or earlier and cannot be explained away by any other aspects of their lives (Conover & Sapiro, 1993: 1080).

Feminist theorists moreover maintain that the gender differences discussed above are used to sanction unequal relationships between men and women. From their perspective, there is a direct correlation between the gender roles assigned to men and women and the power dynamics that exist within a society. Feminist academics believe that male-identified roles are seen to be more important and deserving of greater social rewards

than those fulfilled by women (Steans, 1998:11). For example, male identified roles such as 'head of the household', 'breadwinner' and 'soldier' are accorded higher social value than female identified roles such as 'mother', 'caregiver' and 'homemaker'. Most of these male roles also include a higher number of leadership roles and subsequently also decision-making capabilities than the female ones. Steans (1998:11) explains that the belief that women possess certain gender traits, for example that they are more passive, emotional and sensitive than men, who by contrast are aggressive, objective and logical, has been used to justify female subordination. As a result, men and women are seen to have both unequal status within society and an imbalance in amounts of power, with men supposedly enjoying the lion share of both. Feminist theory therefore argues that instead of reflecting the personality traits of individuals, traditional notions of gender roles are used to justify unequal treatment of women and consequently provide an important ideological justification for a specific form of gender and societal inequality (Steans, 1998:11).

It is believed that the unequal and in many instances, subordinate status accorded to women in societies, is replicated and reinforced in international politics. Joan Scott (in Tickner, 1992) argues that gender is "...a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and ...is a primary way of signifying relationships of power". This is especially evident in politics where characteristics associated with masculinity, such as courage, power and independence, have been most valued in the conduct of political affairs (Tickner, 1992). McNamara (1993:548) agrees, saying that the dominant theories in international relations tend to represent men's experiences of the world and are based on a series of assumptions that give primacy to characteristics and values traditionally associated with masculinity. In contrast, characteristics associated with femininity, such as being nurturing and caring, have deemed women incapable or unsuitable to the conduct of politics. Women's are therefore not only physically excluded from political affairs, but also mentally since the discipline does not include their interests, experiences or concerns.

Because of the indisputable male dominance of the discipline of international relations, feminists have felt the need to re-examine many of its key concepts, such as security. In its current form, McNamara (1993:549) argues, that this concept is unable to achieve a multidimensional and multi-level security for the entire population as the underlying theories are entrenched in masculinity and therefore only offer a partial view of reality. Blanchard (2003:1296) confirms this and states that "...national security studies attempt to explain the causes of war through a discourse that privileges a view based on hegemonic masculinity". Men thus control the conditions of security and while women support what they perceive to be legitimate calls for state action in the interest of that security, the task of defining, defending and advancing the security interests of a state is a man's affair (Tickner, 1992). In this regard, the role of women with respect to national security is rather ambiguous: While they are considered the ones being protected by the male soldiers, they are left with little control over the conditions of their protection.

This has led feminist theorists to question the meaning of security and to raise the question of who is being protected by these masculine dominated notions of security. Security threats have conventionally been seen as threats to national boundaries, but since the end of the Cold War, security threats have become more internal and have had a higher rate of civilian casualties. For many academics a new, more global vision of security is necessary (Tickner 1992). Feminists argue that reformulation of the meaning of security is necessary to draw attention to the extent to which gender hierarchies themselves are a source of domination and thus an obstacle to a truly comprehensive definition of security. Similar to their connection between gender hierarchies and the power dynamics within society, feminists believe the violence in war is intrinsically connected to violence against women.

For most feminists, militarism, sexism and violence are interconnected (Tickner, 1992). Many would also agree that the behaviour of individuals in society and the subsequent domestic policies of states cannot be separated from states' behaviour in the international system. Feminists call attention to the vulnerabilities that women experience due to the gender hierarchies that exist in society and claim that these are nowhere more apparent as

in times of war. Goldstein (2001:19) argues this same fact; “Sometimes war and hunting are the only spheres that exclude women, or the two spheres where that exclusion is most formalised”. Elshtain (1987:3) also agrees, by saying that war is an experience to which women are exterior and that men have inhabited the world of war in a way that women have not. Through their roles as soldiers men have been especially valorised and rewarded in many cultures throughout history (Tickner, 1992). Simone de Beauvoir suggests that men’s ability to give their lives for their countries have been considered the highest form of patriotism (in Tickner, 1992). It has, though, also been an act that women have predominantly not been allowed to participate in and as a result, women are regarded as ‘secondary citizens’ in many societies.

However, even though women have conventionally been excluded from the political processes surrounding war, but they have not been excluded from the act of war itself. As this thesis will go on to demonstrate, war affects women very specifically and completely disrupts the traditional gender roles that have served to sustain male dominance throughout the ages.

The Experience of War: Beautiful Soul vs. Just Warrior

Armed conflict has a complex affect on gender roles: On the one hand, gender roles are enforced during times of war and on the other hand, gender roles are in some instances completely reversed during war. This section will discuss the affect that war has on gender roles and the ways in which gender roles are necessary for the conduct of war. Specific attention will be given to the socialisation of men as soldiers and women as the so-called “other” against which men affirm their masculinity. This section will also serve as an introduction to the notion that women can fulfil a variety of gender roles during war, which will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Gender characteristics and gender roles are central to understanding war and vice versa. On the one hand, traditional notions of war contain equally conventional, established notions of gender characteristics and gender roles, which serve to enable the processes of

war. On the other hand, traditional understandings of war are also central to gender differentiation with a society. Elshstain (1987:3) explains gender roles during war as follows,

Men fight as avatars of a nation's sanctioned violence. Women work and weep and sometimes protest within the frame of discursive practices that turn one out, militant mother and pacifist protestor alike, as the collective "other" to the male warrior. These identities are underpinnings for decision and action...

This understanding of gender roles in war subsequently assumes an affinity between men and war and women and peace. It also reinforces a very specific understanding of gender roles - which holds men in a higher social regard than women as men offer their lives in service of their countries while women are confined to domestic tasks. Elshstain (1987:4) argues that this approach to gender roles in war is a continuation of a tradition that consists of culturally constructed, transmitted myths and memories. War thus simultaneously feeds off and serves to entrench established gender roles and power relations.

The gender divisions that exist between men and women during peacetime are continued into the conflict process. During war, men are seen as violent and as the protectors of society while women are regarded as non-violent and compassionate. As Caprioli and Boyer (2001:503) argue, in war "women work for peace and men wage war – co-operative women, conflictual men". The masculine soldier consequently comes to stand in sharp contrast against the feminine peacemaker or, as Goldstein (2001:42) argues, violent men in comparison with peaceful women. Elshstain consequently argues (1987:4) that in war men and women adopt the personas of "Just Warrior" and "Beautiful Soul" respectively. These personas, however, do not serve to depict what men and women really are, but what roles they fulfil during times of war. They serve to recreate and ensure women's roles as non-combatants and men as warriors. These binaries are necessary, according to Goldstein (2001:252), for society to induce men to fight in war. Gender identities consequently become societies' primary tools in conditioning men for war.

War does not come naturally to men. Contrary to traditional belief, men are not born with the qualities necessary to become good soldiers and they do not take up arms on their own account or in some cases, even of their own free will. Instead, they are conditioned to do so from an early age. Goldstein (2001:19) explains,

Contrary to the idea that war thrills men, expresses innate masculinity, or gives men a fulfilling occupation, all evidence indicates that war is something societies impose on men...

This is done through the expectations of masculinity. Cultures mould men into soldiers by connecting the status of 'manhood' to the war experience. This occurs as follows: Men are conditioned from a young age to adopt masculine qualities, which coincidentally also contain the traits necessary to make good soldiers. They are simultaneously also taught to believe that 'manhood' is something that has to be earned and that the best way to do this is to become a brave and disciplined soldier. The result is culturally conditioned young men who join armies in order to both prove and achieve the status of 'manhood'. Once they've become soldiers and experienced active combat, they're rewarded with the status of 'man' and can return home with the expectation of having enjoying a higher status within their irrespective society.

Women are central to men achieving their status of 'manhood' during war, as women serve to reinforce men's masculinity during war and consequently keep them at the frontlines. As mentioned before, Elshtain (1987:3) calls women the "collective "other" to the male warrior". Women's femininity is seen as an opposite of men's masculinity and sets a standard against which men have to prove themselves. Women are also the "Beautiful Soul" who according to patriarchal belief requires the presence of "Just Warrior" to protect her. As Mason (2003:3) argues, "Women and children have traditionally remained at home, where they are perceived as creatures that are fragile and need to be protected from men's wars". This so-called need for protection is perceived as a feminine weakness, which serves to reinforce the so-called strength of masculinity. In the same way, male soldiers also tend to feminize their 'enemy' in order to reinforce their own masculinity. Gender is consequently used to symbolise domination and soldiers psychologically assume a masculine and dominant position relative to the feminine and subordinate enemy (Goldstein, 2001: 356).

Women's role as the 'other' is the first of many roles they fulfil during war. They traditionally also serve as the 'nurturing feminine domain' which makes combat more tolerable for men (Goldstein, 2001:301). According to Goldstein (2001:301), male soldiers are better able to motivate themselves for combat if they are able to compartmentalise conflict in their belief systems and identities. In their minds, a clear separation exists between the battlefield and the home front, with civilian or normal life being regarded as feminised and combat as masculinised. Men subsequently associate women with a '...place called home or normal or peacetime'. By focusing on the image of women and their association with home, men have a place to both protect and return to after the war is over. This becomes a motivation to focus on during the war and reinforces the notion that their situation is exceptional and temporary (Goldstein, 2001:301).

Women therefore serve as both a motivation to fight and as a comfort to male soldiers during war. Both these roles, however, centre on the experiences of men and once again relegate women to the periphery of war. These conventional accounts of women's role during warfare moreover completely exclude the experiences of women and also serve to disguise the particular ways in which women experience conflict. It is true that women do perform the traditional, non-combatant roles of wives, mothers and nurses during war. They, however, also mobilise themselves and partake in so-called 'masculine' areas of work and consequently, assume many roles previously reserved for men. For example, women become breadwinners and single heads of households during war. In some cases, they even participate in war as combatants. The visual boundary between the masculinity and femininity becomes blurred during wartime since women step out of the kitchen and participate in the public sphere to do men's work. As a result, many scholars, such as Summerfield (1997), believe that war holds the potential to improve the status of women and possibly also lessen gender inequality within society.

The following chapters will overview women's diverse experiences during times of war. As the mother and 'carers' in society, the lives of women are greatly complicated once men leave home to join the military ranks. They are left with the sole responsibility for

the welfare of themselves, the elderly and disabled as well as the children (Steans, 1998:100). Not only do women have to take on new responsibilities in these times; they are also faced with the threat of directed gender violence, such as rape. Women are not stagnant during war, but rather find themselves in positions that are continuously evolving – both to their benefit and to their detriment.

Chapter Two

Women's Roles during War

As war becomes a reality, men and women's gender roles inevitably shift to accommodate wartime circumstances. Men generally go off to fight in the war in various masculine-orientated combatant roles, while women are femininely left behind to keep the home fires burning. With the men gone to the battlefield, however, women take on many roles previously regarded as belonging exclusively to the male gender. Women systematically begin to transform and expand traditional gender relations as they assume men's former tasks; they become soldiers, labourers of the war effort, national political actors and survivors of violence (Meintjies, 2001:64). This chapter will expand on Chapter One by exploring the different roles that women come to fulfil during war and will then discuss how these shifts in gender relations allow women to make certain social and political gains during war. This discussion is divided into three sections: The first section considers the traditional roles that women continue to perform during times of war and argues that these roles are merely extensions of the gender roles women perform during peacetime. The second section focuses on the new, non-traditional roles that women take on in the absence of men; especially those roles categorised as masculine tasks in the pre-war period. The final section explores the social and political gains that women achieve as a result of the gender shifts that occur during war and then also the temporary nature of these gains, which are usually reversed at some point after the war.

Traditional Perceptions of Women's Wartime Roles

War is considered to be a gendered activity, with specific roles being assigned to men and women respectively (Riley, 2005:342). Traditional understandings of warfare regard men as the warriors and defenders of a nation, while women are considered to be the auxiliaries; they provide logistical support in the war effort, or in the domestic sphere, since they are often confined to the home front as the wives and mothers of soldiers (Meintjies, 2001: 63). As a result, women have traditionally been restricted to non-

combatant roles in war, such as mothers, nurses, prostitutes, camp followers, victims and as peace activists. These traditional roles that women fulfil during war have thus been very specific in the sense that women can be victims, peace agents or nurturers, but not combatants or direct participants in the war effort. This section will discuss the traditional roles that women have fulfilled in wars in the past and how women continue to fulfil these roles in contemporary, post-cold war conflicts.

Confined to Traditional Gender Roles:

It can be said that the traditional roles women fulfil during war are merely a repetition of women's feminine roles during times of peace, because roles such as these uphold the same collective image of what being a woman means and what behaviour is appropriately feminine than that which exists during peacetime. As noted by Riley (2005:343), "...women knew what to do in times of war, acting in socially approved feminine ways that came naturally to them". Consequently, women's traditional gender roles are replicated and extended in war, but not changed in any way. In this context, men feel that they fight in wars to defend women and as such, war is not a time for women to take independent action for themselves (Summerfield, 1997:4). Instead it is expected for women to support men's wartime activities and not to challenge the established gender status quo. In the cases where women do take any independent action, they have been attacked on moral grounds by both men and other women (Summerfield, 1997:4). As a result, women have been confined to their traditional gender roles in war and are expected to fulfil the same kind of tasks than they would during times of peace.

Jean Elshtain (1987:4) suggests that women have been confined to their traditional gender roles in war is because of their socialised caring natures and their potential for motherhood, which essentially deems them life givers and not life takers. A member of the British parliament wrote the following regarding women partaking in war in 1942: "A women's duty is to give life and not to take it..." (in Summerfield, 1997:6). Elizabeth Addis (1994: xv) concurs, saying that in the collective memory women are sources of mediation and dialogue, guarantors of domestic tranquillity, bearers of life, rather than of death. In addition, Summerfield (1997:6) notes that resistance to allowing women to

partake in war efforts lay at one end of male reservations about women's participation in war, which reveals the tension between the mobilisation of women and the wartime gender contract under which men fought for the protection of women, who in return, maintained hearth and home as the "cornerstones" of the nation. As such, women are expected to continue fulfilling their traditional gender roles during armed conflict and not to overstep any gender boundaries that could challenge established male supremacy.

Unfit to Participate in Men's Wars:

Historically, women have been designated to the periphery of war. They have been in the background in men's wars in the same way that men have been outsiders to female activities such as raising children and taking care of the household. According to Elshtain (1987:165), this 'outsider status' can be ascribed to our understanding of male and female bodies. In their historical roles as warriors and soldiers, men fight each other and take lives. As a result, their bodies are hard with muscle, straight and fit for combat. In their capacity as warriors, male bodies are consequently also seen to expendable in large numbers. Women, on the other hand, give birth and as such, are seen as givers of life. Their bodies are soft, rounding out, and pregnant with new life. Their bodies are not seen as expendable, but as what re-creates life after the losses of war and therefore hold forth the promise of the future. As a result, women's bodies are not seen to be fit for combat or in fact, capable of fulfilling soldierly tasks. The world can thus survive with losing men in war, but there must always be women to give birth to more male babies to fight in future wars.

Because of the association of women with life, the very idea of women committing violence is seen to be an anomalous appearance. Male violence is regarded as a structured activity, with set rules of procedure and conduct. Female violence, however, is seen as uncontrolled and unrestricted. Beyond their roles as life givers, women are symbolically deemed uncontrollable and irrational. Natalie Davis (in Elshtain, 1987:169) says that as the 'lustful, disordered and unstable sex,' it is felt that women can unleash mindless destruction and violence on the world around her. Elshtain (1987:167) also says that female violence is collectively seen as a sign that signifies formlessness, disorder, a breakdown or misrule. For these stereotypical reasons, many feel that women should be

kept from participating in war - Not only because of the potential destruction that they will cause, but also because of the breakdown of order that it would signify. Women are thus not only physically unfit to participate in war, they are also deemed emotionally incapable.

Wartime Roles Deemed Appropriate for Women:

Women have subsequently been confined to wartime roles that have been deemed appropriate to their gender. So rather than participating in the processes of war, women have been outsiders looking in. They have been awarded observer status and have been designated witnesses to male bravery and prowess (Elshstain, 1987:181). Elshstain (1987:165) says,

...men see edifying tales of courage, duty, honour, glory as they engage in acts of protection and defence and daring: heroic deed doing. Women see edifying stories of nobility, sacrifice, duty, quite immortality as they themselves engage in defensive acts of protection, the nonheroics of taking care of.

Through their roles as onlookers, women have served to both reinforce soldier's masculinity and motivate them to persevere in their fighting efforts. Women performing feminine roles during the war improve men's morale by enhancing a man's identification of himself as a warrior (Goldstein, 2001:307). Simultaneously, women also serve to shame men into persisting in their soldiering efforts. In the first and Second World War, many cases of women publicly ridiculing men who they deemed cowards for not participating in the war effort were reported.

A further role that women traditionally fulfil in war is in a supportive capacity, often as mother, wife or sweetheart of the soldier. Essentially the same role as supporter of the war effort, these positions epitomises the nurturing feminine sphere that stands in direct contrast with the war effort (Goldstein, 2001: 309). Soldiers take comfort in these images in similar ways – actual mothers who care for them, sweethearts who will tend to them after they return from war and marry them, and wives who already do so. Soldiers take comfort in the knowledge that someone is waiting for them at home and cares about what happens to them while they're on the frontline. For example, American women supported soldiers in the first Gulf War by sending them care packages with items such

as food, toilet paper and sun block since these items were scarce in Saudi Arabia (Riley, 2005:343). In addition, American women also showed their support for the Government and war through the use of yellow ribbons, which they would use to decorate their neighbourhoods, homes, cars and clothing. Many women thus do their best to support men in their roles as soldiers. For many of them, in their capacity as non-combatants, they feel that supporting soldiers is the most direct way of participating in the war.

The closest women have come to the battlefield as non-combatants in the past century have been as nurses. As argued by D'Antonio (2002:7), "nursing gave them the chance to participate as few other women could in the tumultuous events of their times". Once again, an extension of their role as nurturers, many women have taken pride in nursing injured and sick soldiers. D'Antonio (2002:7) notes that female nurses are "...an enduring symbol for the comfort, care, and kindness that a gentle female presence provided for battle scared and weary sons, brothers, and husbands". For centuries, the job of nursing has fallen to wives, camp followers and other women accompanying military forces. Formalised women's military nursing only came about after military commanders came to see women nurses as a way to extend military control over medical care without diverting scarce manpower from combat, a formula that depended on "keeping women nurses ideologically peripheral to the combat-masculinity core of the military" (Goldstein, 2001:313). Military nursing has meant hard work, sometimes without pay and often without official recognition. In many cases, it has also meant death on the frontline. It has, however, been the closest women have come to directly participating in armed combat without taking up arms themselves.

The traditional roles that women fulfil during war are mostly aimed to keep women on the sidelines of war. These roles maintain women's socially constructed characteristics and roles and ensure that women continue to fulfil the same female functions they would during times of peace. They keep women confined to a set of social stereotypes which maintain that, "We had a war to fight and war is a man's business. Women would only clutter it up" (McCoskie in Permeswaran, 2008:95). It simultaneously also ensures that men are able to return to the same roles they fulfilled prior to the war upon their return

from the frontline. Although relevant, these traditional roles are only one side of the coin. Women are increasingly becoming active in war as armed combatants, peace protestors and entrepreneurs. In the absence of men, women become agents of new possibilities.

Women in Non-Traditional Roles during War

Women are not only passive observers to war. Increasingly, women have become active agents and direct participants in conflict situations. As Summerfield (1997:5) observes, “women moved into different types of work and jobs; they took off dresses and put on trousers”. According to Meintjies (2001:63), the political economy of war mobilises society for the war effort to produce food, clothing, munitions and other war material. With the majority of men gone off to the battlefield, women become combatants, heads of households, farmers and factory workers. They also provided support services in the military, by fulfilling logistical, intelligence, administrative and domestic tasks. In other cases, women’s agency is also expressed through their participation in peace processes before, during and after the conflict. Out of these social, economic and political changes new opportunities arise for women to gain both employment and education. This section will discuss the many new roles that women come to play during war and how these new roles often allow for women to make social and political gains.

Women in the Armed Forces:

Once an inconceivable concept, women are increasingly participating directly in conflict situations by joining both conventional and non-conventional armed forces. In modern wars, women have played important roles in intelligence gathering, analysis, communication and transport (Meintjies, 2001:63). In order to fulfil these roles, women have received training in logistical and administrative areas. Logistics requires knowledge of topography and basic engineering skills and communications requires understanding of complex signal operations, including the way radios and telephones (Meintjies, 2001:65). These are all new skills that women acquired during war and can also be useful in the post-war period. The inclusion of women in auxiliary roles such since these roles have also opened up new and transformative experiences for equality.

In Eritrea, for example, men and women in the armed forces were trained and lived in close proximity to one another.

Women have also increasingly participated in wars as armed combatants. Ever since the First and Second World War, many women have become directly employed by armed forces throughout the world. Women's participation in the armed forces occurs on either a voluntary basis or due to force. Addis (1994:3) argues that when given the choice, some women decide to become soldiers with the same freedom and in the same framework of individual rights and liberties, as others would choose to be janitors, nurses or university teachers. There are many reasons why women choose to become soldiers. In some cases, women choose to participate in conflict and carry out acts of violence because they are committed to the political, religious or economic goals of the parties to the conflict. In other instances, women join armed forces to gain access to obtain food, shelter, medicine and to seek revenge (Denov, 2006:4). In some contexts, women may also join armed groups in search of empowerment and emancipation in societies and cultures that enforce rigid and confining gender roles. For example, during the war in Mozambique, women joined the Frente de Libertação Nacional (FRELIMO) because of the appealing rhetoric and propaganda that promised new and emancipating roles for women and young girls (McKay & Mazurana, 2004:107).

There are also increasing cases of women and girls joining the armed forces out of necessity or due to force. Cases have been reported of women joining armed forces after running away from home or because it was the only way for them to survive (Coomaraswamy, 2009:50). In both Columbia and Sri Lanka, for example, girls have joined the army after fleeing from increasing cases of domestic violence in their homes. However, there are also cases where women are forcibly abducted into armed groups. McKay & Marzurana (2004:23) note that abduction occurs when "...girls are kidnapped or seized by fighting forces or groups and forced to serve in them, as confirmed in 27 countries" around the world. Once recruited into armed forces, women fulfil a variety of roles, including spies, frontline fighters, commanders, cooks, cleaners and medics (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:2). In Sierra Leone, for example, many abducted women

served as 'wives' to the RUF commanders and were responsible for distributing weapons, food and loot confiscated from village raids.

The Benefits and Challenges of Life in the Armed Forces:

Women's participation as combatants in armed conflict both challenges gender stereotyping and empowers women. Many women who fight in wars can turn the experience into a successful endeavour. This has often been the case with women fighting in commandos or those who served as high-ranking officials during liberation wars (Utas, 2005:405). With looted wealth, they managed to build up successful business enterprises. One such example is Julia Rambo, who fought for that National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) during the Liberian war, and went on to own three bars in Monrovia and Buchanan. Her ability to sustain a successful business in the post-war era can directly be linked to her participation in the Liberian war. Although this is not the norm, women who are successful in the war effort have also been appointed to positions in the new government and civil society once the conflict has ended. One such example from Liberia is that of Martina Johnson, a notorious general in the NPFL artillery, who was appointed head of security at Robertsfield International Airport following the war.

The experience of participating in war may also give women an added advantage in terms of changed behaviour, as many women gain confidence and hope to improve their status in society following their experience as armed combatants. As they existed as equals with men during war, it is expected that this equality will continue after the war has ended. In Sri Lanka, for example, the induction of women into Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) military ranks has radically transformed the Tamil women's self-image (Manchande, 2001:115). Traditionally, the Tamil woman is auspicious, married, and fecund. However, the LTTE has allowed its female militants freedom of movement and equality of social and political commitments and has consequently challenged the rituals and practices that oppressed Tamil women in a social system characterised by caste, dowry, the seclusion of the unmarried women and sequestration of menstruating women (Machande, 2001:115).

Many women militants in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have gone on to acquire positions of power in territories under LTTE control, for instance in courts run by the LTTE. The LTTE has also recently encouraged its women cadres to form a separate political wing (Manchanda, 2001:115). In addition, LTTE women have also been allowed to ride bicycles and wear jeans, while all other Tamil women had to sport long skirts, saris or half-saris. These new roles and subsequent autonomy have liberated many Tamil women participating in the LTTE and has also set an example for many younger women hoping to enjoy the same freedoms. For feminist, however, women militants are a black hole in the discourse on the possibility of empowerment. This is because in order to achieve the above-mentioned freedoms, women have had to adopt the role of perpetrator of violence. For feminists, inducing women into a fighting force is not a step towards empowerment and equality, but rather signifies the militarisation of civil society (Coomaraswamy in Manchanda, 2001:114). Other feminists, however, feel that women's participation in armed forces challenges the stereotype of female passivity.

It must also be said that becoming an active combatant is not always a positive experience for women. There have been many instances where women and girls have been manipulated or forced to take up military or violent roles against their will, for example as female suicide bombers or child soldiers (UN, 2002:13). Women have also suffered severe cases of hostility and violence in the armed forces. McKay (2004:22) notes that female combatants are almost universally subjected to forced sexual relations, sometimes by many perpetrators in one day. They may also suffer from a lack of shelter, food, medical care, and education while participating in armed forces. During the war in Northern Uganda, for example, large numbers of the women in the liberation armies became ill or disabled and later died. In addition, women in the armed forces are also witnesses to extreme cases of violence. Denov (2006:11) notes,

They were also witnesses to brutal forms of violence against men, women and children, both combatants and civilians, which were clearly intended as public displays of horror. An aura of terror, repeatedly articulated, was a key factor in ensuring cohesion and obedience in the group.

In situations such as these, women are not empowered through their experiences, but rather exploited. Such instances undervalue and marginalise women's contributions to

the war effort and often create situations where women are worse off than they were before the war. As such, women's experience as combatants must be studied on a case by case basis, as their experiences can differ radically even within the same military force.

Single Head of Households and Sole Providers:

For those women who do not join the armed forces, there are many other challenges and opportunities to be experienced during war. Women play a key role in preserving order and normalcy in the midst of the chaos and destruction of war. While the men are off fighting or getting killed, disappearing or taking refuge in other countries, women are left with the responsibility of ensuring their families' livelihoods (Sørensen, 1998:2). In many developing societies, families depend on agricultural production for their income. In addition to the problems like landmines, a lack of farming implements and inaccessibility to markets, women face additional challenges as well. They often lack legal rights to land and other resources, which in the context of women becoming single providers may affect their ability to generate an adequate income from farming alone (Sørensen, 1998:7). For example, in Rwanda and Cambodia, women were disadvantaged by customary inheritance and property laws that did not guarantee them legal access to land. Consequently, they had little control over any income they generated from land cultivation. As an alternative, many women resorted to joining the casual labour force to generate an income. Such opportunities enable women to still employ their skills and to earn an income to support their families. Although this seems like a minimal achievement, for many women such opportunities are the first work opportunities that they have ever experienced.

The burgeoning informal sector is also of particular value to single-providing women during war. Women are often the first to become unemployed or under-employed during war. As a result, women may pursue new work opportunities. According to Sørensen (1998:7), the informal sector, with its petty trade and small-scale business, is a great source of income for women. Although some women have been known to take up activities that they were involved in prior to the war, such as small-scale trading. In other cases, women engage in new, innovative projects. Some women establish businesses on

the basis of local need and demand and others build up intricate trading networks that cut across ethnic and national boundaries (Sørensen, 1998:7). In Somalia, for example, some nomadic women took over men's traditional roles and began frequenting the markets, to sell livestock and milk in order to buy other essential consumer items. Taking advantage of this mobility, Somali women also became involved in livestock trade, and travelled in small groups to other villages to buy sheep and goats for resale.

Furthermore, women have also been able to generate an income during war by undertaking work previously reserved for men. Chingono (in Sørensen, 1998:22) observes,

In some instances, women have ventured into areas that have been the domain of men such as large-scale entrepreneurial activities, commercial farming, trading and smuggling, as well as ownership of small shops.

Women in Uganda, for example, have engaged in male-dominated activities such as beer production as an income-generating activity. They have also participated in cross border trade, another activity previously regarded as exclusively male (UN, 2002:24). In Chad, for example, women utilised the networks formed during their stay in refugee camps to do extensive cross-border trading in Nigerian and the Sudan. Women's capacity to build up and mobilise extensive social networks aided them well in these projects and they proved to be capable entrepreneurs.

Women as Peace Activists:

Finally, the agency of women is also expressed through their involvement in peace processes before, during and after the war. Although predominantly excluded from formal peace negotiations in, many women engage in peace activism at the grassroots level. To name a few, women in Rwanda, Burundi, Cyprus, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Sri Lanka formed grassroots organisations to protest war and advance ideals of peace. Many believe that women are well suited to engaging in peace processes, as they are regarded as natural peacemakers in conflict situations. De Groot (in Pungong & Onubogu, 2005:21) argues,

...in a crisis, men and women, for whatever reason, [appear] to act differently ... women tend to act more peacefully and are prone to seek conciliation. The

presence of a man in a tense situation can be provocative, even if that man has no intention to provoke. On the other hand, the woman tends to calm stressful situations because she is expected to be peaceful.

Many women engage in peace activities and take an active role in mediation and conflict resolution initiatives during war. Not necessarily because the role becomes them naturally, but rather because of the situation that they find themselves in during war. The United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:54), argues that women's interest becoming involved in peace processes often stems from their experiences of armed conflict, whether as victims or as armed participants. Therefore, whether victims or active agents in the conflict, nearly all women have an interest in the peace process.

Many women from all walks of life have been known to ardently partake in informal peace building activities. For most of them, it is a personal choice – a choice that may be motivated by a lack of association or identification with the conflict, or by a personal experience of its socially and economically disruptive consequences and a wish to return to a less stressful, more stable situation (Sørensen, 1998:7). In Guatemala, for example, female members of the National Coordination of Guatemalan Widows (CONAVIGUA) campaigned against the conscription of young men into the army, not only to protect them from being socialised into the army culture, but also because mothers are economically dependent on their sons. In addition, mobilising themselves in the pursuit of peace has also provided women with opportunities to organise themselves as groups, break gender stereotypes and has generated an awareness among women regarding the political dimensions of the conflict and their own political position (Sørensen, 1998: 7). However, the scope of women's involvement in peace processes is too wide to be discussed here and will adequately be addressed in Chapter 5.

Wartime Gains and Losses

From the previous two sections, it is clear that women take on numerous new roles during war. The majority of these new roles were the prerogative of men before the outbreak of war and as such, a reversal of gender roles occurs when women assume these positions. This experience is both liberating and empowering for many women, as it allows for

them to acquire new status, skills and power. In addition, these new roles also challenge norms about gender roles and about the participation of women in decision-making capacities in their households, civil society, and the formal economy. Women therefore stand to make significant gains from the changed gender relations that result from conflict. However, it has also been noted that the gains made are often of a temporary nature and are frequently reversed at the end of the conflict. As observed by Summerfield (1997:3), “Improvements in the status of women have been linked to wartime changes which lessened gender equality; setbacks have been linked to post-war reversals of such changes...”

Social, Political and Economic Gains during War:

Women’s gains during the war period depend on a variety of factors. For one, women’s gains are usually dependent on whether it is expedient for societal gender norms to be replaced or adjusted in an effort to support the war effort. Women factory workers during the First and Second World War are a good example of this, as women were allowed to take on male roles because it aided the war effort. It was thus beneficial for society to allow women to take on men’s roles, as a desperate need arose for women’s labour. However, by taking on these ‘male’ roles, women experienced a sense of liberation as it allowed for certain freedoms that would otherwise have been frowned upon. A second factor influencing women’s wartime gains is the extent to which post-conflict reconstruction necessitates that women remain in the new roles that they occupied during the war. For example, if women come to occupy leadership positions during the war, it is vitally important that they remain in those roles in the post-war period in order to consolidate their wartime gains. Hence, women’s movements campaigning for women to stay in the positions they achieved during the war and not to relinquish these roles to the men upon their return from the battlefield.

Social Gains:

Women have been known to make gains on three levels during wars, namely social, political and economic. For the many women who mobilise themselves and become active agents during the war, many opportunities emerge to improve their social status in the post-war period. Bop (2001:20) uses the example of women who participated in the

liberation wars in Africa. In countries such as Angola and Mozambique, women became involved in the organisations created, and also, in the armed struggles for liberation. Although the majority of women participating or supporting the war played a secondary role, a relatively significant number became fighters and subsequently came to occupy important positions in the military hierarchy (Bop, 2001:20). By virtue of these new positions, women fighters transformed the way they perceived themselves. This contributed to changing women's traditional identity as wives and mothers to that of fighters and liberators of their country. However, acceptance of these new identities, whether and how long it lasts after peace returns, and its place during the process of national reconstruction, present difficult challenges for women and for society to handle in the post-conflict period (Bop, 2001:20).

Political Gains:

Women's mobilisation, as described above, encourages the emergence of citizen consciousness among women and also strengthens their will to participate in political decision-making. Often, women use the skills and expertise they developed during war to gain access to political structures in the post-war period. For example, women involved in peace protests have been known to transform their grassroots organisations into non-governmental organisations (NGO), which are aimed at both establishing peace giving assistance to women affected by the conflict. In countries such as Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Sri-Lanka, where disappearances have generally accompanied armed violence, women have established nation-wide NGOs to urge state authorities to investigate human rights violations as part of the peace process (Sørensen, 1998: 8). Additionally, these organisations also addressed the political sensitive issue of impunity and assist victims with compensation claims. Through activities such as these, women have been able to gain access to political structures and influence decision-making structures in the post-war period.

In another example of women's making political gains due to their own mobilisation, is Guatemalan women exiled in neighbouring Mexico. These women successfully managed to influence the conditions for repatriation after gaining representation in the Guatemalan Permanent Commissions (GPS) through their various NGO activities. From their

positions in the GPS, women demanded the establishment of a truth commission to investigate killings and disappearances. This managed to secure Guatemalan women access to future participation in future political institutions in their country. Women involved in NGOs and other similar organisations therefore have the opportunity continue their work after the conflict ends and thus, also to consolidate their political gains. They are not obliged to go home after the end of the war and leave the political decision-making to the men. Rather, they have a platform from which they can continue their work and even take up new causes as the need arises in the future.

As demonstrated in the case of South Africa, women used their activities during the transition to democracy to consolidate their participation in the post-1994 environment. It started when women from over ninety women's organisations came together to form the Women's National Coalition (WNC) between 1991 and 1992 (Britton, 2005:38). The WNC was actively involved in the negotiations for democracy during the transition period, specifically during the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). To begin with, the WNC's Women's Charter ensured that women's interests would be recognised in the country's new constitution. In addition, the WNC also ensured that women representatives were included on the Negotiating Council of the Multiparty Negotiating Process (MPNP), which was responsible for creating transitional structures like the Independent Electoral Commission, as well as the interim constitution and the bill of rights (Britton, 2005:38). The WNC's efforts were rewarded after South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, with women constituting 15 percent of the National Senate and 24 percent of the National Assembly in the first parliament of the new Government of National Unity (Sørensen, 1998:12).

Economic Gains:

Besides from their social and political achievements, women can also make significant economic gains during war. Contemporary wars, particularly those taking place in Africa, offer countless opportunities to get rich to arms vendors, to the suppliers of troops, to the fighters themselves, and to their leaders (Bop, 2001:24). Although the level of wealth gained by women will be far lower than that of men, they still stand to make significant economic gains during conflict. Martine Galloy (in Bop, 2001:24) notes that

women involved in the 1998 civil war in Congo had many opportunities to improve their relative economic position;

The responsibility of re-provisioning the militia in power with fresh food was handed down to a woman on the select list. This operation, although it was an extension of domestic tasks, gave her access to the network that distributed payments of fees, permitting her to accumulate a real goldmine. In their end, the mother and families of the militiamen profited from the war booty their sons reaped from the systematic pillage in force.

Thus, for those who know how to seize opportunities at hand, there are many opportunities to improve their economic situations. In Niger, following the Tuareg rebellion, women devoted themselves to commercial ventures in the hotel and craft industry (Mahamane in Bop, 2001:25). Simultaneously, the Tuareg women have also committed themselves to restore herds of livestock and are looking for ways to work with sponsors in order to learn new development techniques.

Women have also gained wealth through resorting to illegal activities, such as smuggling contraband arms and precious stones or by brewing alcohol. Some women have also sold illegal drugs for their own consumption or for the needs of the camp they supported in the war. Although lucrative, these opportunities carry a high risk of violence and the possibility of apprehension. In Senegal, for example, women members of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance have been apprehended for selling cannabis to fund the rebellion (Bop, 2001:25). The United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:24), also notes that these illegal activities are often controlled by organised crime elements that are closely integrated with militias and warlords relying on destabilised environments that support illegal pursuits.

Women have thus stepped out of their traditional roles to meet the economic demands of war and have also benefited from their commercial mobilisation. This progression between sex roles has helped many women in sectors previously dominated by men and contributed to mitigating the prejudices preventing women's advancement in the economic and social spheres (Bop, 2001: 25). Although it seems that the gains women achieve with an economic base last longer than political gains, most gains are not sustained after conflicts come to an end. Meintjies et al (2001:9) note that women say

they feel they are different during periods of conflict and that they act differently, but that society does not allow them to live differently in periods of reconstruction. This is because, as Manchanda (2001:121) notes, that a return to peace is customarily perceived as a return to the gender status quo, irrespective of women's agency during the conflict.

Post-War Losses

Many of the gains women make during the war are reversed in the post-war period. Numerous theories have been proposed as to why this is. Some propose that male soldiers crave a 'return to normalcy' once conflicts end and as such, expect circumstances to be the same at home as when they left. Even though women have made gains in their social positions and status during the war, it remains a male dominated society in the post-war environment. As such, men's desire to return to the same circumstances that they enjoyed before the war overrides women's hopes of a new way of life. Meintjies et al. (2001:9) give two reasons as to why women regress in the aftermath of war: First, it seems likely that many women do not consciously conceptualise the changes in their roles and without a conscious translation of these gains; there cannot be an effort to defend women's opportunities and gains in peacetime. Thus, if women do not realise the gains they have made and make an effort to preserve these changes, their gains will be lost. It is therefore necessary for women to transform their sense of themselves during conflict; otherwise they will not be able to defend themselves when men reassert their claims in the aftermath of war.

Second, Meintjies (2001:9) proposes that women's failure to consolidate wartime gains lies in their loss of community with other women. Women are be empowered in their collective strength as a group during war, but once things return to normal and they return to their homes and families, they become isolated and lose their framework for concentrated action. Meintjies et al. (2001:10) mentions the example of refugee camps where women are given an opportunity to work together and learn leadership skills, but notes that this community may be lost and the momentum dissipated once women were repatriated and dispersed. With this loss of agency, women come to lose both the gains they have achieved and in some cases, some of the social standing that they enjoyed prior to the advent of the war.

Loss of Cultural Identity and Bodily Integrity:

Codou Bop (2001:25) notes that women experiences losses on many levels, including a loss of identity, of bodily integrity, of health and then also losses in terms of education, leadership and economics. The losses of identity and of bodily integrity are closely connected: In war, families, clans and groups are broken up and dispersed. Women are consequently separated from their homes, families and communities and as such, lose all points of cultural reference. Such events consequently deprive individuals, particular women, of all their familial, clan and national identity and leave them deprived of their traditional interdependencies. This isolation during war moreover leaves women in a vulnerable position as they are often displaced and left without any protection. Under such circumstances women are faced with threats of violence, particularly gender-based violence. Gang rapes, sexual abuse, mutilation of limbs, forced marriages, forced sexual relationships and pregnancies have become an undeniable consequence of wars (Bop, 2001:26).

Economic Losses:

Wars are also one of the primary causes of economic underdevelopment. According to Bop (2001:28), wars contribute to the unravelling of the economic fabric at the local and national level, the loss of investment capital and human resources, as well as the breaking up of local and national businesses, and unemployment. In most cases, war almost inevitably lead to economic depression as infrastructure is destroyed and industry is brought to a standstill. Kofi Annan (2002:24) notes that women are often the first to become unemployed or under-employed during conflict situations. Women may lose their jobs because their employers are no longer able to pay their salaries or because the state has given priority to hiring men after they return home after war.

In order to survive the economic deprivation caused by war, many women consequently resort to flight, foraging and sub-optimal coping strategies. Due to food insecurity, women and girls skip meals, adopt a less diverse diet and reduce portions in order to protect the nutritional status of other family members, such as able-bodied men or young children (UN, 2002:25). Women also cook less frequently because of fuel shortages of limited food supply and integrate inferior foodstuffs in their and their family's diets. In

addition, women also resort to selling household assets to support their families. In rural areas, this can include the sale of crops, seeds, water, rights, land, farm animals and equipment. The loss of these assets often does more harm than good, as it threatens the livelihoods of the entire family.

Losses in Education and Health:

Beyond the political, economic and social losses that women suffer in the aftermath. They also suffer losses in terms of health, education and access to basic resources. Women, first of all, face serious health risks during conflict. The most common of which concerns physical handicaps and disabilities caused by the explosion of landmines (Bop, 2001:33). Women also face particular risks that stem from their biology. According to the United Nations (2002:18), the physical vulnerability of women and adolescent girls is higher than that of men and adolescent boys due to their sexual and reproductive roles. Particular risks women face include Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/Aids, mutilations, complications from botched abortions, uterine problems and problems having a normal sexual life or giving birth in the future. Women and girls are also more susceptible to malnutrition than men because of inequitable distribution of food within households and at the community level. This may result in stunted growth and development in adolescent girls and contribute to additional health risks for pregnant or lactating mothers, and in some cases result in death (UN, 2002:19).

Women and girls often lose access to education in conflict. Female enrolment in schools drops in times of war because young girls and adolescents alike are forced to assume greater responsibilities to ensure household food security (UN, 2002:23). For example, young women have to leave school to work in agricultural lands, carry out domestic labour and undertake work in the informal sector in order to sustain their families. At the end of the war, many young women find themselves in a precarious position with no formal education or training and little chance of finding work (Bop, 2001:32). Consequently, as household resources decrease following the confusion of the post-war period, adolescent girls are married off at younger and younger ages. Often, too much older men. In Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda the civil war environment has led to a rise in child marriages (UN, 2002:23).

Loss of Political Influence:

Perhaps the most extreme in women's wartime losses concerns women's loss of rights to exercise leadership on the political and social levels, often rights won in the periods of conflict (Bop, 2001:30). Bop (2001:30) says,

In post-war periods, especially in countries where the situation is unclear and neither war nor peace prevails, authorities give concrete expression to any hope of changing relations of power in favour of the socially subordinate.

No concrete explanations exist as to why women have lost the leadership positions they previously held. Bop (2001:31) suggests that women fail to secure their wartime leadership roles because their interests as a group take second place to national interests. She draws on the example of the Maoist concept of principal and secondary contradictions, which argues that 'contradictions within the people,' because they can supposedly be resolved more easily, may be put off to a later date. During the post-war period, authorities mainly emphasise issues relating to the conflict itself and to sharing of power between the different parties. Gender issues are mostly ignored.

Considering the ambivalence of wartime gains and the many losses that occur during war is not surprising that women encounter enormous difficulties as the end of wars and the beginning of the post-war period. Women struggle to consolidate their war time gains, as they are unable to gain access to land and to property or to win representation in decision-making spheres. Thus, despite their participation in the armed struggle and their agency during the war, few women are able to hold on to their changed status in the post-war period. This is particularly reflected in the elections of many post-war countries, as few women are able to gain political representation. For example, fewer than 10 per cent of women in Angola, 18.1 percent in Namibia and 14 per cent in Zimbabwe gained a seat in parliament. Thus, for many women, the initial optimism regarding their future status in society soon give way to serious concerns regarding the long-term results of their efforts and contributions. As Byrne (in Sørensen, 1998:5) observes, "Women have often found that fighting for their country's liberation and achieving more prominent public roles is not a guarantee that a real commitment to gender equality will follow victory".

Chapter Three

Violence against Women in War

The changing nature of warfare in the post-cold war environment has lead to an increase in violence against civilian populations, especially women and girl children. Overall more men than women continue to die as a result of conflict, but women and girl children suffer equally from the numerous unbearable consequences of war (UN, 2002:2). One such consequence is gender-based violence and sexual violence, which is aimed directly at women and young girls. This chapter will continue on from Chapters One and Two by considering how women experience violence differently from men during war, in part due to their female genders. This discussion has been divided into three sections: The first will discuss the changing nature of warfare in the post-Cold War environment and will take into account how these changes have come to pose a threat to the safety of civilians. The second section focuses on gender based and sexual violence and will specifically look at the occurrence of rape during war. The third section examines indirect forms of violence and exploitation suffered by women during war and as such, will examine cases of trafficking in women and girls during conflict situations.

Women and Contemporary Armed Conflict

Since the end of the Cold War, the nature of warfare has changed dramatically. Where previously combat was restricted to military engagements between national armies, the post-cold war environment is characterised by civil wars and regional conflicts that divide communities along racial, ethnic and religious lines (Ward & Marsh, 2006:3). A consequence of the change in the nature of warfare is that civilian populations are victimised on a massive scale: As noted by the United Nation Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:2), during the First World War only 5 per cent of all casualties were civilian, whereas during the 1990s civilians accounted for up to 90 per cent of all casualties (UN, 2002: 2). Civilian women and girl children have been specifically targeted and according to the United Nations (2002) have come to constitute the majority of all victims in contemporary conflict. Violence against women has been particularly

rife and as a result, gender-based and sexual violence has come to be seen as weapons of war in contemporary conflicts.

Intentional Violence against Women:

Anu Pillay (2001:35) says that women in war experience explicit violence, implicit violence, violence in public, institutional violence, economic violence and violence in the home. The violence experienced during war is often an escalation of violence that women experienced prior to the war and is expected to further increase in the aftermath of war. UNIFEM (2008) notes,

Violence against women in wartime is a reflection of violence against women in peacetime, as long as violence against women is pervasive and accepted, stress, small arms proliferation and a culture of violence push violence against women to epidemic proportions, especially when civilians are the main targets of warfare.

Pillay (2001:35) reports that violence during war escalates into the “most atrocious and heinous acts of brutality and torture”. Consequently, mass rapes become gang rapes and mass murders turn into serial killings. In addition, women may experience rape, forced impregnation, forced abortion, human trafficking, sexual slavery and the intentional spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The conditions of armed conflict are thus particularly heinous to women as it puts them at an increased risk of physical and emotional abuse.

The causes of violence against women are complex and multiple. Sideris (2001:142) proposes that acts of violence perpetrated by one individual against another occur in a context specified by inequality in power. She subsequently argues that violence against women is caused by the structural inequality between men and women. United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, (2002:2) agrees, reporting that the specific violence suffered by women and girls in armed conflict is linked to their status in society. As noted in paragraph 135 of the Beijing Platform for Action, “While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex”. Women are therefore particularly at risk during war, not only due to their status as civilians, but also due to their status of women.

Violence as a result of Wartime Gender Roles:

As discussed in Chapter 2, men and women fulfil different tasks during war – most often men go off to fight as armed combatants and women are left to keep the front at home. With the men gone, women are left without security or protection and consequently become prime targets to opposing forces. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) note that, in general, women do not go off to fight in war and therefore remain unarmed and unprotected at a time when traditional forms of moral, community and institutional safeguard disintegrates (in UN, 2002:14). Moreover, families have often incorrectly assumed that elderly women and women with children will be safe from harm and have consequently left them behind while the rest of the family flees. Women are thus left particularly vulnerable during wartime. Without protection they become easy targets for enemy forces, which aim to indirectly attack their military opponents through committing violence against their mothers, wives and daughters. As noted by Ward and Marsh (2006:4), “...women’s bodies are used as an envelope to send messages to the perceived enemy”.

Women are furthermore at particular risk due to the nature of the roles they fulfil during war. In many cases, women are responsible for the care and nurture of their families during war and consequently shoulder the burdens of providing for their dependants in the absence of male breadwinners. While taking care of their own households, tasks such as collecting firewood or water put women at risk of kidnapping, exposure to landmines and sexual abuse by rival factions. Women have also been targeted for their roles as cultural symbols of their national groups. The result of this has often been torture, an occurrence that has been on the increase in situations of armed conflict (UN, 2002:14). Women have been tortured for holding prominent political or community positions, for speaking out against opposing groups and for resisting violence against themselves and their families. Most of all, women have been tortured in an attempt to violate their sense of self, both as a person and as a woman.

Domestic Violence:

Apart from being prime targets to enemy forces, women are also subjugated to increased instances of domestic violence and spousal abuse throughout armed conflict. During the Bougainville crisis in Papua New Guinea, domestic violence became more prevalent and more brutal. Women cited the easy availability of weapons, the violence their husbands or partners experienced as a result of the crisis and a lack of jobs, shelter and basic services (Hakena in Ethchart & Baksh, 2005:27). Usta et al (2008:794) notes an elevation in family violence or an exacerbation of pre-existing patterns of domestic violence during civil wars in Latin America. They attribute this increase in domestic violence to a societal form of psychosocial trauma that seemed to propagate the acceptance of violence as a method of problem solving. Research conducted by the ICRC has also shown that the increase in the availability of small arms during conflict may be used in interpersonal violence (in UN, 2002:15). In the former Yugoslavia, men used weapons procured during war against their wives and children. Armed conflict therefore serves to aggravate the inequalities between men and women and puts women at heightened risk of abuse from their male spouses and family members. Thus, even if women do not participate directly in conflict as combatants, they are still under threat of violence. They may not be wounded or killed in the midst of direct warfare, but they are none the less at risk of become casualties of war.

Women become isolated during war. They become widows, are displaced and are primary targets for physical, emotional and sexual forms of violence. Both state and non-state actors are responsible for severe violations of women's human rights, including killings, abductions, rape, sexual torture, and slavery, as well as denial of access to food and healthcare, all with dramatic consequences (UN, 2004: 16). The increase in instances of domestic violence during war, however, also demonstrates that a lot of the violence against women in war is also conducted by their husbands and other male family members. Domestic violence is acknowledged as a leading cause of women's morbidity and mortality and has a negative influence on their physical and psychological well being. In fact, a study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina suggested that the long-term

consequences of domestic violence be considered when treating war-related trauma (Usta et al, 2008:794).

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Civilian women and girls face different risks and dangers in armed conflict compared to those faced by civilian men and boys. Gender-based violence affects women, men and children, but women and girls are more vulnerable due to their status as the so-called weaker sex. There is a growing awareness of sexual violence and rape as a strategy of warfare, as evidence from recent conflict indicates that members of fighting forces have specifically targeted women, adolescent girls and to a lesser extent, girl children (UN, 2002:15). The forms of torment used against women include torture, rape, mass rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, mutilation and the forced termination of pregnancies. Women's bodies consequently become an instrument of war. As Usta et al. (2008:793) notes, "... women's bodies can become battle grounds where sexual violence becomes a weapon of war to be used to express power and to humiliate, dominate or disrupt..."

The motivation for sexual violence committed during armed conflict varies. According to Ward and Marsh (2006:3) sexual violence can be both random and systematic. Arbitrarily, sexual violence can be a by-product of the social and moral breakdown that occurs during war. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, rape during the war was so indiscriminate that it was referred to as "murderous madness" (Ward & Marsh, 2003:3). In one example, a Congolese mother walked into her house to find a paramilitary raping her 10-month-old baby. Atrocities such as these are moreover not limited to those committed by combatants. Men from the local community may also make use of the chaos of conflict to commit sexual violence against women without any fear of prosecution. In Afghanistan, under the rule of the Mujahideen, rape and sexual assault became such a common occurrence in the streets of the capital city that the Taliban takeover in 1996 was regarded as a welcome reprieve by many women.

When sexual violence is carried out in a systematic fashion, the acts committed become even more brutal. In these instances, sexual violence is carried out by fighting forces for the explicit purpose of destabilising populations and destroying family bonds (Ward & Marsh, 2006:3). Sexual violence is also used to drive communities off lands or to heighten terror during attacks. In instances such as these, sexual violence becomes a public act aimed at maximising humiliation and shame. According to Sideris (2001:147), rape is often perpetrated in public, in the presence of family and compatriots. In East Timor, women were raped in front of their families and in some cases; Timorese men were forced to rape Timorese women. The same happened in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One Congolese man recalls, “I abandoned my house because of the conflict. I met six Arabs in the bush. I wanted to take out my spear and defend my family, but they threatened me with a weapon and I had to stop. The six men raped my daughter, who is 25 years old, in front of me, my wife and young children” (in Ward & Marsh, 2006:4).

Sexual violence can also serve to quell resistance by instilling fear in local communities or in opposing armed groups. In such cases, women’s bodies are used to send a message to the enemy army – a message meant to humiliate and destroy communities. Nordstrom (in Sideris, 2001:147) argues,

Rape, as with all terror-warfare, is not exclusively an attack on the body – it is an attack on the ‘body-politic’. Its goal is not to maim or kill one person but to control and entire socio-political process by crippling it. It is an attack directed equally against personal identity and cultural integrity.

According to the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:16), the raping of women is a means for the aggressor to symbolically and physically humiliate the opposing forces. In Rwanda, the rape and mutilation of women by opposing group was carried out, not only as an attack against women, but also as a means to exercise power over and demoralise the men in the women’s family, clan and ethnic group. In the Shan province of Burma, where the local government has been trying to suppress a local rebellion since the mid-1990s, hundreds of women have been systematically raped (Ward & Marsh, 2001:4). It is thus not only women who are affected by these atrocities, but entire communities.

The Many Faces of Rape in War:

In the context of war, rape is aimed at undermining social stability. This is because, as Sideris argues (2001:147), sexual violence perpetrated on a mass scale threatens the community of family and community. Interviews with Mozambican refugees (in Sideris, 2001:147) who were raped during war in their country made a strong connection between rape and social fragmentation. They argued that when one woman was raped, the whole community suffered. The women pointed out that those present during the rape were also dehumanised - Those drawn into the public degradation of the rape victim by being forced to witness the attack or participate in the assault were shamed and humiliated. It is also a frequent consequence of rape for women to be rejected by her spouse or family after the event. This has been a frequent occurrence since the classical period when Roman husbands were required to divorce a wife that had been raped (Niarchos, 1995: 667). Rape victims are stigmatised. In the case of Mozambique, many women described how men rejected the women who bore the children conceived from wartime rapes (Sideris, 2001:147). In this way, rape resulted in the breakdown of family and community functioning: “The rape of females can in some instances demoralise and destroys enemy communities” (Kennedy-Pipe & Stanley, 2002:68).

In recent years rape has also been used to wilfully transmit the HIV/AIDS virus. The United Nations (2002:20) recognises that use of sexual violence as a strategic and tactical weapon of war contributes to the spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), the most dangerous of which is HIV/AIDS. In Sierra Leone, it is estimated that between 70 and 90 percent of rape survivors had contracted STIs. A study undertaken in Rwanda in 2000 found that of the 1000 rape survivors interviewed, 67 percent were HIV positive (Ward & Marsh, 2006:10). Abducted girls were said to be particularly at risk due to the many episode of sexual violence that accompanies their kidnapping. Moreover, fear of the stigma related to sexual or reproductive health prevents many women and girls from seeking testing for HIV or health care. Health care may also not be freely available; both due the financial cost of the treatment and the looting and destruction of health care facilities during war.

Rape may also be used to forcibly impregnate women and adolescent girls. Particularly in conflicts defined by racial, tribal, and other divisions, rape may be used to advance the goal of ethnic cleansing (Ward & Marsh, 2006:4). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, rape was used as a form of ethnic cleansing. Following the age-old principle of ‘breeding out the enemy,’ armed forces have used forced pregnancies to destroy ethnic groups. In both Bosnia and Rwanda, women and adolescent girls are held against their will and repeatedly raped until they conceived (UN, 2002:16). In Bosnia, Muslim women impregnated by Serbian troops were furthermore held captive until late term to prevent them from aborting the pregnancies. Niarchos (1995: 657) relates how in the former Yugoslavia, women were kept in so-called rape camps. These women’s captors raped them daily with the intention of impregnating them with “Chetnik babies”. In most of these camps, gynaecologists examined women on a regular basis to determine whether they were pregnant. If found to be with child, women would be segregated and then held captive until their seventh month when it was too late to obtain an abortion. On the opposite side of things, armed forces have also targeted the unborn children of their opponents and consequently forcibly aborted women’s pregnancies. One woman from Sudan reported in that in 2004 a fellow kidnapped woman had her stomach slit open, as she was pregnant with the enemy’s child (Ward & Marsh, 2002: 5).

Sexual Slavery:

Sexual slavery is another form of gender-based violence that is experienced by women and girls during armed conflict. In such instances, women have been abducted and then forced into sexual and domestic labour. According to one soldier from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the soldiers did not get paid and therefore couldn’t afford prostitutes. They thus had to force women to comply with their wishes (Ward & Marsh, 2006:5). Another example of this is Rwanda’s “ceiling women” where women were kept in the space between the rafters and the roof while their captors were away and then brought down for sexual and domestic labour up their captor’s return (UN, 2002:170). In the former Yugoslavia, women were kept in brothels to entertain soldiers (Niarchos, 1995: 657). In these instances, women were held in private houses for up to six months at a time. They were raped every 15 days when the soldiers returned from the battlefield.

In many of the liberation wars in Africa, civilian women were abducted and given as 'wives' to reward soldiers. One young woman recalls (in Ward & Marsh, 2006:6), "I was always with them at night as their wife". In Sierra Leone, many of the soldiers had polygamous "marriages" with abducted women who had been forced to "marry" them (Human Rights Watch, 2003:43). These rebels moreover changed wives frequently when they tired of the women or when their "wives" were too ill to perform their tasks, a consequence of the brutality that they were exposed to. In addition to providing sexual services, "wives" were also made to carry out forced labour during their captivity, including cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, and carrying heavy loads of ammunition and looted items (Human Rights Watch, 2003:43). These women were thus enslaved in more sense than one.

Consequences of Sexual Violence:

Sexual violence against women and girls during war can have immeasurable short and long term consequences. Psychologically, many rape survivors suffer from self-blame. One explanation put forward for the tendency of rape-victims to blame themselves is that women are socialised into the victim role and therefore accept responsibility for negative life events (Meyer and Taylor in Sideris, 2001:149). Women also suffer from depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the violence. Physically, many victims have suffered from traumatic fistula, consisting of tissue tears in the vagina, bladder and rectum. As a result of the violent gang rapes that take place in the DRC, Congolese doctors are now classifying vaginal destruction as a crime of combat (Ward & Marsh, 2006:10). Additional long-term medical complications include uterine prolapse and other injuries to the reproductive system such as infertility, or complication associated with miscarriages and self-induced abortions.

Response to Sexual Violence in War:

The political response to the high number of wartime rape cases has been changing over the last few decades. Traditionally, as Niarchos (1995: 651) points out, rape has been an

expected occurrence during war - Along with plunder, it has been seen as one of the “unfortunate by-products of war”. As such, political and military leaders have regarded sexual violence during war as somewhat inevitable. Prosecutions of wartime rape have been largely unsuccessful and is often either completely overlooked or folded into a larger category of crimes against civilians (Niarchos, 1995:651). This situation has systematically been changing, particularly after the war in the former Yugoslavia. The human rights violations during the previously mentioned conflict were of such a horrifying nature that the International Tribunal for the Prosecutions of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia Since 1991 was established to investigate in 1993. Unlike the International Military Tribunals set up in Nuremberg and the Far East, the Yugoslavia Tribunal included in its founding statute an explicit reference to wartime rape.

The number of rapes that occurred during the armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia is disputed. Some predict numbers that vary between 20 000 to 50 000, while others refuse to speculate (Niarchos, 1995:656). The Tribunal in Yugoslavia was the first to directly approach the subject of rape and has hopefully set a precedent for future cases of a similar nature. The tribunal successfully prosecuted various forms of gender based violence as instruments of genocide, crimes against humanity, means of torture, forms of prosecution, and enslavement and crimes of war (Askin, 1999:288).

Trafficking in Women and Girls

Between 1995 and 2000, human trafficking worldwide increased by up to 50% (UNIFEM, 2008). The International Organisation for Migration estimates that up to 2 million women and children are trafficked across international borders annually (UN, 2002:17). There is increasing evidence that a significant amount of this activity is associated with armed conflict. As noted by UNIFEM (2008),

Armed conflict increases the risk of women and girls being trafficked across international borders to be used in forced labour schemes that often include sexual labour and/or forced prostitution.

According to UNIFEM (2008), a country is likely to become a source of trafficking victims after sudden political change, economic collapse, civil unrest, internal armed conflict or natural disaster. Because of the economic damage caused by such occurrences, women and children become one of a region's few marketable resources and are consequently exploited by organised crime syndicates (Rathgeber, 2003:153).

War and Human Trafficking:

The increase in trafficking in human beings during armed can be attributed to the collapse of societal structures that follow the breakout of armed conflict. Trafficking is enabled and aggravated by both internal and external factors. Internally, women are left in very vulnerable positions during war. Pre-war systems of gender inequality, war economies, criminal syndicates, and the destruction of destabilisation of livelihoods all contribute to place women at risk of trafficking (UN, 2002:17). War creates conditions wherein women find it difficult to provide not only for their families, but also for themselves (UNIFEM, 2008). Many women therefore revert to illegal means whereby they seek to establish a better way of life for themselves. In some cases, women fall into the hands of traffickers due to their own choices. Numerous women have sought out the help of traffickers so that they can leave their own conflict-ridden countries and find a better life in economic developed countries. However, once women are in the hands of traffickers, they are exploited and become victims of extreme cases of violence.

Externally, trafficking is fostered by transition, instability, poverty, disintegrating social networks and disintegrating law and order in sending, transit and receiving countries (UN, 2002:17). Corruption greatly contributes to trafficking. Fraudulent police services and border controls become very susceptible to bribery during war and consequently turn a blind eye to human trafficking. This inefficiency and corruptness of law enforcement and military personnel in some countries, allows traffickers to function since they do not fear arrest, prosecution or conviction (UN, 2002:17). For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, traffickers take advantage of the country's open borders, where only thirty-nine out of four hundred and ninety two crossing points are controlled by the country's

border control (Rathgeber, 2002:154). Criminal networks involved in crimes like the arms or drugs trade, therefore, take advantage of armed conflicts to expand their business to include trafficking in humans. In Columbia, for example, the ongoing civil strife, lack of governmental control over the country, and corrupt law enforcement officials has given rise to one of the western hemisphere's most active trafficking networks (Ward & Marsh, 2006:6). It is estimated that around 40 000 Latin American women and girls are trafficked annually to work in brothels, factories and as domestic workers.

The Methods of Human Traffickers:

Traffickers recruit their victims through violence, kidnapping and deception. They then control their victims through the use of violence or the threat of use of violence, which is the most common form of coercion used against women in trafficking situations. According to the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women (UNIFEM, 2008),

...rape and other forms of sexual violence are often used to break women physically, mentally and emotionally and to obtain their enforced compliance in situations of forced labour and slavery-like practices.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are used as weapons against migrant women irrespective of the nature of the work they are about to perform. Variations of sexual violence, however, are the most prevalent form of violence used. Victims of trafficking experience severe physical and psychological trauma as the result of the violence, rape, threats, addiction and the other violent means that traffickers use to control their victims. Trafficked women and girls are also at risk of reproductive health problems due to STIs, including HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

In some of the cases of international trafficking, women and girls are sold into the camps of rebels and soldiers in neighbouring countries. Women and girls may be lured by offers of protection and access to safety zones, only to find out that they have been deceived later. In such instances, women and girls are trafficked to provide sexual and labour services to combatants (UN, 2002:17). In Sierra Leone, trafficked women were used as sexual slaves for the camp officers and forced to grow food, cook and provide other services. Military forces therefore create a direct demand for that not only fuels the

trafficking of women, but they also publicly sanction the certain brothels that house trafficked women. In other cases, women are deliberately abducted to work for militias in economic activities such as diamond and gem mining, which support the conflict (UN, 2002:17). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia, women and children were abducted to work for the many militias that patrol the diamond fields, as well as to service the commanders.

Trafficking in Refugee Camps:

Refugee and internally displaced women, especially those in camp situations, are also at particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation (UNIFEM, 2008). As noted by the United Nations (2002:26),

Both refugee and internally displaced women and girls may become victims of hostage-taking for purposes of enslavement and trafficking into slavery, coerced or enforced prostitution, abduction and forced military recruitment for participation in hostilities or support of combatants.

Women and young girls have often fallen victim to sexual exploitation after being separated from their families during flight and therefore have no one to protect them against exploitation of this nature. Female refugees who are not integrated into their host communities are particularly vulnerable to trafficking rings. In addition, children who are orphaned during the conflict have also been preyed on by traffickers and due to the confusion caused by conflict, are taken without anyone paying much attention. Orphaned young girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and exploitation, including trafficking into forced prostitution. With no one there to watch and pay attention, the symbolic haven of safety of refugee camps present become an extension of the violence experienced on the battlefield.

To further worsen the situation, the international presence at refugee camps, which usually follows armed conflict, has been connected with an increasing demand for prostitution and trafficking of women and girls (UN, 2002:17). In post-conflict situations, women and girls have been trafficked into areas under the mandate of international peacekeeping operations. International peacekeeping personnel, as well as

the personnel of private contractors that supply or supplement the staff of peacekeeping operations who have purchased trafficked women and children for sex and domestic labour, have permitted trafficking to flourish and have even themselves participated in trafficking operations (UNIFEM, 2008). An investigation into refugee camps in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone also revealed the sexual exploitation of women, girls and boys by humanitarian workers and peacekeepers in exchange for basic provisions (UN, 2002:17).

Women are victims of both random and systematic violence during war. The violence against women can take on many forms, including domestic violence, rape and human trafficking. In all these instances, however, women are marginalised and exploited. Moreover, the violence against women does not end once the conflict comes to an end, but in most cases continues into the aftermath. It has even been reported that violence against women increase in the aftermath of war. In addition, violence against women during war is not restricted to women within the warring country's borders. Refugee women are also particularly at risk. The following chapter will discuss women's experience as refugees and internally displaced persons and will focus on the challenges women face once they flee their homes.

Chapter Four

Women Refugees and Internally Displaced persons

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in 2008 that there are approximately 43 million refugees, asylum-seekers, and others of concern to the Organisation around the world (UNHCR, 2008: 2). Women and girls are estimated to constitute up to 49 percent of this amount, which implies that 47 percent of refugees and asylum seekers and half of all Internally Displaced Persons and returning refugees are women. This chapter will follow on from Chapter Three, by once again discussing how women experience an aspect of war differently to men due to their gender. The primary focus will be women's experiences as refugees and once again, the discussion will be facilitated across three sections: The first of which considers the process of flight and discusses the reasons why women are forced to flee their homes during war and what dangers they face as women during the flight process. The second section concerns women's experiences during displacement, specifically while living in refugee and resettlement camps. Both women's positive and negative experiences in camps will be discussed. The third section discusses the process of returning home and will focus on women's challenge to reintegrate themselves into their home societies.

Fleeing from War

During armed conflict, social structures are disrupted and a general environment of instability and violence reigns. As previously mentioned, women face additional risks of being subjugated to sexual and gender based violence during this period. These instances of violence include abuse of persons in power; sexual bartering of women sexual assault; rape; abductions by parties to the conflict; mass rape and forced pregnancy. Kofi Annan (2002:25), Secretary General of the United Nations, says:

Flight is often triggered by severe sex discrimination and gender-based persecution which may combine with discrimination and abuse on other grounds, such as ethnicity, religion and class.

Many women consequently choose to flee their homes out of fear for their lives and/or in the hope of achieving some level of security elsewhere. Some women choose to flee their homes, merely to relocate to other parts of their countries - often in urban areas or regions where displacement camps have been set up. In other cases, women flee their countries and choose to relocate to refugee camps in neighbouring states or seek asylum in developed countries.

The Risks associated with Flight:

Each phase of displacement, including the initial displacement, flight, protection and assistance in refugee and displaced persons camps, resettlement and reintegration has different implications for female and male refugees and IDPs. Refugee, returnee and internally displaced women and girls are more likely to suffer discrimination and human rights abuses throughout their flight, settlement and return than their male counterparts (UN, 2002: 26). During flight, women and girls are at high risk for sexual violence as many of them have to flee without the added safeguard of male family members or community members (Ward & Marsh, 2006:6). In addition, family and community members travelling together are at risk of being dispersed during flight, leaving children separated from the rest of their family members and women and girls as solely responsible for protecting and maintaining their households (UNHCR, 2003:20).

Without money or other resources, women and girls may be forced into providing sexual services for men and adolescent boys in exchange for safe passage for themselves and their family or to obtain necessary documentation or other necessary assistance. Some women may first head towards urban settings, possibly in search for the relative security of a densely populated area or in the hope of finding employment (Ward & Marsh, 2006:7). However, both refugees and internally displaced women in urban areas are at a high risk of exploitation by local residents. Especially since these women are less likely to be targeted for protection and assistance by governments and humanitarian agencies than those in camps. Refugees and internally displaced persons may also be subjected to cultural biases and discrimination in urban areas, especially where there is a marked difference in the cultures of the refugee and the host community (UN, 2002:29). For

example, Afghan refugee women living in Peshawar, Pakistan described being forced to exchange sex for rent-free housing. Unaccompanied young girls are particularly at risk and most vulnerable to sexual exploitation in big cities. A 1999 survey in of over 2 000 prostitutes in Sierra Leone found that 37 percent were younger than 15 and of those, the majority had been displaced by conflict and was unaccompanied by family (Ward & Marsh, 2006:7).

In addition, women in flight might also be at risk of being targeted by human traffickers and slave traders (UNHCR, 2003:20). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the absence of border control and normal policing make conflict-affected countries prime route for traffickers. In Columbia, for example, the ongoing internal conflict has given rise to one of the Western Hemisphere's most active trafficking networks. Colombia's Department of Security estimates that between 35 000 and 50 000 women and girls were trafficked in 2000 to countries in Asia and Western Europe, as well as the United States of America (Ward & Marsh, 2006:7). Similarly, the beginning of the war in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 created prime conditions for organised crime syndicates to move into the region. A highly organised black market was subsequently created, which controlled everything from weapons to basic food supplies (Rathgeber, 2002:153). Human trafficking both into and out of Bosnia and Herzegovina for sexual purposes have become a highly profitable business for organised crime syndicates, earning syndicates up to 25 million dollars a year (Rathgeber, 2003:153).

Refugee and IDP Camps:

For the women refugees and internally displaced persons that find shelter in camps, there may be a temporary reprieve from the wartime violence. Many women find refuge in these camps and make use of training and educational facilities to uplift themselves and improve their skills. Many refugee camps have schools for children, which in addition also provide educational opportunities for women. However, many women experience the exact opposite. Violence and discrimination is rife in refugee and IDP camps, and women experience sexual attacks, coercion, extortion, sexual abuse, domestic violence,

forced prostitution and the resumption of harmful tradition practices such as female genital mutilation (UNHCR, 2003:20).

Violence in Refugee and IDP Camps:

Violence and human rights violations in refugee and IDP Camps are widespread and can be ascribed to a variety of causal factors. First, the violations that occur in both refugee and IDP camps can be ascribed to the weakening of existing community and family protection mechanisms (UN, 2002:26). Second, increased militarisation and the presence of both civilians and combatants in the camps heighten insecurity for all refugees and IDPs. Third, conditions within camps also put women at risk: Poorly lit camps or camps that lack adequate security, also place women and girls at increased risk of attack by men both inside and outside the camps. Finally, women's responsibilities inside the camps also put them at risk of injury outside the camps. A study conducted in Dadaab, Kenya, found that more than 90% of reported rapes among refugee and internally displaced women occurred under the above mentioned circumstances (in Ward & Marsh, 2006:7).

Violence because of Responsibilities inside Camps:

Humanitarian aid workers have consistently argued that women who venture outside of the camp to gather firewood or water are in considerable danger (Ward & Marsh, 2006:7). To collect these resources, women often have to cross mine fields or walk near military camps, which subjects them to risk of injury from landmines, crossfire and sexual attacks. According to reports from camps in northern Uganda, women and girls have to spend hours collecting water and other resources unattainable in camps, which puts them at risk of abduction or sexual assault (UN, 2002:26). Similarly, in Chad, Sudanese refugee women and children walk hours, sometimes days, collecting wood for fuel and construction purposes. Due to wood being a scarce resource in the Chad, many of the Sudanese women have been attacked by Chadian men, who are angry with the refugees for collecting resources that they consider theirs (Williams, 2005:6). Duane Deng, a Sudanese refugee, recalls: "We were in a group of women when some men came and beat us. They hit and whipped us and stole our axe and tools" (in Williams, 2005:6).

Violence due to Poorly Structured Camps:

Women are also under threat of violence and rape inside the camps, especially when the camps are poorly planned or administered. As with firewood collection, advocates and humanitarians have spoken out about the relationship between ill-considered camp design and violence against women (Ward & Marsh, 2006:8). Due to inadequate lighting and inadequate security, refugee and IDP women are subjected to physical and sexual attacks, rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment, increased spousal battering and marital rape (UN, 2002:26). A risk assessment carried out in seven IDP camps in Montserrado County in Liberia during 2004 concluded that overcrowded conditions, insufficient lighting at night, the close proximity of male and female latrines and bathing facilities, and poor or unequal access to resources all increase the likelihood of sexual violence against women and girls (Ward & Marsh, 2006:8).

In the case of rape in refugee and IDP camps, many women and girls become pregnant. In Liberia, among the more than 1 million returning internally displaced women and girls were struggling with the consequences of rape and unwanted pregnancies. In many of these instances, women who fall pregnant due to rape seek unsafe abortions or are forced to abort, as occurred in the IDP camps in Cambodia (UN, 2002:28). For those who do give birth, they may do so in unsafe and unhygienic conditions, with first-time mothers being at a heightened risk of health complications. According to the United Nations (2002:28), the involvement of women and adolescent girls in the planning and management of camp life is necessary to meet the priorities and needs of women and girls, as well as to ensure effective camp management. It is argued, that the participation of women in decisions regarding the organisation of camps, the layout of shelters and facilities, and the distribution of supplies can play a big role in reducing the risks women and girls face in camp situations.

Rape in and outside Refugee and IDP Camps:

Occurrences of rape are particularly prevalent in refugee camps. Olsen and Scharffscher (2004:337) note, “Women and girls who flee from armed conflict often run straight into a

new peril: increased exposure to rape and other forms of gender based violence”.

Women in refugee camps are at risk of rape both inside and outside the camps, by men both known and unknown to them. In some cases, refugee women have been raped by men of their host communities. Cases have been reported of marital rape and rape by family member in refugee camps, as well as by unfamiliar refugee men housed within camps. In addition, there have also been reports of relief workers demanding sexual ‘favours’ in exchange for food and other material assistance in West Africa (Olsen and Scharffscher, 2004:337).

In Guinea, Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees were raped by Guinean men in 2000. In this instance, the Guinean government was accused of inciting attacks against refugees in the country: President Lansana Conté made a public plea on radio and television to protect the country from rebel attacks from Sierra Leone and Liberia. Consequently, refugees in the capitol city, Conakry, were attacked and raped by both police and civilians in response to Conté’s address. In one account, 19-year old woman told Human Rights Watch (2000) that three armed soldiers in camouflage and crowd of civilians broke into her house. She was raped by one of the soldiers and one of the civilian men, who then proceeded to loot her belonging. Similarly, Burundi refugees were subjected to violence and discrimination in camps in Tanzania. One Burundian woman recalls being raped by Tanzanian men while living in the Mtendeli refugee camp. She said that she had been on her way to another refugee camp to visit her uncle, when she was raped by two men who spoke Kiha, a local Tanzanian language (Human Rights Watch, 2000).

Domestic Violence in Camps Settings:

It has been confirmed that, apart from the army, the social institution with the highest rate of violence during war, is the family – “it is the place where you are most likely to be killed, physically assaulted, hit, beat up, slapped or spanked” (Ćopić, 2004:47).

Domestic violence is consequently one of the gravest forms of victimisation during war and is prevalent in refugee and IDP camps. According to UNIFEM (2008), domestic violence is shown to increase during war and in the post-war period. The increased cases of violence are predominantly ascribed to wartime trauma and the influence of a militaristic culture of violence, which strains domestic relations. A study carried out

amongst Palestinian refugees living in Jordanian refugee camps found that 42.5 percent of the 395 women interviewed had been victims of domestic violence during their time in the camps (Khawaja et al., 2007:214)

Domestic violence is often exaggerated in camp settings due to the structuring of the camps, especially where men are given prevalence over women and as a result, women are left dependent on their male family members. In Nepal, for example, the system of refugee registration discriminates against women by distributing rations through male heads of households (Human Rights Watch, 2003). This policy denies women equal and independent access to food, shelter and supplies, and imposes particular hardships on women trying to escape abusive relationships. Either women must stay in violent relationships, leave their relationships (and thus relinquish their full share of aid packages), or marry another man, in which case she legally loses custody of her kids. In one reported case, a Bhutanese refugee living in Nepal, told Human Rights Watch (2003):

Sometimes I was beaten so badly I bled. My husband took a second wife. I didn't agree. He said, 'If you don't allow me to take a second wife, then the ration card is in my name and I'll take everything.' I asked my husband for the health and ration card and they don't give it to me. I have not gotten approval for a second ration card.

Women in situations such as these are left in a particularly vulnerable position, as they are in fact, forced to remain in abusive relationships.

Health and Related Problems in Refugee and IDP Camps:

Ensuring security of livelihoods, access to economic activities and training in survival, health issues, leadership and conflict resolution is important for the ability of refugee and IDP women and girls to cope under difficult circumstances and to ensure their sense of dignity and self-esteem (UN, 2002:28). This is especially true for health issues relating to sexual and reproductive health. At times, there is inadequate or non-existent provision for maintaining hygiene during menstruation. In many instances men and women have to share latrines and women do not have appropriate places to dispose of feminine hygiene materials. This lack of proper resources has resulted in adolescent girls not attending

school and women missing the distribution of assistance. Without secure livelihood opportunities, women may also resort to prostitution. As noted by Kofi Annan (2002:27),

When humanitarian assistance is not based on consultation with women and does not take their needs into account, women and girls may be left with few options and forced to turn to prostitution in exchange for goods and services.

In Colombia, for example, large numbers of internally displaced women and adolescent girls reported that they had no alternative but prostitution to support themselves and their families.

Life after Refugee and IDP Camps:

Women face many further challenges once they leave refugee and IDP camps upon the end of the war in their countries. For most of them, they are given a choice: Either they can return to their homes and try to rebuild their lives prior to the war or they can seek an alternative life abroad. Many families seek asylum in developed countries during the war in their own. Many others only travel abroad years later, especially in cases where they cannot face the prospect of returning to their previous homes. Each choice comes with its own set of challenges and once again, affects men and women differently.

Seeking Refuge Abroad:

For those who seek refuge abroad, a whole new set of challenges and difficulties await them in their host countries. As noted by the United Nations (2008:27),

During the determination of refugee status and other asylum procedures that those seeking refuge encounter upon arrival, lack of knowledge about the effect of trauma and the cultural barriers to openly discuss traumatic experiences, particularly of sexual violence can result in discriminatory treatment.

Many refugees find it difficult to talk about their wartime experiences, especially due to logistical factors such as language barriers. There might also be a lack of understanding or inability to help on the side of the host nation. Domestic laws and policies on immigration do not always address the differential impact of armed conflict on women and girls and consequently may force them to return to their countries, despite the fact that they risk further violence and discrimination.

To avoid being returned to their home countries, women and girls may be forced to continue in abusive marriages in order to avoid the withdrawal of their visas and the prospect of forced return to countries in conflict (UN, 2002:27). They may even be forced into entering marriages in the host country to avoid being sent back to their home countries. Other central issues are the issuance of identity cards. Similar to the ration cards in refugee camps discussed above, women and children are not always granted their own cards and instead, the male “head of household” retains all cards. This ensures that women and children are kept in submissive positions without having the freedom to make their own choices. In instances such as these, the circumstances referred to as “refuge”, “asylum” or “safe have”, the combination of generalised insecurity in uprooted communities and gender-blind programming can combine to create threatening experiences for those most at risk, namely women, adolescents and children.

There are, however, also many cases of successful resettlement abroad, where women fare much better than their male counterparts. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina families resettling in the United States of America and Austria, Bosnian women adapted more quickly than their male counterparts to their host environments in Vienna and New York City (Franz, 2003:86). In both cases, women were seen to adapt far quicker and easier to their host environments because of a general non-selectiveness of their parts. Unlike their male counterparts, Bosnian women were relatively non-selective and willing to take on any available job in their host environments. The men, on the other hand, did not adapt so quickly due to restrictions in the labour market and their loss of status in society. Whereas the women’s downward mobility did not affect their self-understanding, the loss of status in their new society’s affected Bosnian men’s sense of self (Franz, 2003:86).

Returning Home:

For a lot of refugees, there is only one option once they leave the refugee or IDP camps – they want to return to their home countries. Some travel home in optimism and hope to be reunited with their families and friends upon their return. Others, however, fear the unknown circumstances that await them upon their return. In these cases, people’s

uncertainty is often increased due to the memory of the violence and losses they experienced during the war. Many Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and Iran after the American invasion in 2001, for example, feared being repatriated to their homeland. In these instances, Afghan refugees feared ethnically motivated attacks, lawlessness, and fighting between rival warlords in their home country and did not want to return out of fear for their safety (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Many return home to find their home environments hostile to their return, with others having occupied their homes and lands (UN, 2002:121). This climate of suspicion makes it very difficult for returnees to settle back in to their home environments and rebuild their lives and lands. In certain cases, it has been believed that those who left were granted special privileges or are returning with wealth. In Chad, for example, women returnees were charged higher prices in the markets due to a belief that they came home with increased economic status. The behaviours and skills that women acquired while displaced may be viewed as threatening and result in public criticism, as occurred in post-conflict Guatemala. Returning home is thus fraught with difficulty and can have devastating consequences for women. Mechanisms are necessary to ensure that women and girls do not have trouble accessing food, shelter and health care upon their return home.

The process of flight and displacement is fraught with difficulties and danger in every step of the process. Initial flight may be just as dangerous as eventual resettlement. Displacement can be a positive experience for many women, who make use of the opportunity to gain new skills, while many others are faced with violence, exploitation and abuse. Refugee and IDP camps can be very dangerous environments and need to be organised adequately. In addition, measures should be in place to both protect women and grant them equal rights to men.

Chapter Five

Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Decision Making Procedures

As explained in Chapter One, women are seldom as active in the public sphere as their male counterparts. Yet, women in war have found ways to contribute both individually and collectively to decision-making processes – before, during and after a conflict. Their contributions are most often confined to informal peace building processes and as such, are often completely overlooked as their involvement tends to fall outside formal negotiations. This chapter will review women's agency in post-conflict decision-making processes and as such, will examine their participation, levels of involvement and the nature of their contribution to these processes. This review will be facilitated across four sections: Similar to Chapter One, the first section discusses women's traditional exclusion from peace negotiations, and then examines the arguments put forward for women's equal inclusion in peace building processes. The second section will review women's involvement in informal peace processes and building on Chapters Two and Three, focuses on women's ability to mobilise and transform themselves in the pursuit of a common goal. The third section considers women's labours to become involved in formal peace processes, with attention being given to the innovative ways in which women have lobbied for their inclusion into formal decision-making procedures. The final section discusses cases where women have been included in formal decision-making processes and considers whether they have been able to use their participation to benefit themselves and other women.

The Case for Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations

The peace table is also not a singular event. Instead, such processes span the entire course of negotiations, often beginning in the midst of war and continuing throughout the transitional phase (UNIFEM, 2009). It is, moreover, a multi-faceted event that addresses all the aspects of peace making and provides a platform for negotiating agreements on new legislation, structures of government and social institutions (Anderlini, 2000:5). The

wide spectrum of issues covered under the agenda of post-war peace negotiation can include power sharing agreements; economic reconstruction; demobilisation and reintegration of soldiers; legislation on human rights; access to land, education and health; that status of displaced people; and the empowerment of civil society. These are not only vitally important issues in the post-war sphere that could have long-term effects on the lives of both men and women, but are also unique opportunities to transform institutions, structures and relationships within society.

Women's Exclusion from Peace Processes:

Due to the important nature of the matters discussed during post-war negotiations, it is inconceivable that in most cases only men are allowed to participate in post-conflict peace negotiations. This male dominance has, furthermore, been predominantly the case throughout the past two decades. To name but a few examples: At the Dayton Peace talks that ended the Bosnian conflict in 1995, there were no Bosnian women present in the negotiating delegations. This was despite the wide-spread suffering of women due to mass occurrences gender based violence, such as rape, during the conflict and the prevalence of women in Yugoslav politics prior to the war. In Tajikistan, there was only one woman present in the twenty-six person National Reconciliation Commission, although the war had left approximately 25,000 widows to manage the upbringing their families as sole breadwinners. At the first Arusha peace talks in Burundi, only two of the 126 delegates were women. Also, in East Timor, the consultative group of the National Council of Timorese Resistance only included two women representatives out of a total of 15.

Women's exclusion from peace negotiations is thus not an exaggeration, but a proven fact. As with most political activities, formal peace negotiations are seen as an exclusively male domain. From Dayton to Rambouillet, Arusha to Colombia, it is predominantly the male leaders of the fighting parties who are negotiating an end to war and laying the foundations for peace (Anderlini, 2000:5). Turshen (2001:88) argues,

In most cases negotiators excluded women from high-level parleys, which society considers male domains and which employ discourses and practices that are

closer to men's realities than to women's. Women also lack direct influence in identifying the priorities for reconstruction that are usually part of the peace agreement.

The justification given for women's exclusion is often that the peace table must bring together those who have taken up arms, as it is up to these parties to bring an end to the conflict. While this may ring true for negotiations to secure an end to armed conflict, it cannot be sustained for the discussions that build the framework for a new society. The process for reconstructing a society emerging from war should require the equal participation of both men and women. By barring women access to these processes, it can be argued that half of a population is deprived of access to political processes and it also denies all the people the benefit of having a female perspective in political decision making.

Arguments for Women's Inclusion:

As mentioned above, one of the primary reasons put forward for women's exclusion is that negotiations are intended for the leaders of the fighting parties and as such, women are therefore not necessary participants. Nakaya (2003:459), however, proposes two arguments for women's participation in post-conflict peace negotiations. First, women's participation is conceived as an issue of equitable representation, as legitimate conflict resolution requires an inclusive and participatory process. In addition, the equal participation of men and women can also be regarded as a reform process in which decision-making power is transferred to every citizen on the basis of egalitarianism. Second, it is frequently argued that women bring a gender perspective to the substance of negotiations: "Women's representation at the negotiating table is the sine qua non of gender equality and inclusion". According to Swanee Hunt (in Nakaya, 2002:460), "Common sense dictate that women should be central to peacemaking, where they can bring their experience in conflict resolution to bear". Women are thus expected to use negotiation processes to articulate and negotiate terms for women and gender equality based on their experiences as both victims and active agents during war.

Anderlini (2000:6) argues, furthermore, that women with an understanding of social justice and of the ways that gender inequality hinders human development can make peace negotiations more constructive, more inclusive and more sustainable. UNIFEM (2009) notes,

An important way to guarantee that women's voices and perspectives are heard at the negotiating table is to give them their deserved place at that table. Furthermore, the exclusion of women can have damaging effects on the lasting sustainability of an agreement because not all voices are heard.

Women participation is therefore central to the negotiations being successful and sustainable in the long term. Their presence, as the Kofi Annan (2000:53) argues, not only allows for the inclusion of a gender perspective in both formal and informal peace processes, but is also crucial for the establishment of sustainable peace. The absence of women from peace negotiations may very well result in setbacks to the development of society at large and also undermines democracy. Without women's equal participation, political structures, economic institutions and security sectors will not contain a gender dimension and will also be void of women's post-war concerns.

Women's participation in peace-building processes furthermore provides women with new opportunities to mobilise themselves and gain skills that can be used to the benefit of both themselves and their communities in the post-war period. In situations of war, as discussed in Chapter 2, women have assumed new roles as peace activists in the process of surviving war and holding their communities together. Their experience gained through these roles instil women with a deeper understanding of the social, economic and gender inequalities they face in society and women can make use of the negotiating processes to address these social disparities (Anderlini, 2000:7). For example, within the context of defining the economic and social reconstruction agenda, women can effectively articulate and redress these fiscal disparities between men and women and emphasise the need to redress these inequalities in the post-war period. Participation at the peace table therefore offers women the opportunity to make economic gains, in addition to furthering political gains on a wide range of issues related to advancement of women's rights and gender equality (Anderlini, 2000:7). These may include economic security, social development and political participation. In this sense, the peace table

becomes a platform for women to participate in transforming institutions and structures, and opening the door to greater social justice for women.

Women consequently have a strong justification for claiming the right to equal participation at the negotiating table. Their presence not only signifies an inclusive and participator process, but also increases the probability that the outcomes of the peace process will be of a sustainable nature. In addition, women's participation also gives women the opportunity to bring the concerns and opinions of women to the negotiating table and allows for women to use the experience and knowledge they gained during the war to the advantage of their communities. However, due to the many obstacles they face in their efforts to participate in formal peace negotiations, women are often confined to the grassroots level. Through these grassroots activities, women take the lead in promoting visions of peace and social justice through their community based groups and in many cases, it has been through their prior mobilisation at the grassroots level that have women have gained access to the arena of formal political decision-making.

Informal Peace Processes: Women's Peace Efforts at the Grassroots level

Women are often committed to peace building activities throughout war. Their participation in this regard is seen by some as an extension of their traditional gender roles as 'peace makers,' while others see their participation as another example of women's agency during war (Strickland & Duvvury, 2003:1). Women have been particularly involved in peace building processes at the community level, often because they are excluded from the formal peace processes. UNIFEM (2009) observes, "Women often organize themselves at the grassroots level in order to promote activities for peace, but they do not get access to the negotiation table in the formal peace process". Women have consequently used grassroots peace activities to both mobilise themselves and gain the attention and respect of political and military leaders. Their contributions have often taken on unconventional forms in an effort to grab as much attention as they could possibly muster. In the past, these activities have included peace marches, protests, inter-

group dialogue, the promotion of inter-cultural tolerance and understanding and the empowerment of ordinary citizens in economic, social, cultural, and political spheres (UN, 2002:53).

Mobilisation at the Grassroots level:

Women's interest in becoming involved in peace processes stems from their experience of armed conflict, whether this was as an active agent, as a victim or as both (UN, 2002:53). For women, the end of war not only means an end to the hostilities and consequently also an end to the direct danger that they are faced with on a daily basis, but it also signifies the start of a new social order. As Anderlini explains (2000:10),

For them, the peace table is a forum not only for negotiating and end to war, but also for laying the foundations of a new society guided by principles of social justice, human rights and equality.

The post-conflict period is therefore one filled with new opportunities and the promise of a new social order. Women hope for a new establishment that will be more socially equitable and as open with possibilities for women than as for men. Baksh-Soodeen (in Baksh, 2005:32) argues, "...post-conflict societies provide(s) and opportunity for women to challenge traditional gender roles, create spaces for new identities and imagine new possibilities for themselves". Through their agency during war, women and girls become aware of the potential for reform in periods of peacemaking and consequently work very hard to become a part of these processes.

Women's involvement in grassroots peace movements is frequently initiated at the peak of atrocities and instability and often under the threat of victimisation. Women from all walks of life have been known to participate in informal peace-building work as class systems become irrelevant during armed conflict. Ekiyor and Gbowee (2009) observes that during the war in Liberia women from all levels of society, including those from displaced camps, churches, markets, schools, ordinary jobs and NGOs were recruited to become a part of informal peace organisations. These grassroots organisations, although positioned on the sidelines and often looked over and ignored, they have the ability to mobilise large numbers of women and translate their grievance into legitimate social concerns (Turshen, 2001:89). Women subsequently unite in great numbers and mobilise

themselves in the hope of achieving peace irrespective of who they are, what work they do or where they come from. UNIFEM (2009) notes that women have an increased chance at succeeding if they work in bigger groups, “Women leaders do make a difference when they are in sufficient numbers”.

Using Traditional Skills and Gaining New Ones in the Process:

In many cases, women have used their traditional gender roles to help legitimise their participation in peace building activities. Women from Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Sudan have drawn upon their moral authority as mothers, wives or daughters to call for an end to armed conflict (UN, 2002:55). One Congolese woman (in Fleshman, 2001:3) explains the positive effect their traditional roles can have,

At first, the men were hostile because there was this group of women entering ‘their’ space. But we approached them in a way that made them feel secure. In African culture the woman is your mother. The woman is your wife and sister. If your mother or sister is talking to you, you have to listen.

Women have organised as mothers, either to learn the fate of their children who have disappeared or to prevent their children from being conscripted or deployed to particular conflicts (UN, 2002:55). The National Cooperation of Guatemalan Widows is one such group that campaigns against the conscription of young men, citing their economic dependence on their sons as a primary reason. In another example, mothers, wives and relatives of soldiers and policemen being held hostage by guerrilla groups in Columbia have worked with both governmental agencies and guerrilla groups to reach humanitarian agreements and in some cases, have worked for the exchange of prisoners. Women’s peace groups have also been known to advocate issues particularly relevant to women’s concerns, such as health and reproductive services, and continue this work in the post-war period. For example, the Medica Women’s Therapy Centre was established in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993 to respond to women and children’s psychological, gynaecological and social needs that resulted from male abuse during the war. Thus, women’s groups’ activities are not restricted to the war period, and most often create opportunities for women’s groups to continue their work well into the post-war period in order to deal with all the consequences of war.

According to the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:54), involvement in peace processes can inspire or confirm in women an awareness of the political dimensions of conflicts and of their own political position. Such opportunities raise awareness in women of their own capabilities to become actively involved and make a difference in the political aspects of conflict. Women have consequently identified working for peace as a unique opportunity to become organised, an experience that benefits them in the post-war reconstruction efforts. Women's peace movements also focus on the shared social experiences of women and therefore produce a greater solidarity amongst women, frequently across lines of division. This united front thus makes it harder to cast the enemy as an ethnic and dehumanised 'other', which is often a tactic of wartime propaganda. Benderly (2000:1) notes that women,

...are less entrenched in structures and thus more willing to reorganise hierarchies of political or institution affiliation, to cross ethnic or national boundaries and borders, and to foster alliances that decrease conflict and increase stability.

Women in the Balkans, Rwanda, Northern Ireland and Horn of Africa have been the first to work across volatile ethnic and political borders. In Northern Ireland, for example, women's groups spent a decade building the trust between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which was the foundation for the ultimate agreements (UNIFEM, 2009). Similarly, in Somalia, women presented themselves as a 'sixth clan' that reached beyond ethnicity to a "vision of gender equality". The women ultimately helped created a National Charter that guaranteed women 25 seats in the 245-member Transitional National Assembly (UNIFEM, 2009).

Resistance to Women's Participation in Peace Processes:

However, the value of women's peace contributions is very seldom recognised or appreciated. Turshen (2001:91) argues that men disparage women's peace activities as only a natural extension of their nurturing and caring domestic roles as wives and mothers, despite many women's participation in war as combatants. Such prevailing assumptions about women's designated roles in society have been used as a justification for excluding women from formal peace processes. At the Burundi peace talks, for example, some male delegates questioned the presence of women, seeing their desire to

be involved as interference in the process in which men represented them. One male delegate told the facilitator of the negotiations,

The women are not parties to this conflict. This is not their concern. We cannot see why they have come, why they bother us. We are here and we represent them.

The same happened in Guatemala and Cyprus. In Cyprus, the activities of women activists were disapproved of and women were told to stay at home and care for their children (UN, 2002:55). In this way, stereotypical assumptions about women's roles in society, particularly in relation to decision-making processes and areas of expertise, are used to subjugate women and discriminate against them.

Resistance to women's participation in peace negotiations is evident across most male dominated regions and sectors of society, and throughout various stages of the male-dominated transition process. In Guatemala's indigenous communities, men saw women's mobilisation as a direct threat to their culture and traditions. Guatemalan peace activist, Emma Chirix, says that a significant number of indigenous women themselves expressed little interest in the goal of women's empowerment and education in the post-war period and thus agreed with the men that women should be excluded from peace negotiations (in Anderlini, 2000:11). Even women who played an active role in conflicts have found that they are pushed aside and excluded from post-war decision making processes. The former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2000:54), notes that this includes women who voluntarily served as combatants during conflict, as even they are normally excluded from the male-dominated political groups that make decisions during conflict and in peace processes. In Kashmir, where women also served as combatants, the justification for excluding them from the peace negotiations has been "...that their involvement would make them more vulnerable" (Manchanda in Anderlini, 2000:11).

In the post-war environment extreme pressure is also placed on women to return to their traditional roles. Peace activist and negotiator, Hanan Ashrawi (in Anderlini, 2000:11), says that once the immediate dangers receded, the men adopted a very patronising, patriarchal attitude of "good for you, you've done your national duty, now go back to the

kitchen”. Cynthia Enloe (1993:1) tells the story of Esmeralda, a guerrilla fighter in the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). For most of Esmeralda’s young adult years she completed both domestic tasks and fought as a combatant. However, once the conflict ended, she was expected to hand over her gun to peacekeepers and return to the pre-war notion of what her place in society should be. One of her first post-war tasks was to have her Intrauterine Device (IUD) removed. Enloe (1993:1) explains,

During the war her guerrilla tasks have made it seem politically irresponsible to get pregnant. But now she was being urged by men in the political leadership to imagine her post-war life as one devoted to being a good mother.

In this sense, the culture of militarism that permeates society during war is used to reinforce patriarchal notions in the post-war period.

In spite of the many obstacles women may encounter, they have devised creative and effective strategies to advocate for peace and to participate in peace-making processes. Women’s peace activism is fostered in some places by the more general women’s movement and the struggle for women’s rights and gender inequality (Anderlini, 2000:12). In other cases, women’s grassroots movements have paved the way for women’s involvement in official peace negotiations and nurturing women’s activism on a range of other development issues. The former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:62) notes,

The opportunities for the involvement of women in formal peace negotiations and their capacity for effective participation are often dependent on their political mobilisation prior to the peace process itself.

As demonstrated in, for example, the cases of Guatemala, Israel and Palestine, it was women’s grassroots activities prior to the advent of formal negotiations that enabled women to participate or at least, contribute to the negotiation processes.

The Involvement of Women in Formal Peace-Building Processes

While women’s work for peace in informal peace processes has yielded some positive results, they are seldom included in formal peace processes. Sørensen (1998:6) remarks,

...as most observers to formal national peace negotiations have pointed out, the negotiations tend to be male, high-level activities, and women are typically under-

represented in the involved international authorities, in negotiation teams representing the warring parties, and in any other institution invited to the negotiating table.

Women are not physically represented among decision-makers and military leaders, the usual participants in these processes, thus their concerns and opinions are excluded from the peace table. However, because of the extreme importance of the negotiations and their agency developed during the conflict, women are more and more often demanding representation in peace negotiations. They are aware of what gains they stand to make by participating effectively in the peace-building process and are eager to be apart of the official procedures. Nonetheless, as Turshen (2001:90) argues, for women to be able to actively participate they have to be higher up in the various peace-making structures and for this, they need to be organised.

Obstacles to Participation in Formal Negotiations:

Women's wish to be included in peace negotiations is more than an uncomplicated demand for a proportional numeric representation. Based on the belief that institutions governed by men are likely to reflect specific interests and views, women's demand for equal participation reflects their awareness of the potential for transformation and reform in period's immediately preceding and following peace (Turshen, 2001:91). Women thus see the negotiation phase as a prime opportunity to air their views, express their opinions and bring their concerns to the table. The former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan (2002:61), observes that the essential issues of concern to women, including their participation in post-conflict political, social, civil, economic and judicial structures do not always reach the negotiating table, primarily because women are excluded from formal peace negotiations. Therefore, in order for women's voices to be heard it is vitally important that they are included in post-conflict negotiations and are given the opportunity to equally participate in these processes.

Women face many obstacles on the way to the negotiating table, apart from the common male prejudice against their participation. One of these is a lack of resources, especially financial support, and adequate training. Anderlini (2001:12) says, "...women often face

an uphill struggle to reach official political structures, partly because they lack resources or experiences in developing effective strategies for engagement. In addition, Turshen (2001:90) argues that women need capacity training at all levels, as well as a sense of how to use this training process to foster mobilisation regarding representation and change. For example, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition barely had sufficient funds to publish a manifesto and campaign effectively during the 1996 elections. This was despite an estimated 400 women's groups working on peace-building and reconciliation in the region. Congolese women faced similar difficulties when their government held peace negotiations in Sun City, South Africa instead of in their own country. A severe shortage of funds and continuing resistance to their participation mean that only 10 women were able to travel to South Africa. One delegate (in Fleshman, 2003:5) explains, "The problem was that we didn't have resources. Although UNIFEM and the UN Development Programme had been able to help us, we didn't have the resource to get together and strategise". Funding obstacles, such as these, can completely cripple women's peace-building efforts.

A further hindrance to women's participation is, in some cases, their inability to unite, especially in cases where women are divided along political lines. Anderlini (2000:13) argues that women's groups first have to strengthen gender awareness within their own constituencies. It is also easier to convince male negotiators of women's capabilities and strengths if they are a united group. In South Africa, as previously mentioned, women were able to successfully unite across racial and political divisions to form the Women's National Coalition and collectively participated in the processes of CODESA. However, in the case of the Palestine-Israel conflict, Palestinian women attempted to build a cross-cultural coalition with Israeli women. It was assumed that common women's issues would be able to unite women across political, religious and racial divides. Hanan Ahrawi (in Anderlini, 2000:13) recalls, "We thought we could deal with women's issues as a unifying factor, an area of convergence, rather than subject our commonality as women to the divisions of factional politics and rivalries". This approach, however, did not succeed. Many of the Palestinian group's worst detractors were women who rejected the notion of a negotiated peace with Israel, and were consequently unwilling to support a

broad-based women's peace movement. It took a decade of further war and bloodshed to motivate Palestinian women into forming a strong cross-party coalition.

Innovative Efforts to Reach the Negotiating Table:

However, even when faced with the obstacles described above, many women have persevered in their efforts to gain a seat at the post-conflict negotiating table. In order to cope with discrimination at the peace table and to secure the power and respect necessary to go ahead with their agendas, they have adopted different approaches. According to Mu Sochua from Cambodia the first step was to ensure that work and facts presented by women to negotiating delegates were beyond reproach, thus creating a system of trust and respect for their contributions (in Anderlini, 2000:31). In Liberia women won the respect of the dominant political factions by their scrupulous adherence to honesty and transparency. Mary Brownell says (2000:31),

We were sincere. We were not after financial gain. They couldn't buy us off by offering us a few thousand dollars to close our mouths. What we had to say, we said, whether they liked it or not. This is why the warlords respected us.

In other cases, women have successfully used coalitions and partnerships to strengthen their presence in peace talks. Women's groups have reached out to the international media and the representatives of influential donor countries. By reaching out their hands to the international community women have been able to forge valuable alliances that would support their efforts to gain a seat at the post-conflict negotiating table.

Women's peace movements have furthermore emphasised inclusion, participation and consensus building. Consequently, many peace activists and conflict analysts believe that the peace being negotiated at the political level must be rooted and accepted by the people who have to live under the negotiated conditions in the future. Through their grassroots based work, women have ensured that communities as a whole are taken into consideration during negotiations. UNIFEM (2009) notes,

Women can bring the strategies and knowledge to the table providing practical understandings of the challenges confronting civilians and the best way to address these challenges. Women's concerns come not merely out of their own experiences but out of their rootedness in their communities. They represent

different constituencies: those in need of education, of health care, of jobs and of land.

Women's movements have consequently played a vital role in maintaining the public space for participation in negotiations (Anderlini, 2000:35). In Burundi, for example, women's coalition members have made considerable efforts to reach out to women in the provinces and inform them of the events occurring in the capitol. In the same way, women in Cambodia played a significant role in institutionalising the public consultation in decision-making processes relating to the post-conflict decision making processes. Women are thus attempting to ensure that not only their own opinions are heard and taken into consideration, but also those of their entire communities.

Women's efforts to reach the negotiating table have in some cases yielded significant results. Although not allowed to directly participate in formal negotiations women have been able to influence negotiating agendas by being allowed to add gender-related issues to the list of items to be discussed and in some cases, women have gone so far as to attain at least observer status in the negotiations. Some women's groups, such as the Liberian Women's Initiative and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, successfully had their proposals for peace and reconciliation included in formal peace negotiations and plans (UN, 2002:61). In Burundi, on the other hand, women's extensive advocacy resulted in them being brought into the peace process. Even though their roles were restricted to observer status due to the strong opposition from Burundian men, their inclusion was a significant gain. They were consequently able to make use of their observer status to unite the delegates across ethnic, political and class backgrounds by constantly reminding the men of the people waiting back home and passing notes of their concerns and experiences during the war. The women subsequently aided in developing a clear agenda for the peace process, which included their concerns and experiences. In the end, the majority of the women's recommendations were included in the final Burundi Peace Agreement.

Entrenching Wartime Gains: Women Participating in Post-Conflict Negotiations

The growing recognition that women have a right participate in political structures and decision-making often stems from the few, yet significant, encouraging results that women have achieved when allowed to participate in post-conflict negotiations. Women have in most cases not only brought their concerns and experiences to the negotiating table, but have also been able to bring a different perspective to many of the issues on the agenda. Some of these perspectives may be related to socialisation, while others can be attributed to their experiences women gain through their long years as grassroots activists or due their roles as family caregivers. Whatever the reasons for these differences, the women who have participated in participated in post-conflict negotiations have demonstrated that women articulate conflict and peace differently than men do and can therefore make valuable contributions to the negotiating table (Anderlini, 2000:32).

Contributing a Woman's Perspective:

It is generally assumed that women who participate in peace negotiations are more likely to advance issues that are of importance to women and girls and therefore bring a gender perspective to the peace table. Zoll (2009) elaborates,

In Cambodia, Guatemala, Burundi and the Middle East, women are succeeding in a drive to participate in peace and reconstruction talks in unprecedented numbers. An their voices help ensure that fledgling governments have an opportunity from the outset to be more democratic and responsive to the priorities of all their citizens, by insisting that women's rights be integrated into the new constitutions and legal system.

In most of these cases women's participation in negotiations has resulted in women not only being able to entrench some of their wartime gains, such as political and economic gains, but also to establish further improvements in their status. A prominent example of this is the case of Guatemala, where the participation of women resulted in specific commitments to women. To name but a few, these commitments included access to housing, credit, land, the commitment of the government to implement a national health programme for women and girls and commitments to reunite families and locate children

and orphans. From this example, it can be assumed that women's presence at the negotiating table has the capability to make significant gains for women.

Women participating in negotiations have been able to create a different type of dialogue and approach in negotiations. According to Anderlini (2000:32), having dealt with the severe human consequences of conflict, women believe that exposing the “underbelly” of war is a critical step towards peace. Women see it as important to speak openly about the pain and fear experienced during war in an effort to build trust between adversaries. Women consequently give a ‘human face’ to the conflict as they emphasise the personal consequences of conflict. Helen Jackson, a British Parliamentarian working closely with women's organisations in Northern Ireland, recalls that “The women would come and talk about their loved ones, their bereavement, their children and their hopes for the future”. By drawing attention to these tangible factors women succeed in demonstrating that issues that as quality of life are just as important as power sharing agreements in the post-conflict period. These perspectives and approaches have often put women diametrically opposite to those being discussed by men, but have nonetheless convinced men of the importance of basic human security needs.

Gains for the Entire Community:

The gains women have made, however, have not always been solely in the interest of women and girls. In South Africa, women agreed across party lines that each party should have a one-third female representation within the negotiating team for the constitutional process. This resulted in not only important gains for women, but for human rights in general. The South African Constitution included a comprehensive Bill of Rights with provisions, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, marital status or pregnancy, as well as race, language and sexual orientation. In addition, the constitution also holds provisions for property rights, the rights to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, the right to education, and the right to enjoy and practice your own cultural and religious beliefs. These gains are not only significant to women, but also to whole of the South African population.

The Involvement of International Actors:

In some cases it has been the presence of international actors that have made it possible for women to participate in post-conflict negotiations. Certain international donors have made it stipulate that women are to be included in negotiations in order for a country to receive post-war assistance. In other cases, the United Nations has put pressure on political leaders to include women. In Afghanistan, the United Nations encouraged parties to include women delegates in the peace negotiations (UN, 2002:62). As a result women were full delegates in two of the four parties and advisers in the other two parties. The resulting Bonn Agreement contained an explicit commitment to the role of women in Government and created a Ministry of Women's Affairs. Two women were furthermore appointed to the Interim Administration as Ministers of Women's Affairs, and Minister of Health. Although traditionally female spheres of interest these two positions was a significant step for a state renowned for its gender discrimination.

Cases of Women Not Representing Gender Issues:

Nonetheless, it must be mentioned that the presence of women peace negotiators is not always a guarantee that gender issues will be placed on the agenda of the peace table. In the example of El Salvador, women's participation did not result in gender issues being brought to the negotiating table. In this case, approximately 30 per cent of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation (FMLN) negotiators were women. However, the high percentage of female participation did not result in issues of gender equality being included in the peace agreements. In fact, the El Salvador peace agreements included discriminatory provisions in the accords, such as excluding women from reconstruction programmes, which had far reaching consequences for women, adolescent girls and their dependants (UN, 2002:64). As Anderlini (2000:32) notes, women may not always be supporters of opportunities for other women. Some women, primarily due to their political affiliations, may not agree with negotiated peace agreements and consequently have no desire to use such opportunities to advocate women's rights.

The complete exclusion of women and gender issues from official peace processes for whatever reason can, however, have detrimental effects on the long-term sustainability of

peace settlements as not all the voices and interests have been taken into account (UN, 2002:64). As Zoll (2009) argues, “Historically, women’s absence from peace-negotiating tables has resulted in damaging setbacks in development and economic recovery”. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, even though the international community was aware of the violence and marginalisation experienced by women during the war and the responsibilities they would be shouldering in the aftermath, there were no women included in the negotiating teams. Similarly, in Rambouillet, negotiations prior to the Kosovo bombing included only one woman despite the ongoing and active participation of women’s organisations in Serbia. In Columbia, there was also only one woman present at the peace negotiations and she resigned after continued harassment by other negotiators, the guerrillas and the press. As a consequence, women continued to be marginalised in these states in the post-war period and have not been able to improve their livelihoods in the post-war period.

Chapter Six

The Challenges Women Face in the Aftermath of War

War does not end once a cease-fire is agreed upon or when a peace agreement has been negotiated. The literature reviewed by this thesis suggests that women's challenges often increase when the fighting dies down and a return to so-called pre-war 'normalcy' occurs. This chapter will examine the reconstruction and stabilisation period that follows the end of the war and discusses how women's challenges during this period once again differs from those faced by men. This chapter is divided into the following four sections: The first section will give a general background to the post-conflict phase by reviewing the concepts of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation and will then examine what positions women find themselves in during this time relative to the positions of men. The second section discusses the political, constitutional and judicial reconstruction that occurs in the post-war period and considers whether the post-war legislative reforms are to the benefit of women. The third section discusses economic reconstruction and reviews whether women have access to employment and productive assets in the post-war environment, such as land and access to capital. The fourth section focuses on aspects of social reconstruction and examines whether the restoration of the social sector, including access to health care and education, takes into consideration women's gender-specific needs in the post-war environment.

The Aftermath of War: Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

The period that follows the end of a conflict is known by many names. The World Bank and several other United Nations agencies have set up "post-conflict" units to address the period that follows the end of armed warfare. Meintjies et al. (2001:3) refers to the post-war phase as "the aftermath" of war, while Call and Cousens (2008:10) discuss questions relating to "building peace". Simultaneously, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) uses the term "war-torn societies" in an effort to

emphasise that “...the challenge of rebuilding societies after war is much more complex and difficult than the task of putting an end to fighting” (Steifel, 1999:5)

Irrespective of what one prefers to call the post-war period, the post-war phase is of particular difficulty for women and young girls because discrimination and gender inequalities persist or deepen in the period after conflict (UN, 2002:111). For women, the challenges associated with war does not end once a cease-fire is agreed up or once a peace agreement has been negotiated, but can continue for years after the end of hostilities. In comparison to men, women and girls are limited in their opportunities to play significant roles in the design and implementation of post-war peace and reconstruction processes and they also have unequal access to post-war resources, such as economic resources and education. As a result, many post-conflict societies have been rebuilt without the equal participation of women or the inclusion of a gender perspective in the reconstruction processes. It is thus not surprising that Meintjies et al (2001:3) argues that there is no aftermath for women who have experienced war.

Women’s Experience of the Post-War Period:

The period of transition after the end of a conflict is fraught with difficulty, confusion and hardship for all parties involved. Call and Cousens (2008:2) argues that war-torn societies are characterised by high rates of displacement and damaged infrastructure, as well as weak or absent institutions that are particularly vulnerable to “international ills” such as arms trafficking, trans-national crime and terrorist networks. Under these conditions, both men and women try to re-establish their livelihoods and simultaneously reconstruct their communities and state systems. They have to deal with emotional, psychological and physical injuries suffered during the war, in addition to any feelings of hatred or revenge that may still be running high in the aftermath (Williams, 2001:19). Moreover, the use of post-war violence may increase as a means to resolve problems and disputes, and with the high level of small arms in circulation after the end of the conflict, the post-war period is very seldom peaceful.

Women's experiences during this time are various. Bop (2001:5) argues that women's experiences during the post-conflict phases are connected to their experience of the conflict. The International Centre for Research on Women (1998:1) has come to the same conclusion, saying, "Many women's lives are changed fundamentally by conflict, which also affects how they engage in post-conflict activities and institutions". To name a few examples: For women, who took up arms during the conflict, their experience of the aftermath is closely connected to their combat roles during the war. For example, for ex-combatant women, the post-war period is determined by the conditions of demobilisation and the availability of services to assist with injuries and trauma sustained during war and their reintegration into society (Meintjies et al, 2001:5). For those who did not take up arms, the aftermath is filled with different challenges. Many women left their homes during the war and became refugees or displaced persons. These women now have to face the additional challenge of returning to the home they once fled from. Some women were left to head their own households and take care of their families during the conflict and now have to face the imminent return of their husbands and other male family members. Then, there are also the experiences of women who were raped and assaulted during the war and now have to come to terms with the repercussions of those experiences, including unwanted pregnancies and post-traumatic stress disorder.

To further complicate the post-war situation for women, international organisations involved in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation processes have in the past experienced difficulties in integrating gender equity goals in the institutional structures and policies that govern their activities. As Onubogu and Etchart (2005:43) explains,

Although the groundwork for gendered intervention should be laid at the peace negotiating table, the reality of peace processes is that the most attention is paid to the demands of those responsible for the violence and bloodshed, and far less is given to the alternative perspectives for peaceful reconstruction that might be offered by citizens who were caught up in the conflict.

Beyond the policy difficulties, international organisations have also often failed to take into consideration that established notions of reconstruction and rehabilitation have been known to assume an element of going 'back' or restoring to a position or capacity that previously existed (Onubogu & Etchart, 2005:37). Yet, this is not necessarily what

women want, as emerging from situations of armed conflict, women may not want to return to the pre-conflict status quo.

Gender Awareness in Post-Conflict Reconstruction:

Call and Cousens (2008:2) refer to a “series of chronic weaknesses” in international peace building efforts. Traditionally, post-war reconstruction programmes have been based upon two approaches; namely a human rights and a human needs approach (Meintjies, 2001:4). The needs-based approach to post-war socio-economic rehabilitation prioritises social and material needs, emphasising humanitarian assistance. The rights-based approach to post-war political reconstruction gives priority to political reconstruction, including human rights, justice and equality, elections, pluralism and participation, and often defines human rights in the narrow sense of civil and political liberties to the neglect of economic and social rights. Although both these approaches consist of important aspects of creating an environment for post-war reconstruction, neither is adequate for the task of enabling women to realise substantive advancement (Meintjies et al, 2001:4). Rather, the rhetoric of equality and rights approaches tend to disguise the reconstruction of patriarchal power - which leaves women as powerless in the post-conflict period as they were during the conflict and beforehand.

A growing realisation that the transition from conflict to post-conflict is an important opportunity for the re-ordering of society has emphasised women’s physical and ideological exclusion from policy-and decision-making in post-conflict reconstruction processes and has lead to increased demands for women’s inclusion in such processes (Onubogu & Etchart, 2005:34). Many international organisations, including the United Nations, have systematically adjusted their post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation programs to include aspects of gender awareness, which will not only identify gender issues that may obstruct or improve development programmes and projects, but also address them. More specifically, the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 asserted that:

In addressing armed or other conflicts, an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes should be promoted so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

Onubogu and Etchart (2005:34) argue that both a gender balanced and a gender mainstreaming approach be incorporated in the peace processes and social reconstruction. The gender balance approach holds regard to the physical presence of women during post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation processes. As such, the approach requires the inclusion of both women and men at all stages and in all roles within the peace process and social reconstruction. For example, women may participate as members of the participating parties, negotiating teams or mediators. However, the participation of women either directly or indirectly does not ensure the inclusion of women's concerns in the substance of any agreement reached. Gender balance must be accompanied by gender mainstreaming. This additional implementation ensures that women's concerns and experiences are taken into consideration in the structuring of peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Many organisations and institutions within the development community, including the UN and international NGOs, have incorporated gender balance and gender mainstreaming approaches in their post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction processes. In recent years, UN activities in Afghanistan have demonstrated the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in post-conflict activities and giving attention to women's needs during conflict and reconstruction, whether through policies related to general provisions of international assistance or specific interventions related to health and education services (Strickland & Duvvury, 2003:18). For example, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) acquired medical equipment and carried out essential repairs in three hospitals to ensure a reduction of maternal mortality (UN, 2002:123).

Likewise, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has sought to refine gender guidelines for employment and training programs, while the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has been working to determine data needs for promoting gender responsive programs and engage women as partners in food security programs (Strickland & Duvvury, 2003:19). In Tajikistan, for example, the FAO projects

aim to improve food security by providing poor women's groups with support for income-generating activities. In addition, the World Bank's operational policy, Development Cooperation and Conflict, has supported economic and social recovery "...with particular attention to the needs of war-affected groups who are especially vulnerable by reasons of gender, age or disability" (UN, 2002:124).

As can be seen from these examples, gender balancing and gender mainstreaming in rehabilitation and reconstruction are targeted interventions, focusing specifically on women and their needs. These focused interventions are critical to ensuring that women and girls recover from war, rebuild their lives and contribute constructively to post-war reconstruction efforts at both community and national levels (UN, 2002:125). In addition, these gender-focused approaches can also help avoid perpetuating situations of inequality and discrimination against women and lead to the creation of equitable and sustainable societies in the post-war environment.

Democratic Reconstruction and Rehabilitation: The Need for Governance Reform

The post-war period provides an opportunity to create a democratic and equal society for both men and women. Both scholars and practitioners have increasingly been giving attention to the intersection of the concepts of post-conflict reconstruction and democratisation as a successful post-conflict reconstruction approach (Call & Cook, 2003:135). Several factors have contributed to this development: First of all, post-conflict reconstruction has in itself become an important concept in international security discourse. In the past, peace-building efforts were primarily focused on reaching and maintaining durable peace agreements, whereas international practitioners are now increasingly embracing the need to address a complex range of challenges in war-torn societies (Call & Cook, 2003:135). This includes issues such as preventing future armed conflict, redressing past human rights abuses, building effective state institutions, recreating a social fabric, fostering a healthy civil society and integrating gender perspectives into reformed state institutions.

The Need for Good Governance in Post-War Societies:

Good governance is increasingly seen as an essential element in post-conflict reconstruction (Call & Cook, 2003:136). Jeroen de Zeeuw (2001:19) explains,

Democracy is regarded as an effective political system for handling conflict, both externally and internally. The international community therefore considers assistance to the process of democratisation as a ‘major investment in internal and international security’.

During the 1990s, bilateral and multilateral agencies brought governance into their philosophy and policies on post-conflict reconstruction. International actors have followed the tendency and have added good governance to a post-conflict agenda that has historically been focused on ensuring immediate military security and regenerating the economy (Call & Cook, 2003:136). As a result, post-conflict reconstruction initiatives have come to include aspects relating to the development of institutions, behavioural patterns, and a political culture that contains the exercise of power within the limits of established institutions and the rule of law and takes gender aspects into consideration.

The first step towards establishing a democratic and equal society in the post-conflict period is governmental reform. The majority of post-Cold War armed conflicts consist of internal conflicts, such as Civil wars. Conflicts such as these generally indicate failed political systems that could not perform essential governance, thereby generating political insecurities (de Zeeuw, 2001:19). These political systems thus have to be completely reconstructed and re-established in the post-conflict phase. According to de Zeeuw (2001:20), reforming government institutions in the post-war period is essential in creating institutional capacity and necessary security for preventing a relapse into violence. This is also a prime opportunity to ensure that post-war institutions include the participation of women and gender perspectives.

Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial Reform:

A central aspect of governmental reform is the review of a country’s legal system, such as the constitution and judiciary. Regarded as one of the most vital processes during democratic reconstruction, constitutional reform is an opportunity to incorporate gender perspectives within a state’s legal system (UN, 2002: 112). In addition to establishing the

legal framework of a state, constitutions frequently include a bill of rights, which defines political, economic, civil, social, cultural and religious rights, and also provides mechanisms for the enforcement of these rights. In Cambodia, for example, a consultative process accompanied the drafting of a new constitution. Women from all walks of life were allowed to attend and participate in these processes and as such, the country's new constitution grants women equal rights with men. Similarly, in Eritrea, the formulation of a new constitution prompted a high level of public discussions among both men and women. The subsequent constitution adopted in 1991 recognised the equal rights of men and women, and guarantees women a high level of ownership rights and civil liberties, including the right to land.

The United Nations Secretary General (2002:112) furthermore argues that any new legislation to be enacted during the post-war period should be prepared from a gender perspective and that any existing laws that discriminate against women should be repealed or amended. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has noted its concern regarding the existence of legislative provisions that continue to discriminate against women in the post-war period, including the Family Code, Penal Code and the Labour Code. In addition, the committee has called for new legislation to be formulated that addresses specific areas related to women's well-being in the post-war period, including legislation on violence against women, specifically domestic and sexual violence; harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation; marriage and divorce; and the custody of children in the case of divorce. Without these fundamental legislative changes, women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remain in the same state of vulnerability and helplessness than experienced during the conflict.

Legislative changes, however, remain powerless without related changes in a country's judiciary. A gender-sensitive judiciary is critical to removing gender bias within courts, which often curbs the rights of women and perpetuates discrimination and inequality (UN, 2002: 112). De Zeeuw (2001: 23), for one, notes that in Guatemala, Sudan, and El Salvador corrupt judicial systems contributed to gross human rights violations and

discrimination, often directed at minority groups such as women. In many post-war situations, women and young girls have not received favourable court decisions regarding custody of children, rights to property or inheritance and the right to be free of violence due to discriminatory practices. In Kosovo, for example, male relatives accused of sexual or physical violence was acquitted due to a 'lack of evidence,' even though photographs and witness statements were provided as substantiation (UN, 2002:112). Reform of the judicial system is thus crucial to ensuring that women receive the necessary justice and assistance in the post-war period.

Justice for Wartime Crimes:

Once a country's constitution, legislation and judiciary has been reconstructed, it is important to ensure that the victims of violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws receive justice in the post-conflict period. Not only because it is important that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, but it is also important for the victims to receive some level of restitution for the crimes committed against them. The United Nations Secretary General (2002: 113) argues that it is important that violations and international humanitarian law and human rights are documented, investigated, and prosecuted during reconstruction as this demonstrates that to women that social justice exists and that mechanisms exist for the dealing with the violations that they suffered during the conflict. In these cases, impunity for crimes committed against women should be avoided since such acts may appear as a disregard for the rights of women and girls and will subsequently serve to not only instil distrust in post-war institutions among women, but also make them feel helpless.

In the hope of providing some semblance of justice in the post-war period, the international community has supported several institutions to address crimes committed during war. At the national level, truth and reconciliation commissions have been established as part of post-conflict reconciliation processes. Described by de Zeeuw (2001:23) as instruments to "...prevent national amnesia concerning what has happened during violent conflicts", truth and reconciliation commissions have created opportunities for public recordings and acknowledgement of violations and people's suffering.

However, truth and reconciliation commissions are not generally aimed at bringing perpetrators to justice. Instead these commissions have provided full amnesty for persons who have agreed to participate in them. This approach has been of value in many post-conflict societies, such as Uganda, as it allows for people to come to terms with the events of the war. On the other hand, many observers have argued that as long as perpetrators of violence and sexual violence are allowed to act with impunity, victims are denied justice (UN, 2002: 113).

Electoral Reform:

A further aspect of political reform in the post-war period is the creation of an electoral system that guarantees free and fair elections and allows for universal suffrage. According to de Zeeuw (2001: 22), free and fair elections can be achieved through assistance in terms of logistics and by the strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations for voter's education and election monitoring through the establishment of independent electoral commissions. In terms of women's participation, they generally have the right to vote, but may not be granted full rights to political participation or may face resistance if they seek public office. In Somalia, for example, officials opposed women representing their irrespective clans in the Transitional Council and as a result, no women were represented in the government. One way to counter the exclusion of women and increase their participation is the introduction of a quota system for woman candidates in local and national elections. Affirmative action of this nature was successfully implemented to increase women's participation in the Kosovo Assembly (UN, 2002:115).

Economic Reconstruction

Armed conflict results in significant damage to overall economic infrastructure. According to the World Bank (1999:27), armed conflict impacts a country's economy in five ways: First, the physical and social infrastructure is destroyed. Post-war economies are characterised by the need to rebuild physical infrastructure, while simultaneously also experiencing the need for immense financial and human investments at a time when

industry has likely been destroyed and a large portion of the work force injured or killed. Second, long term development is disrupted. The political and social instability that follows a conflict has a severe impact on the economy, as these disruptions are unlikely to be overcome in a relatively short time span. Third, a diversion of public expenditures from output-enhancing activities occurs. As such, much needed funds are diverted from where they are needed most, for example schools and health care, to pay for military expenditures. Fourth, capital stock is destroyed as people experience a loss of income. Finally, portfolio substitution occurs as investors move their assets – financial, human and physical – out of a country during a war.

Economic Reconstruction and the Interest of Women:

Due to the extent of the damage, economic reconstruction is fraught with difficulty and can be very time consuming. Women are specifically affected since their responsibilities for their own well-being and for the progress of their households and communities are set to increase in the post-war period. Sørensen (1998:18) asks a very important question regarding the nature of economic reconstruction: Will the emerging economic environment be conducive to women's empowerment or will it rather reinforce economic marginalisation and thereby increase women's vulnerability? According to the United Nations Secretary General (2002:16), efforts to understand the gender dimensions of post-conflict economic reconstruction require a clear understanding of pre-war economic conditions and how these changed during the war. Critical aspects include the general position of women and men in the economy before the war, different vocational skills, and educational profiles, access to capital, social attitudes to men and women's work, the distribution of domestic responsibilities and how this affects men and women's lives and working capabilities (UN, 2002:16).

Given the above aspects and the resulting inequalities in markets and economic institutions, as well as economic policies that can easily neglect gender perspectives, men and women are often affected differently by economic reform and by international support to rebuild economies. Men are generally in a better place to be involved and benefit from reconstruction initiatives due to their greater participation in public life prior

to the conflict (UN, 2002:11). Women, however, need additional assistance and specific attention should be given to their economic needs in the post-conflict period. It is therefore essential that gender dimensions are taken into consideration in the design of new policy frameworks, the rehabilitation and development of infrastructure and production facilities and the development of a qualified human resource base (Sørensen, 1998:18).

The Agricultural Sector:

Sørensen (1998:18) considers three fields of economic activity to determine women's experience of economic reconstruction, namely agricultural production, the informal sector and the formal sector. The agricultural sector is of particular importance to women as many women are dependent on agricultural production during war and expect to continue this trend during the post-war period. As noted by Sørensen (1998:19), "In many countries where development has recently been curtailed by armed conflict, agriculture was, and is, the primary form of livelihood and the major source of income for a majority of the population". However, extensive destruction of physical infrastructure, landmines, environmental degradation, lack of farming implements, inefficient administration can impose serious constraints on economic recovery.

In addition to these difficulties, women may face further challenges if customary inheritance and property laws do not guarantee them legal rights to land, farming implements and other resources essential for farming. As a consequence, women may have little control over the income they might earn through cultivation (Sørensen, 1998:19). One option available to women in this situation is to offer themselves as casual labourers to those who possess larger land holdings and are able to continue with agricultural production in the post-war period. This dispossession, however, erodes women's material and social positions (UN, 2002:117). Furthermore, women's contribution to the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the post-war environment is seldom recognised, except as a dimension of the recovery of the household economy. Unfortunately, women's agricultural work is mostly acknowledged in relation to informal sector activities such as petty trade and the establishment of small-scale businesses.

The Informal Sector:

Informal sector activities often play a central role in the revival of post-war economies and is furthermore, very accessible to women. Activities associated with the informal sector, such as small-scale food production and the provision of services; do not require large capital investments and scarce resources. Furthermore, in this sector of the economy women are able to earn and income relatively quickly and these activities can be conducted at any time. Thus, women can plan their work around caring for their families. Many women migrate to urban centres in the aftermath of war in order to gain greater access to informal markets (UN, 2002: 118). However, in these urban settings, women may not have adequate social networks to draw upon for assistance, especially in terms of childcare, and may have difficulties in benefiting from their new opportunities.

In some cases, though, women have been withheld from participating in the informal sector. Certain traditional cultures confine women's economic activities to the domestic sphere or to semi-professional white collar jobs (Semyonov in Sørensen, 1998:26). Furthermore, in societies where women are conceived of as protectors and representatives of the national cultures, conflicts in the name of culture and religion may result in the reinforcement of such traditional images. As a consequence, women are withdrawn from the public labour market. This occurred in Afghanistan, Algeria and the former Yugoslavia where warfare was directly linked to religious and cultural identity and traditional gender roles were strictly enforced in the post-war period.

The Formal Sector:

The formal sector, although difficult to gain access to, can potentially be a source of income for women in the post-conflict period. Many women gain employment in the formal economy during wartime due to high employment rates that result from capital flight. However, this is often reversed in the post-conflict phase as women struggle to maintain these jobs once men return from the battlefield. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mozambique, positive employment trends for women in the formal economy during the

conflict were reversed in the post-conflict period (UN, 2002:117). A further challenge for women seeking employment in the formal sector is post-war differences in attitudes towards their employment. After the formal peace accords are completed, women and adolescent girls may be expected to stay at home and fulfil family responsibilities (UN, 2002:117). This regression is not only due to a so-called return to pre-war 'normalcy', but is also necessary to make space for male ex-combatants seeking work in the post-war phase.

New Areas of Employment:

On a positive note though, the post-war phase can also provide women with new areas of employment (Sørensen, 1998:26). One example is international relief and development organisations, which have become an attractive alternative source of income for educated and skilled women. The international attention to post-war reconstruction has also created jobs indirectly as many organisations favour a policy of channelling resources through local NGOs. As a result, many traditional self-help groups, community-based organisations, tribal organisations transform themselves into NGOs. The capacity of this field relies heavily on the history of state-civil society relations and on the capacity granted these organisations by the state. However, even in countries with little experience of civil society organisations, NGOs have been burgeoning in response to local needs and external priorities.

Social Reconstruction

At the social level, post-war societies face two separate challenges. The first is the rehabilitation of damaged social sector, which includes health care, education, and social service institutions. The second concerns the facilitation of a long-term process of social integration, and includes social healing and reintegration in the aftermath of war. The main gender-related questions that arise around these two challenges concern whether a reconstructed social sector will address women's particular needs and unease in an appropriate and adequate manner and whether social reconstruction will be able to generate socio-economic relationships that are advantageous to women (Sørensen,

1998:31). The social sector influence women's lives directly and as such, women should play an active role in the recovering of social service institutions and participate in reviving and reshaping the social structures of society.

Post-War Health Care:

In the aftermath of conflict, people's health and their ability to survive remain fragile, as basic healthcare infrastructure may be weak, damaged or non-existent (Derderian et al, 2009: 19). During conflict health clinics are often destroyed or looted, professionals flee the area and there is a general lack of available medicine and equipment. As the United Nations Secretary General (2002:119) explains, "Healthcare facilities and workers may be targeted during conflict and thus there is often reduced primary health care available in post-conflict situations". Studies have further found that women and girls suffer more than men and boys from reproductive and sexual health problems due to poor nutrition, sanitation and sexual abuse in the aftermath (UN, 2002:119). Sørensen (1998:33) notes that women require both primary healthcare and responses to war-related stress. There are also psycho- social health problems; disabilities and health issues caused by cumulative effect of neglected health issues during the conflict. All of this has to be dealt with in the aftermath, and the lack of functioning healthcare facilities makes this particularly problematic.

Where healthcare facilities are unavailable, women have taken up responsibility for providing basic care to their families and neighbours, often using their extended social networks. As noted by the United Nations Secretary General, "Women and adolescent girls have mobilised to address the health problems arising from, or increasing with conflict, including the effects of gender based violence". According to Sørensen (1998:33), women's overall concern for the well-being of people, especially children, as well as their experience as midwives, have allowed them to care of other women in particularly vulnerable positions. However, these abilities of women to provide healthcare is closely connected to their extended social networks, which are often damaged during conflict.

Aside from taking part in the provision of primary health care, women have also played an important role in developing new mechanisms to respond to the many new health problems occurring as a result of the war, including psycho-social trauma, rape, war-related injuries, and poor nutrition (Sørensen, 1998:34). One very successful method has been through volunteering with NGO's and international organisations in their communities. In Sri Lanka, for example, increasing numbers of health problems related to civilian casualties and displacement mobilised men and women to do voluntary community work. The Family Rehabilitation Centre, an NGO originally established to provide health care to war-injured persons, has trained hundreds of victims in healthcare and social activities so that they can help others. The NGO has subsequently established outreach posts throughout the country and a broad support network of international experts and sponsors. Similar mobilisation efforts by women have also occurred in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda.

Despite women's active involvement in providing healthcare, the re-establishment of a functioning healthcare system should be an important priority in post-conflict situations. Numerous lessons have been learned on how to ensure that post-war health assistance meets the needs of all people. Issues, such as appropriate access, investments, proper training, sufficient numbers of women health care workers and adequate supplies have been raised (UN, 2002:119). However, it remains a challenge to ensure that all of these provisions are implemented. Derderian et al. (2009:20) observes that as the post-reconstruction phases and humanitarian aid gives way to development actors, priorities inevitably shift. As a result, healthcare is often under threat of falling off global policy and donor priority lists.

Access to Education after the War:

Similar to the challenges women face in gaining access to adequate healthcare system in the aftermath, they may also face difficulty in gaining access to education. Education is a critical source of stabilisation for communities and both men and women show a desire to return to school as soon as possible (UN, 2002:119). However, cases have been reported where girls have been denied their right to education in the aftermath due to social,

cultural, religious or political restriction. For example, in Afghanistan, girls' schools were burned down after the Bonn Agreement due to patriarchal notions that 'girls don't belong in school'. There have also been instances where poverty has kept girls from attending schools, as many families are unable to support the enrolment of their daughters in school over sustained periods. In such cases young girls have been kept from school because their labour was required at home, i.e. families cannot afford to lose the contribution to household food and economic that working girls might provide (UN, 2002:120).

Women have mobilised to address the issue of education in the aftermath of war. In Sierra Leone, for example, women mobilised their own resources to rebuild schools that had been destroyed during the war to help ensure children's education, particularly that of girls (UN, 2002:120). Because of these initial efforts by women, many additional organisations have become involved in rebuilding schools in Sierra Leone. One such organisation is the Free the Children campaign, which has been providing education to thousands of children in the post-conflict phase. The organisation has also been training teachers and sent shipments of aid into the country, including wheelchairs, textbooks, school kits, clothing and medical supplies. In Mozambique and Uganda, female teachers have also tried to continue children's primary education in refugee and welfare camps of internally displaced persons, or in their places of residence (Allen in Sørensen, 1998:32).

As the above reconstructive processes have demonstrated, social reconstruction is a complex process that involves the very foundations of any society, including social identities, institutions and social welfare. Women become particularly involved as they generally put great emphasis on the rehabilitation and development of the social services sector. As such, women take initiatives to improve existing facilities and in some cases, provide services of their own as in the case of healthcare and education. However, women's contributions to social reconstruction are often seen as an extension of their domestic roles and because of this, they do not receive adequate recognition for their efforts. While it may be true that their experiences at home equip them for social work, the failure to admit the professionalism that accompanies such acts may jeopardise

women's access to training and remuneration and eventually lower the status and respect that their work provides for them (Sørensen, 1998:42).

Chapter Seven

The International Community Responds to Women's Experience of War

Women's plight during war is receiving increasing attention from around the world. The international community has systematically come to recognise that women have special needs during war and also have a right to participate in post-war decision-making processes and have taken action to ensure that this occurs. This chapter focuses on the efforts of the international community to aid women in their experiences of war and will not only give an overview of the development of an international awareness of women's experiences of war through policy developments, but will also discuss the various manners in which the international community have collectively come to support women's participation in post-war decision-making procedures. This discussion will be facilitated across the following four sections: The first section will focus on the pre-1990 period and will review the various U.N World Conferences on Women. The second section focuses on the period 1990 – 1999 and will pay specific attention to the build-up to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The third section considers the developments that occurred between 2000 and 2002, and will discuss the content of the resolution, the content challenges it faces, as well as the resolution's strengths and weaknesses. The final section will focus on the period following the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 and will discuss the implementation of the resolution, as well as the "spin-off" resolutions that have followed in its wake.

Pre-1990: The Dawn of Awareness

Fifty-five years prior to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC 1325) in 2000, the equal rights of men and women were confirmed in the 1945 United Nations Charter. Despite this strong initial commitment to the equality of men and women, it has taken over half a century for the United Nations to adequately address the role of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations. The path to the

adoption of UNSCR 1325 has been long and fraught with both difficulties and victories. The pre-1990 period is characterised by a dawning awareness of women's situation in conflict, followed by small yet significant steps in overcoming gender blindness in conflict situations among the international community.

CSW Report:

Early efforts aimed at raising an awareness of women in conflict include the 1969 Report of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW Report). The CSW report was the first UN mandate to consider whether special protection should be accorded to women and girls during armed conflict and in emergency situations. One of nine functional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the CSW was founded in 1946 and is dedicated to the advancement of women. The 1960s and 1970s saw the emergence of a greater awareness of discrimination against women and a rise in the number of organisations willing to combat it. This escalating international women's movement influenced the approaches to women and development in the UN and particular in the CSW. In 1987 the CSW's mandate was expanded to include the functions of promoting the objectives of gender equality, development and peace, monitoring the implementation of measures for the advancement of women, as well as reviewing and appraising progress made at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels.

Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in War:

A further development in the pre-1990 period was the United Nations General Assembly adoption of the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict in 1974. In this Declaration the United Nations emphasises the "the need to provide special protection of women and children belonging to the civilian population" (Ayissi, 2002:8). The Declaration not only recognises the suffering of women and children during armed conflict, but is also states that civilian and women in particular require special protection during war. However, the protection mentioned by the declaration is defined in very broad terms and does not specify the wartime crimes

committed against women and children. For example, the declaration makes no mention of any gender-based violence during war, such as rape, or violence committed against children, such as the recruitment of child soldiers. Therefore, although helpful in terms of raising an awareness regarding the suffering of women and children during war and setting a precedent for their protection, the declaration was too broad with regards to the nature of the wartime crimes that are committed against women and children.

International Women's Year:

Building on this early work in raising awareness on women in conflict, the UN General Assembly started focusing on women more broadly. One of the organisations first endeavours was to declare 1975 as International Women's Year. Amongst its objectives was to integrate women into global development efforts and increase women's contributions to strengthen world peace (Binder et al, 2008:23). At the 1975 World Conference on the International Year of Women in Mexico City, governments and non-governmental organisations identified international cooperation, the strengthening of international peace and women's political participation as specific areas for national and international action. The Conference addressed women's participation in the struggles against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination and foreign domination. The World Conference furthermore gave momentum to the drafting of an international treaty to eliminate discrimination against women, which would eventually result in the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at the Copenhagen Conference.

CEDAW:

Following the success of the 1975 International Women's Year, the UN declared 1976 to 1985 the "UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace". The most prominent occurrence during this decade was the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), often referred to as the women's international bill of rights or the "Women's Convention", in 1979. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, the convention defines what constitutes

discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination and to achieve substantive equality. Binder et al (2008:23) explains,

The convention constituted a comprehensive instrument seeking to achieve not only de jure but also de facto equality of men and women in crucial areas including economic rights, family rights, and women's rights to political participation.

CEDAW addresses many issues of importance to women and can be applied to women in conflict, especially in terms of women's equal participation in post-conflict negotiation processes. However, CEDAW has no specific provisions on violence and does not address women in conflict specifically. Although useful, CEDAW left the door open for further policy developments in relation to women during war.

The World Conferences on Women:

The World Conferences on Women in 1975, 1980 and 1985, as well as the UN Decade for Women, increased the visibility of UN activities for women. Throughout these three conferences discussions on women and peace shifted from a focus on broad political issues to the specific impact of war on women and girls and their role in peace-building (Binder et al, 2008:23). The 1975 and 1980 World Conferences, in Mexico and Copenhagen respectively, dealt with women's participation in struggles against colonialism and the racism and occurrences of racial discrimination, which usually accompanies such occurrences. The two conferences also addressed the situation of women living under oppressive regimes in South Africa and Namibia, the Palestinian people and the need for women's participation in the international peace struggle.

At the 1980 World Conference in Copenhagen, member states and participants specifically identified women as agents of change at the national and international levels, and in political, social and economic areas. Women were also seen as key entities in building just, rational societies in the struggle for fundamental national rights and self-determination of peoples against wars of aggression. This was the first time that women were officially recognised as more than victims during the war and recognised as active

agents during conflict. This set the stage for the recognition of the many roles that women fulfil throughout armed conflict and in the aftermath.

The Third World Conference held in Nairobi in 1985 focused on the empowerment of women in economic, social, political and cultural spheres (Binder et al, 2008:23). During the Conference, participants considered women's participation in the efforts for peace in both decision-making positions and in education for peace as vital to successful peace building. Delegates made use of the opportunity to discuss strategies for women's participation in safeguarding world peace, averting nuclear war strategies, halting the arms race and advancing the goal of disarmament. For the first time, the various forms of violence against women in everyday life and in all societies were highlighted as key obstacles to the achievement of peace. By recognising the violence suffered by women in everyday life, it was only a small step further to recognise the violence suffered by women during war.

From 1990-2000: A Changing International Context

The international context of peace-building policies and programs evolved remarkably throughout the 1990s. Strickland and Duvvury (2003:11) argues that this evolution reflects the changing nature of conflict situations and complex emergencies, as well as the way in which nation states and international organisations continue to redefine the roles of various actors engaged in or affected by war. This progression also coincided with two important and interacting shifts in thinking directly related to international development. The first is a growing understanding of the meaning and the role of gender and gender relations in development, as reflected in the change of focus from "women in development" to "gender and development". The second important shift in thinking concerns a global understanding of human rights and their practical relevance to human development.

Fourth World Conference on Women:

The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, identified women and armed conflict as one of its 12 areas of concern. The Conference defined its strategic objective to “...increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels...and integrate a gender perspective in the resolution of armed or other conflicts...and ensure that bodies are able to address gender issues properly” (UN, 1995: 61). Delegates discussed the increased participation of women in conflict resolution; reduction of excessive military expenditure; and the promotion of women’s contribution to fostering the culture of peace. The result of the Conference was the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, which recognised that civilian casualties outnumber military casualties, with women and children comprising a significant number of the victims and also proposed a number of strategic objectives and actions to be taken by relevant actors. It also called for the upholding and reinforcement of the norms of international humanitarian and human rights law in relation to the offences against women, and the prosecution of all those responsible for such offences.

UNESCO Contributes:

The work on gender differences in political decision-making and conflict resolution conducted during the various UN World Conferences was, furthermore, part of a larger UN effort to ensure greater gender equality (Sørensen, 1998:15). At a more concrete level, UNESCO devised its “Cultures of Peace” programme, which concentrates on peace-building in specific war-affected countries. Key components of the programme include work with local organisations to collect and document local stories of peace and reconciliation; the training of journalists and female community organisers; the training of women as peace promoters; the organisation of seminars on the culture of peace and conflict resolution and the establishment of community radio stations. The project is based on the assumption that sustainable peace is achieved from the bottom up and that it is a pre-condition for development. The project is therefore of particular value to women at the community level; especially those involved in peace-building efforts.

UNIFEM's African Women in Crisis:

Another imported UN contribution is through UNIFEM, which founded a project, called African Women in Crisis (AFWIC) in the early 1990s. The project document states, “The mission of AFWIC is to promote a development-orientated strategy to the process of disaster mitigation which ensure that women are viewed as both crucial resources and full participants in all effort to alleviate crisis situation in Africa” (UNIFEM, 2004:7). AFWIC is furthermore based on recognition of women’s own resources to handle crisis, and aims to identify activities that would further support their efforts, such as skills training and mental health counselling. They also conduct gender-sensitive research and endeavours to influence disaster plans and manuals to integrate women as resourceful actors (Sørensen, 1998: 16). AFWIC thus does not focus on armed conflicts specifically, but where armed conflict is concerned one of the main objectives of AFWIC is to promote peace and reconciliation initiatives (Dirasse in Sørensen, 1998:16).

International Law steps up against Gender Based Violence:

International law also made advancements in the interest of women in conflict during the 1990s. In 1998, in response to the widespread rapes that occurred during the war in the former Yugoslavia, international law for the first recognised rape and other sexual violence as a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population. In 1999, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly. The optional protocol allows for individuals as well as group complaints to the committee monitoring implementation of the Convention and proved a broad channel for registering human right violations experienced by women on the basis of gender (Strickland and Duvvury, 2002:12). These and other humanitarian law developments reflect a progression in the recognition of the impact of armed conflict on women, but did not consider conflict’s impact on women beyond sexual violence.

G8 Miyazaki Initiatives:

Similar progressions in the approach to women in conflict can be found in statements by the Groups of Eight (G8). The G8 Miyazaki Initiatives for Conflict Prevention of 2000 considered the relationship between conflict and development, recognising the G8 mandate to extend economic and development cooperation to help create resilient societies that promote inclusion and opportunity for “all citizens”. The following year, the G8 recognised that women are not only victims in conflict situations but also serve as negotiators, peacemakers, and advisors whose efforts are vital to sustainable peace (G8FMM 2001). The G8 leaders have emphasised the importance of women’s full and equal participation in all phases of conflict prevention, resolution, and peace-building (Strickland & Duvvury, 2002:13). With the full support of the world’s strongest states, women in conflict were at a more promising position at the end of 2000 than ever before.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

It took approximately half a century to develop an all-encompassing approach to women in conflict. Fifty-five years of development and progression helped sharpen the focus of issues under consideration by the UN Security Council in its open debate on women, peace and security in October 2000. With women’s human rights receiving prime attention on the UN agenda throughout 2000, and with heightened concern for the status of women in conflict-affected settings such as Kosovo, Afghanistan and Rwanda, the Security Council session reflected an unprecedented level of political and popular interest in issues related to women in war (Strickland and Duvvury, 2002:16).

The Adoption of UNSCR 1325:

The year 2000 was a very successful year in terms of developments relating to women in conflict and would eventually cumulate in the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. The year started off with the Security Council President, Ambassador Chowdhury, making a statement to the press on the occasion of International Women’s Day. In this statement, the ambassador inextricably linked the notion of peace with the existence of equality between men and women. Two months later a seminar on

“Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations” was held between 29 and 31 March 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia. Organised by the Lessons Learned Unit of the UN Department of Peace Operations, the seminar culminated in the Windhoek Declaration. The Declaration states that in order for peace operations to be successful, men and women had to participate on an equal basis. Likewise, the 2000 Report of the Panel of UN Peacekeeping Operations, also known as the Brahimi Report, recognised the need for equal gender representation in UN peace operations.

These events, along with the many others that predated the year 2000, set the path for the adoption of a resolution that would finally aim to adequately address the topic of women in conflict. On 31 October 2000 the United Nations unanimously passed United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). The resolution is a combination of firsts for the UN. As Cohn (2004:8) explains, “Resolution 1325 is often called a landmark resolution because it represents the first time the Security Council has ever turned its full attention to the subject of women and armed conflict”. Resolution 1325 is consequently the first UN motion to acknowledge that women are not only victims of war, but are also active agents in promoting peace and have the right to participate equally in peace-building processes. It is also the first time that the Security Council in a comprehensive act called for the respect of human rights and humanitarian law regarding women and girls, particularly those affected by war. UNSCR 1325 is therefore regarded as a milestone achievement for international institutions, women’s groups and activists alike.

Contents of UNSC 1325:

The contents of Resolution 1325 are revolutionary in nature and have become a beacon of hope to women in war-torn regions around the world. The resolution first of all recognises the contribution women make to conflict resolution and sustainable peace and emphasised the necessity to involve women in conflict prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction. Cohn (2004:8) notes,

Resolution 1325 breaks new ground because it not only recognises that women have been active in peace-building and conflict prevention; it also recognises women's right to participate – as decision-makers at all levels – in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building processes.

The Resolution further ensures that a gender perspective be included in peacekeeping operations and peace negotiations by calling for the all the relevant participants to “adopt a gender perspective” in their approach. Gender perspectives in this context is made to include attention to the special needs of women and girls during disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction, as well as measures supporting women's local women's peace initiatives (Cohn, 2004:8).

Resolution 1325 also recognises that women are the disproportionate victims of war and calls upon all parties to conflict to take special measures to respect women's rights, to protect women from gender based violence, and to end impunity for crimes committed against women and girl (Cohn, 2004:8). As such, the resolution not only recognises women and girls right to life, security and equality in their societies, but also focuses on women's need for protection against gender-based violence in both armed conflict and refugee camps (Binder et al, 2008:24). It furthermore requires states to prosecute the perpetrators of mass violence against women and to exclude such crimes from amnesty processes. These provisions are especially valuable in post-1990 situations of conflict, where gender based violence has become a tactic of warfare. The resolution also focuses on the special needs of women in the post conflict phase, in particular in situations of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. This is of particular important since women are generally looked over in the DDR processes even though women increasingly constitute a considerable part of fighting forces.

A further important aspect of UNSCR 1325 is its emphasis of women as active agents in war, in particular women's roles in peace-building processes and peace negotiations. As UNIFEM (2002) notes,

Resolution 1325 is a watershed political framework that makes women – and a gender perspective – relevant to negotiating peace agreements, planning refugee

camps and peacekeeping operations and reconstructing war-torn societies. It makes the pursuit of gender equality relevant to every single Council action, ranging from mine clearance to elections to security reform.

The resolution also urges states to increase the representation of women at all decision-making levels and to protect women's rights as they relate to the electoral system, the police, and the judicial system (Binder et al, 2008: 25). Binder et al. (2008: 25) emphasises the importance of the provision because of the high representation of women in some post-conflict societies. For example, as of 2005, Rwanda held the world's largest representation of women in parliament with 48.8% representation. A similar situation exists in Kosovo, where a 28% female representation exists in their parliamentary and municipal assemblies. Women in Afghanistan and Iraq also made significant gains in their 2005 elections, with women taking between 25 and 30 per cent of seats in their respective country's national parliaments (Binder, 2008:25).

Challenges to Implementation:

Beyond its obvious promise, UNSC Resolution 1325 faces various challenges when it comes to implementation. According to Purcell (2006:2) there are three major challenges to the successful implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. Poverty is the first and foremost challenge to the successful implementation of Resolution 1325. Poverty is not only one of the primary causes of conflict on the African continent, but it also prevents post-conflict development. A second obstacle is justice as the rule of law, together with social and political order is critical to ensuring a culture of peace. Without a fully functioning justice system instability and injustice is prolonged in the post-war period and exposes women to the threats of renewed conflict. Third, a continuing need exists to address the long-standing inequities in women's access to resources such as land, work, education and health care. Women's equal access is essential to ensuring that UNSCR 1325 is successful at an institutional level.

Cohn (2004:8), furthermore, argues that UNSCR 1325 lacks adequate ways to implement or enforce its commitments. Although unanimously adopted by all UN members, the resolution has a far-reaching scope without any means to enforce implementation. This is

especially daunting since Resolution 1325 essentially calls for changes in the behaviour of member states, international agencies, institutions, and the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and many other organs of the United Nations itself (Cohn, 2004:8). If implemented correctly the change proposed by the Resolution would fundamentally redistribute the gender distribution of power itself, due to the fact that it calls for better gender representation of women throughout the UN system itself. However, there are many bureaucratic and institutional barriers that stand in the way of such a transformation occurring either timely or adequately.

Internal Limitations:

To complicate matters further, UNSC Resolution 1325 also has internal weaknesses that may prevent it from achieving success. While emphasising the importance of women's participation in post-conflict negotiations, the resolution does not address the root causes for women's frequently exclusion from post-conflict negotiations. The resolution also fails to address the structural problems that may be keeping women from participating on an equal footing to men, such as financial resources and education (Binder et al, 2008:25). According to Binder et al (2008:25), additional strategies such as capacity building for women and long-term policies to counter cultural stereotypes and proactively implement affirmative action are necessary in order to successfully enable women to participate in the political, legislative, judicial, electoral, and economic reconstruction and reform processes of their countries.

Charles Aburge (2008:3) also argues that UNSCR 1325 faces obstacles due to its own internal limitations. According to Aburge (2008:3), UNSCR 1325 is more of a 'motivational' resolution than a practical one. In fact, the resolution only directly makes a "request" to the Secretary General, when it calls for the head of the UN to annually assess the impact of war on women; the role of women in peace-building; and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution which would be submitted to the Security Council on an annual basis. UNSCR 1325 is furthermore formulated under Chapter VI of the UN Charter (Pacific Settlements of Disputes) which are only recommendations, whereas the resolutions formulated under Chapter VII (Peace

Enforcements) are essentially international law. As such, the resolution's incentive system is weak due to the fact that enforcement is left up to the whims of the actor. The punitive instruments for addressing non-compliance with UNSC R1325 envisages the use of Article 41 measures, which relate to economic and diplomatic sanctions – hardly the most effective instruments in intra-state violence (Aburge, 2008:3). Especially since many of these actors have already been sanctioned because of the conflict and further sanctions do not have much of an affect. In addition, the Resolutions capacity to prevent atrocities being committed is equally limited, given the Resolution's relative powerlessness to hold combatants or even peacekeepers to account for their actions.

Furthermore, UNSCR 1325 does not adequately provide guidance with regards to how to deal with armed combatants in the course of intra-state violence (Aburge, 2008:4). The legal course open to addressing intra-state violence remains primarily national law or in some instances, international law. According to Aburge (2008:3), this is not particularly helpful if the concern is to promote gender participation under the brutal and often confusing conditions of war. Because of these conditions, the obligations of combatants are ultimately enforceable post-facto, with the hope that this may provide deterrence for atrocities committed during the conflict. The aim here, being to deter soldiers from committing human rights violations by warning them of the consequences of their actions beforehand. It is, however, well known that post-war prosecutions are insufficient to act as deterrence against future violations, especially since impunity is often granted for wartime crimes. In Sierra Leone, for example, there has been little to none prosecution of soldiers who committed wartime crimes of gender based violence (Barnes et al, 2007:2).

Strength of UNSC 1325:

However, these internal weaknesses do not mean that the UNSCR 1325 is not able to achieve the goals that it has been set out to. Resolution 1325 is unique in nature and has several strengths that will aid it in overcoming its challenges. First of all, UNSCR 1325 is the product of a massive mobilisation of women's political energies and therefore not only has a large support base, but also serves as a continuing motivation for those working towards women's equality in conflict situations. Auburge (2008:8) argues that

UNSCR 1325 has given a boost to women's and peace movements, related agencies in the UN and women's departments in foreign/development agencies. The resolution is subsequently finding its way into legal frameworks and it has given concrete expression to the extended concept of human security. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, UNSCR 1325 has been used to increase women's participation in political life overall through the use of quota systems and gender mainstreaming methods (Alice, 2007:4).

Second, UNSCR 1325 is not a singular resolution, but is supported by a variety of other resolutions and declarations. As the history of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 shows, the resolution builds upon previously adopted resolutions that focus on refugees, children and armed conflicts and the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as the Geneva Convention, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other associated UN resolutions. When used together these resolutions are not only an embodiment of several principles; the right to peace; the right to participate; non-discrimination; gender mainstreaming in all aspects of public life; the right to protection from harm and the right to justice, but also form a powerful medium to further the goal of equality (Auberge, 2008:10). Using the example of UNSCR 1325 and CEDAW, UNIFEM (2006) explains:

UNSC resolution 1325 and CEDAW –two normative, legally binding documents – are powerful tools when used together to move the gender equality agenda forward in the peace and security context. Although each set of standards constitutes a critical tool in advocating women's rights, using them together strengthens the work of gender equality advocates, and works to ensure the realization of de facto gender equality in times of peace and within post-conflict environments.

Thus, although a singular resolution, UNSCR 1325 is also part of a much bigger system of resolutions and declarations and when used together, these documents form a very powerful tool to further the goal of gender equality in both peacetime and in conflict situations.

Beyond 2000: The Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Follow-Up Resolution 1820

It has been nearly ten year since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and yet, it remains unclear whether the resolution has achieved the goals set out in its mandate. In general it seems as though UNSCR 1325 has had a mixed impact, with both setbacks and victories. As it stands, heinously violent acts against women in conflict zones continue and women are still under represented in post-war peace negotiations. On the one hand, it would appear as though many states are either still unaware of UNSCR 1325 or do not take it seriously enough (Bender et al., 2008:23). The UN itself has also been inconsistent in its implementation of UNSCR 1325. On the other hand, many women have placed their hope in UNSCR 1325 and have used the resolution to both advance and protect their own interests in conflict situations. Accordingly, it is important to review the implementation of UNSCR 1325, and overview the ‘follow-up’ resolutions, such as UNSCR 1820.

Implementation Failures of UNSCR 1325:

In terms if implementation, Auberge (2008:24) argues that UNSCR 1325 calls for both preventative and remedial actions by all members of the United Nations (Auberge, 2008:24). To explain, the need for preventative actions arise in the sense that violent crimes often arise from a combination of systemic discrimination and gender nationalism and as such, all member countries are potentially vulnerable to conflicts. As UNSCR 1325 addresses gender discrimination its early implementation, it may very well aid in the prevention of conflict and thus decrease the vulnerability suffered by states. Remedial measures, on the other hand, are relevant to all countries, whether in conflict or not, in so far as there is no equity in participation. Auberge (2008:24) consequently believes that UNSCR 1325 is a challenge not only for North-South politics, but also for national politics. Nevertheless, internationally recognised principles of common but differentiated responsibilities based on capabilities and complicity, suggests some member of the UN will be expected to shoulder more responsibilities regarding to UNSCR 1325 than others (Auberge, 2008:25).

UNSCR 1325 addresses itself overwhelmingly to the UN Secretary General and to UN member states. However, according to Auberge (2008:26), UNSCR 1325 requires different methods of implementations from UN member states. To the wealthier nations, the obligations connected with UNSCR 1325 are both internal and external. Internally, nations are expected to ensure that gender mainstreaming occurs within their own institutions. Externally, it is expected that adequate resources (financial and technical) be provided in support of UNSCR 1325, that peacekeeping services are engendered, and that both police and civilian forces are provided for peace keeping and peace enforcing missions. As a result, many of the wealthier UN Members have adopted National Action Plans regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325. To name a few, the United Kingdom of Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Finland all have national action plans. A number of countries have also formed the “Friends of 1325,” a group which advocates the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on a global level.

In contrast to the developed countries, conflict ridden countries are required to focus on applying UNSCR 1325 to the operations of their armed forces, to the protection of their own citizens and in the reconstruction of their societies in the post-conflict period, including negotiations, elections, peace building and impunity. For example, army and security personnel forces in Nepal have now acknowledged the need to include guidance on both human rights and gender in their training. Furthermore, all countries supplying peacekeepers are to ensure that they are trained to uphold UNSCR 1325 sufficiently and to prosecute anyone who engages in sexual violence while on a peacekeeping mission. All other nations have an obligation to mainstream gender and to take preventative actions to mitigate any conflicts (Auberge, 2008:26).

The different approaches to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 among UN members have lead to a high level of inconsistency and have also caused a lot of confusion regarding the responsibilities associated with the resolution. The UN Security Council, for one, has not fully integrated UNSCR 1325 into its daily work and resolutions. According to Binder et al. (2008:26), since 30 June 2006 only 55 of 210 country specific Security Council resolutions have included language on women and gender. The

Security Council's concern regarding women's concerns more generally are equally varied and inconsistent. In September 2005, 10 out of 18 peacekeeping operations included personnel that worked on gender issues (Binder et al, 2008:26). A study analysing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 between 2000 and 2005 maintains that "...the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the Security Council Resolution remains haphazard, and...the requirements of Resolution 1325 have not been implemented in a systemic or ongoing matter by the Security Council".

Successful Implementation of UNSCR 1325:

Fortunately, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goes beyond the UN Security and the UN member states. According to Purcell (2006:3), there is an evolving role for inter-governmental and regional organisations and Non-UN peacekeeping forces, such as the African Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), in the process of implementing UNSCR 1325. For example, the African Union has UNSCR 1325 to address the topic of gender equality amongst its 53 members and is currently promoting these issues through a Women's Committee, which includes presidential advisors and women involved in peacekeeping missions and assessments (Purcell, 2006:3). In Nepal, NGO's have used UNSCR 1325 at a regional level to train women peace volunteers, who then circulate information on violence against women and human rights within communities in order to enhance gender relations on the ground (Barrow, 2009:5). It would therefore seem as though UNSCR 1325 has had greater success outside of the UN than within it.

Women's groups and other UN agencies, such as UNIFEM, have also gone to great lengths to disseminate information on UNSCR 1325 and ensure that women are aware of their rights during armed conflict. The United Nations Development Fund for Women, in particular, has issued an extensive set of documents and training guides about the resolution and related issues and has thereby promoted gender mainstreaming within the UN itself. The organisation has in addition translated the resolution into seventy languages for local dissemination (Binder et al, 2008: 26). Women's groups advocating for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo used UNSCR 1325 to demand a place

at the negotiation table. UNSCR 1325 gave Congolese women the power of international authority to demand participation. In February 2002, they hosted a meeting of the warring factions, government, and civil society in Nairobi, Kenya. The resulting Nairobi Declaration consequently reflects the potential of UNSCR 1325 in its call for an immediate cease-fire, the inclusion of women in all aspects of the peace process, the formation of the Congolese Women's Caucus and the adoption of a 30 per cent quota for women at all levels of government.

UNSCR 1325 has thus had both its success and its failures. Ten years on, UNSCR 1325 has made important steps towards improving the protection of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict, but reality on the ground shows that there is little improvement in the way that they have been treated (Purcell, 2006:6). The follow-up adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 on Women, Peace and Security in 2008 has therefore been adopted just in time. The new resolution will hopefully help to not only reinforce the goals set out in UNSCR 1325 and strengthen the implementation of its predecessor, but also expand its mandate. .

United Nations Security Resolution 1820:

Unanimously adopted by the UN Security Council on 19 June, the newest resolution confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations and aims to advance the broader agenda of women, peace and security. The development of UNSCR 1820 started in 2005, at which time there were divergent views on the adoption of a resolution specifically aimed at combating sexual violence. The Permanent Commission of the United Kingdom to the UN was the first mission to consider how to continue advancing women, security and peace agenda after perceiving critical weaknesses in the language of UNSCR 1325 (Achuthan & Black, 2009:7). With the help of various women's organisations, the Mission concluded that a more 'action-based' resolution was needed, one that would specifically address the gross-human rights violations occurring on a daily basis during armed conflict.

Throughout the next three years contributions were made by non-governmental organisations and UN members alike. In October 2007, Ghana held the Presidency of the Security Council and developed a Presidential Statement, which called for a working group on women, peace and security. Although most of the wording for a working group was dropped in the final draft of the presidential statement, the debate that ensued, and the advocacy taking place at the time, laid the groundwork for the formulation of a new resolution (Achuthan & Black, 2009:8). Soon afterwards, the UK and UNIFEM began collaborating on a conference to be held at Wilton Park. The aim of the conference was to refine the understanding of what role UN Peacekeepers could play in the prevention of sexual violence during and after armed conflict. Conference participants included representatives from permanent missions to the UN, country-level ministers, military personnel, policy makers, NGO experts from conflict zones and other practitioners with insight into the challenges of addressing sexual violence.

Although conference organisers had not intended for the Willow Park conference to prompt the development of a resolution on sexual violence, shortly after the conference the United States of America government expressed its interest in advancing a resolution on the topic during its next Security Council Presidency. The resolution did initially face some objection from various NGO groups and certain permanent member of the UN Security Council. Concerns were put forth regarding the language used in the resolution, as certain women's groups feared that the language used might create 'loopholes', which could later be exploited. Also, fear was expressed that the discourse used might designate women as victims during war and subsequently denies them their 'active agent' titles. However, once the language was rectified and accepted by the concerned parties, the path towards UNSC 1820 was set. Exactly three weeks after the Willow Park meeting, UNSC 1820 was unanimously adopted in a Security Council session presided over by US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.

Contents of UNSCR 1820:

The contents of UNSCR 1820 are focused specifically on the topic of sexual violence against women in war, as well as ensuring women's participation in conflict decision-

making procedures. The resolution recognises sexual violence as a tactic of war and simultaneously, also makes a connection between the existence of sexual violence and the maintenance of international peace and security. The resolution furthermore recognises sexual violence as war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide, while also emphasising women's role in decision-making procedures. In addition, the resolution also demands the "immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians;" calls for women's participation in peace talks; urges sanctions for perpetrators; and requires that sexual violence be excluded from amnesties. UNSCR 1820 is consequently not only a milestone in itself, but it also serves as a reinforcement of UNSCR 1325. .

Strengths and Weaknesses of UNSC 1820:

Similar to UNSCR 1325, the new resolution also has its strengths and weaknesses. The resolutions' strengths include raising an awareness of rape during war, reforming laws relating to the successful prosecution of wartime sexual violence and excluding sexual violence from wartime amnesty agreements. On the other hand, the resolution's weaknesses are related to its language and focus, as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. In addition, Resolution 1325 also faces challenges in terms of implementation. The resolution is still very new and a general lack of awareness exists regarding its existence (Achuthan & Black, 2009:31). This is especially noticeable among the general civilian population, civil society and even women's NGO's and organisations. Although not very concerning given the resolution's recent development, it must be remembered that women's groups were the main promoters of UNSCR 1325 and most of the UNSCR 1325's successes are found in the activities of women's organisations. UNSCR 1820 would thus benefit greatly from having the support of women's activists.

Both UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 have the potential to bring about great change for women in conflict and non-conflict situations. As such, they have much in common:

Both resolutions are action documents and tools of accountability that oblige all stakeholders to protect women and girls, to ensure their participation in peace, recovery,

and construction, and to promote their fundamental rights for sustainable democratic development (Achuthan & Black, 2009:32). Together, these two resolutions could form a very powerful tool in combating women's inequality in both society and during war. However, for this to happen, continued action has to be taken to ensure the implementation of both resolutions. Without use, these potentially powerful tools remain unfulfilled commitments and fail to address women's need in war.

Chapter Eight

A Case Study of Women in the Sierra Leone's Civil War

In the previous seven chapters, this thesis has discussed how women experience war differently from men, including their experiences as victims and their mobilisation as active agents. Attention has been given to the violence suffered by women, the discrimination they face, and the positive way in which they face and overcome the challenges they encounter during war. The purpose of this final chapter is subsequently to put into practice the assumptions and theories discussed throughout this thesis by studying the experiences of women during the civil war in Sierra Leone. This example of women in conflict will be discussed in terms of the following aspects: First, the background to the civil war in Sierra Leone will be discussed, with attention being given to the position and status of Sierra Leonean women prior to the war. Second, women's various experiences during the conflict will be examined, with consideration being given to the various roles they fulfilled during the war, the violence they suffered, as well as their experiences as refugees or internally displaced persons. Third, attention will be given to women's participation during peace processes, including their partaking in grassroots organisations and their presence at the formal peace negotiations. Fourth, women's experiences in the post-conflict phase will be analysed, including occurrences of post-conflict violence, their participation in post-conflict reconstruction, and the reintegration of refugees and displaced persons. Finally, this chapter will focus on the status of women after the conflict and will discuss any challenges that they may face in the aftermath of war.

Background to the conflict

Sierra Leone is a coastal West African nation state that shares borders with Guinea and Liberia. A country rich in resources, including timber, ivory, palm oil, and valuable mineral deposits such as gold, bauxite and diamonds, Sierra Leone was colonised by the British in 1808 (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:10). Colonisation lasted for approximately 153 years and was a relatively peaceful period in Sierra Leone's history. During its movement to abolish slavery, the United Kingdom allowed thousands of freed slaves to

find refuge in its West African territory. The resulting Krio tribe settled in the Freetown area and constitute 10 per cent of the total population (Human Rights Watch, 2003:9). The educated Krio minority generally occupies a higher social and economic position and has traditionally been resented by the other 15 ethnic groups in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2003:9).

Sierra Leone received independence from the British in 1961. For most of the next three decades the country was governed by the All Peoples Congress (ACP) party. The post-colonialism government was characterised by corruption, nepotism, and fiscal mismanagement. Upholding the colonial practice of emphasising the export of raw materials over industrial production, the one-party rule of the ACP caused the impoverishment of Sierra Leonean population (Human Rights Watch, 2003:9). Day (2008:500) explains,

In many ways, the war in 1991 and resulting state collapse was a result of thirty years in which various elites had converted political power into their own economic gain, while extracting wealth from the majority, resulting in the marginalisation of most sectors of society in the post-colonial state.

The country's economy systematically declined throughout the 1980s, partly because of lost revenue due to diamond smuggling (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:10). However, politicians, powerful chiefs and traders prospered even though the average citizen's standard of living continued to falter.

Frustration with the government's corruption and mismanagement lead to increased unrest among youths and students who could not support themselves and their families. Many of these students were expelled from the country, only to flee to Ghana and Libya where they attended Moammar Qaddafi's secret service military training facility. Searching for allies to overcome the West's containment of Qaddafi's regime, Libya was eager to nurture the political discord amongst the young Sierra Leoneans (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:10). It was within these military camps that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was formed under the leadership of Foday Sankoh in 1984.

In March 1991, RUF rebels invaded Sierra Leone from Liberia and occupied the eastern regions of the country, securing lucrative diamond reserves. In exchange for weapons, drugs and supplies, Sierra Leone diamonds were smuggled into Liberia for sale on the international market (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:11). The RUF originally only consisted of two small groups of 150 soldiers in total. However, control of the diamond mines allowed Sankoh to recruit, both forcibly and voluntarily, young miners, locally unemployed men and children into fighting forces.

From the very beginning, the RUF committed heinous acts of violence. Within the first 18 months of the conflict, over 40 000 people were internally displaced while hundreds of thousands became refugees (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:11). The RUF's terror tactics included murder, public beatings, amputations and the use of sexual violence and sexual slavery (Human Rights Watch, 2003:10). According to Mazurana & Carlson (2004:11), violence against women and young girls and general terror in both rural and urban centres became one of the cornerstones of RUF movement and was encouraged by its leadership. The war furthermore destroyed hundreds of hospitals, schools and tens of thousands of homes. Sierra Leone's infrastructure support systems were virtually destroyed, leaving civilians in a particularly vulnerable position.

The civil war would last for just over a decade. The first attempt at peace was brokered due to growing international pressure in 1999. RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, and democratically elected president, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, negotiated the Lomé Peace Accord during July of 1999 in Togo. The accord, brokered by the UN, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), committed the RUF to laying down their weapons in exchange for representation in a new government. The peace process was, however, marred by cease-fire violations, missed deadline and infighting within rebel ranks (Human Rights Watch, 2003:13). The RUF, furthermore, failed to comply with several commitments, including the release of civilian abductees.

With the Lomé Peace Accord failing, the situation in the country continued to deteriorate. In May 2000 the situation had worsened to the extent that British troops were deployed in

Operation Palliser to evacuate foreign national, secure the country's airport, allow reinforcement of the UN contingent, and assist the in the re-organisation of pro-government forces as an effective fighting force (Human Rights Watch, 2003:14). The British troops were able to stabilise the situation and were the catalysts for a cease-fire and the eventual end of the war. A new cease-fire was necessary to revive the peace process and such an agreement was subsequently signed in November 2000 in Abuja.

A second Abuja Agreement was negotiated in May 2001 and set the stage for the resumption of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of combatants on a large scale and lead to a significant reduction in hostilities. By January of 2002, nearly 47,710 combatants had been disarmed and demobilised, including a high number of child soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 2003: 15). On 18 February 2002, President Kabbah declared the Civil War officially over. The following month, the state of emergency was lifted for the first time in four years. Following this act, the government charged Sankoh and other RUF members held in custody since May 2000 with a number of crimes, including murder and related charges.

Sierra Leone held its first post-war democratic elections on 18 May 2002. In the election, President Kabbah and his party, the Sierra Leone People's Party, won landslide victories in the presidential and legislative elections. In his second term in office, President Kabbah faced the challenge of rebuilding the country and its economy. After a decade of war, Sierra Leone ranked last among 162 countries in terms of life expectancy at birth, adult literacy, and combined enrolment in primary, secondary and tertiary education; and GDP per capita (Human Rights Watch, 2003:15).

Women's Experiences of the Civil War

Women have a long history of being active and respected members of the community in Sierra Leone. According to Day (2008:496), women in Sierra Leone have held a high status in society in both their private roles as wives and mothers and in their public roles as ceremonial chiefs, land chiefs and other titled positions within socio/political structures since before colonialism. Women's market associations have furthermore managed or at least, influenced trade and commerce in Sierra Leone's capitol Freetown

since the 1800s. However, despite these long-standing examples of the exercise of women's power in the private and public realms, women suffered greatly due to gender based violence and marginalisation in the decade long war.

Female combatants in the RUF and CDF:

Both women and girls took part in the Sierra Leone civil war as combatants. Mazurana and Carlson (2004:12) estimate that a total of 137,865 women and 12,056 young girls participated in the fighting forces during the civil war. Of these, the majority stated that their recruitment took place by force or by abduction by rebel forces, leaving very few to have joined to armed forces voluntarily. Once recruited, women and girls had various roles to fulfil, including that of frontline fighters. In the RUF, nearly all of the women received basic military and weapons training with both machine guns and two-grip pistols (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:12). In addition to their roles as combatants, women and girls also served as cooks, porters, assistants to the sick and wounded, “wives”, food producers, messengers, spies, communications technicians and as workers in the diamond fields.

Captive “wives” of RUF commanders, however, enjoyed special status and exerted considerable power within RUF compounds (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004: 14). These wives were predominantly adolescent girls. When the commander was away, they were left in charge of the compound. They kept in communication with the commander and would send troops, ammunition and supplies when needed. These girls furthermore decided on a daily basis who would fight, provide reconnaissance, and raid villages for food and loot (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:14). Some women also counselled their husbands on war strategy, troop movement and upcoming attacks. However, as noted in the Kono District of Sierra Leone, commanders’ “wives” were in some cases replaced with new or more favoured girls. The “rejected” wives would subsequently be sent to the frontlines to fight. Thus, even though women were known to wield some level of power and authority, their positions were never guaranteed.

Women and girls were also enlisted into Sierra Leone's pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF), such as the Kamajors and Gbethis. Members of the Kamajors group were

originally a male-only traditional hunting society, but due to increased pressure from the RUF, began to recruit women and girls in the early 1990s and continued this practice throughout the war. The Goethe group, however, enlisted and integrated women from the very beginning and regarded them as integrated member of the CDF. As such, women were included in all ceremonies, amulets and sacrifices and served as commanders, frontline fighters, initiators, spiritual leaders, medics, herbalists, spies, and cooks (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:13).

In terms of recruitment, women and girls joined the CDF at the request of their husbands who were already part of the militias. Many adolescents and children joined the Kamajors and Gbethis with the approval of their families. This was especially relevant in areas where the Paramount Chief of the area endorsed a particular unit of the CDF; it then became mandatory that all families contribute at least one member to the CDF (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:13). There were, however, also cases where women were abducted and forcibly conscripted by the Kamajors and Gbethis. During such occurrences, women and girls already a part of the CDF worked with their male counterparts to capture civilian adolescents and children, whom they forcibly initiated and trained as fighters (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:13).

Women and girls in both the CDF and the RUF observed widespread human rights violations and in some cases, actively partook in them during the civil war. In the CDF, for example, girls reported witnessing acts such as cannibalism, human sacrifice and sexual abuse. According to Devon (2008:7), this constant exposure to violence, eventually lead girls to accepting such acts as routine. These observations resonate with Kerman's (2005) observations about the normalisation of violence. When individuals perpetrate acts of violence and torture, overtime they tend to see themselves as performing a routine, an everyday job. This sense of routine was expressed by a number of the participants in Devon and McClure's (2005) Sierra Leone study. As the war continued, many young women came to view their participation as simply a normative act:

Killing was part of the normal activities of the RUF...Overcoming the enemy was part our job...Once you were part of the fighting force, you should be seen killing someone without even a reason. This shows that you were committed and ready to work with them (Devon & Mac lure, 2005 – girl, Sierra Leone).

Victims of Gender Based Violence:

Occurrences of sexual violence were widespread and systematic during the Sierra Leone Civil War. This violence included rape, gang rape, sexual slavery and assault. Rape was so prevalent during the war that one mental health worker with the Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF) commented, "...being raped is like being bitten by a mosquito, it's that frequent". According to Shanks et al. (2001:304), rape in Sierra Leone was an effective means of terrorising entire communities and was aimed at to humiliate and punish them and ultimately, to control them. Human Rights Watch (2003:35) explains,

The rebels sought complete domination by doing whatever they wanted with women, including sexual acts that, by having the additional element of assailing cultural norms, violated not only victims, but also her family or wider society.

Sexual violence was consequently aimed at not only violating women themselves, but was also a means whereby to afflict entire communities by breaking taboos and undermining cultural values (Shanks et al. 2001:304). .

Moreover, cases of rape were often followed by other human right violations against the victim, her family and community members (Human Rights Watch, 2003:31). Women were consequently beaten and raped in public. One women, who was 24 years old when the RUF attacked the Hawaii village, testified the following to Human Rights Watch (2003),

I was captured together with my husband, my three young children and other civilians as we were fleeing from the RUF when they entered Jaiweii. Two rebels asked to have sex with me but when I refused, they beat me with the butt of their guns. My legs were bruised and I lost three of my front teeth. Then the two rebels raped me in front of my children other civilians. Many other women were raped in public places. The RUF rebels stayed in Jaiweii for four months and I was raped by three other wicked rebels during this period.

RUF members were also known to use objects, including weapons, burning wood and hot oil, to rape and torture women, sometimes resulting in their death. In 1994, an elderly

man from the Giehun district, witnessed the brutal killing of a women accused of plotting to set Foday Sankoh up for government ambush (in Human Rights Watch, 2003). The women, named Janneh, was brought to the village square by the rebels, forced to lay on her back and then the rebels poured boiling palm oil into her vagina and her ears. She did not survive the attack.

Sexual slavery was also particularly prevalent during the civil war. As McKay and Mazurana (2004:58) note, “nearly all of abducted girls are raped and girls associated with fighting forces almost universally report sexual violence”. Women and young girls were primarily abducted to be sex slaves of the rebels and to perform slave labour. For example, girls were required to perform sexual acts to male soldiers during military campaigns and as rewards to celebrate a victorious attack (Stavros in Denov, 2008:9). Alongside the repeated sexual violence, many girls were also forced to “marry” individual males within the fighting forces. Euphemistically referred to as “bush marriages” or “AK-47 marriages” in Sierra Leone, these marriages were equivalent to sexual slavery whereby women would be seen as the “property” of specific males in the group (Denov, 2008:9).

The victims of acts of sexual violence often experienced serious health consequences. According to Shanks et al. (2001:300), incidences of sexually transmitted diseases are very high among survivors of sexual violence, including the HIV/AIDS virus. Doctors interviewed by Human Rights Watch (2003:50) reported a high level of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) amongst victims, as the armed conflict in Sierra Leone served as a vector for sexually transmitted diseases. Moreover, numerous women reported unwanted pregnancies as a result of sexual violence (Denov, 2008:8). Other health problems included complications when giving birth, prolapsed uterus and severe trauma.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons:

The violence of the civil war in Sierra Leone caused a high number of people to flee their homes. Approximately 400 000 people fled from Sierra Leone into neighbouring Guinea and Liberia (Amowitz et al, 2002:514). Many others became internally displaced persons (IDPs) within their own country. Of these, according to Amowits et al. (2002:514), 334 061 people registered as IDPs in 2002 and a further 500 000 to 1 million people were estimated to be unregistered IDPs. The majority of both refugees and IDPs were women and children.

Even though they had escaped the direct violence of the civil war, women were not always safe as refugees or IDPs. In a study conducted by the American Medical Association (2002), it was found that 13% of their respondents had experienced incidents of war-related human rights abuses, while 94% reported experiencing war-related sexual assaults. They also reported that non-war related acts of violence committed by family or community members increased while being displaced. In addition, many cases of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) were reported in refugee and IDP camps (Human Rights Watch, 2003:24). Traditionally a part of an initiation rite, approximately 90 percent of Sierra Leonean women have undergone FGM. Because it was not always possible to hold the ceremonies during the war, initiation rites are often practices in refugee and IDP camps on adult women, girl mothers and pregnant women – whereas traditionally it was a rite of passage into adulthood for adolescent girls.

Some women did, however, have positive experiences while being refugees or IDPs. Many women have reported receiving assistance from and gaining new skills while displaced (Fontanini & Conteh, 2002:2). For example, Sierra Leonean refugees in the Samukai camp in Liberia were taught new trades by UNHCR's implementing partners, such as tailoring. One woman, Massa, was involved in small-scale trading in her village before her flight. She hopes to resume these activities upon her return home, as well as improve her new skills as seamstress (Fontanini & Conteh, 2002:2). In cases such as

these, women feel empowered upon during their stay in displacement camps and start looking forward to their return home, as they have hope for the future.

Unified Members of the Community:

Despite the widespread violence and suffering, the Sierra Leone Civil War also constituted a period of unprecedented unity amongst women (Day, 2008:501). The women leaders of the country worked closely together to support the agenda of women's empowerment, expansion of civic education, the ousting of military rule, and the establishment of a responsive democratic government. According to Day (2008:501), much of this grassroots activism emerged from women responding to a deeply held consciousness of themselves as women with responsibilities to their families and communities. One Temne ceremonial chief interviewed in 1995 described how her husband had died during the war and left her with seven children under the age of 10 to raise alone. She says that if it were not for the various women's organisations that she had been involved in, she and her family would not have survived (in Day, 2008:501).

Women Participating in Peace & DDR Processes:

From early on in the war, women in rural and urban centres mobilised to protest atrocities and call for peace. Three grassroots women's groups were particularly active during this time, namely the Women's Forum, the Women's Movement for Peace and the Women's Wing of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress. Together, these three movements worked to establish democratic elections and bring the war to an end. In addition, women's groups were also actively involved in reintegrating former combatants, especially women and children who were excluded from formal Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programs.

Women Taking the Lead for Democracy:

Women's groups demonstrated unprecedented awareness, activism and unity of all strata of women during the civil war (Day, 2008:501). According to Sesay (2005:182), the

period 1994-1998 marked a turning point in the history of Sierra Leone with regard to the role of Sierra Leonean women, and civil society in general, in the democratisation process. It started in 1994, when the Sierra Leone Association of University Women (SLAUW) proposed that women's groups meet regularly for networking, information-sharing and collective action on issues of common concern. The following year SLAUW participated in a series of teleconference discussions, enabling women to learn about initiatives taken by other Third World women in similar conflict situations.

Women's groups from all over the country came together and resolved to take action for both peace and democracy. They believed that the best strategy would be to directly intervene in the political situation on the ground (Sesay, 2005:183). They subsequently agreed on three issues: First, the women's groups agreed that the national crisis facing Sierra Leone was too serious to be left to the military government in power. Second, they believed that military would be more tolerant of being challenged by groups of women than by groups of men. Third, women were natural peacemakers and could subsequently bring unique skills into resolving the conflict.

The Sierra Leone Women's' Movement for Peace (SLWMP) and the Women's Forum began to lead a campaign of appeals to the National Provision Ruling Council (NPRC) military government and the rebels. Their primary demand: Democratic elections to be held as soon as possible. Sesay (2005:183) argues that the women's campaigning put the issues regarding the handling of the war into the public domain in a non-partisan and non-confrontational manner, which made public debate of contentious issues possible without fear of automatically offending the government. As a result of the women's intervention, a negotiated peace settlement became a respectable option that offered both the NPRC government and the rebels the opportunity to climb down from entrenched positions without degradation.

Among their activities that forced the military government to hold democratic elections, was the two National Consultative Conferences held at the Bintumani Hotel August 15-17, 1995 and February 12, 1996, and a massive demonstration of women dressed in white

on January 16, 1996, calling for the military regime to step down. During the second Bintumani conference in February 1996, the women showed their solidarity in the face of the obstinate military regime. In spite of armed soldiers blocking off traffic and occurrences of violence and intimidation, the majority of the women in attendance voted that the elections continue. Sessay (in Day, 1998:502) recalls the events of that day:

On that fateful day of Bintumani II, armoured vehicles and armed military personnel lined the streets of Freetown and surrounded the conference hall in a bid to intimidate the defiant women who were all dressed in black – mourning for democracy. Some women were harassed, beaten up and prevented from participating in the meeting. Despite the skirmishes on the route, those who daringly managed to enter the hall critically spoke out.

Thus, despite obvious intimidation, the women's groups insisted that the military government make way for democratic elections and move out of the way of the people of Sierra Leone's right to self government (Day, 1998:502).

When the military government indicated that they might postpone the elections for security reasons, the women's movement organised a massive march in January 1996 (Day, 1998:502). Dressed in white, the women virtually brought the capitol, Freetown, to a standstill with their demonstrations. The military government argued that the logistics of holding elections were problematic as a large part of the country was under 'rebel' control or not secure enough for safe travel. The Women's Movement for Peace, however, was insistent that the Interim National Commission (INEC) and international observers would work out a formula for fair representation so that the elections could be held. After the women's movement's public demonstrations and threats of a general strike, the original timetable for the elections was restored.

The determination of the women eventually forced the military government into democratic, multi-party elections on February 26, 1996. The elections resulted in the elections of President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. However, the victory was of a short duration. President Kabba's government was toppled by a military coup less than a year later on 25 May 1997. Calling themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), the rebel regime completely thwarted the people's hope for a democratically

elected government and was unanimously rejected by the people of Sierra Leone, who instituted mass civil disobedience (Day, 1998:503). The efforts of Sierra Leone women once again paid off. In February, 1998 the AFRC was forcefully driven out of power by ECOMOG forces and President Kabba was reinstated on March, 10 1998.

Women Leading the Way for Peace:

Apart from their advocacy for democratic elections, women's groups also mobilised themselves in the pursuit of peace. In May 2000, with the RUF flouting the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord, a group of elderly women came together and demanded a meeting with RUF leader, Foday Sankoh. On arrival at the RUF compound, the women were mistreated and insulted. Frustrated by the situations, the women tried a different tactic to gain Sankoh's attention. They collectively hitched up their skirts, bent over and bared themselves to Sankoh and his entourage (Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:4). In Sierra Leone, such an action by women is the worst curse that can be brought upon anyone.

The news of these events had a galvanising effect on fellow Sierra Leone citizens. According to Mazurana & Carlson (2004:4), they now had an obligation to uphold the elderly women's honour and support the curse. The women's actions subsequently gave people the courage to stand up to the RUF. Coinciding with the arrival of a new UN mission and British Special Forces, the women's protests and public demonstrations were not only pivotal in the struggle for peace, but also culminated in the arrest of Foday Sankoh.

Women's Contributions to Reintegration of Ex-Combatants:

Women's groups and individual women further played an important role in reintegrating former combatants, especially women and children. Some women's whose children were killed during the war opened their homes to child soldiers returning from the front. Such occurrences were particularly helpful, since it has been suggested that a trusting relationship with a caring adult may be a critical element in a child's recovery from the scourge of war (McKay & Mazurana, 2004). In other cases, women set aside their own suffering and offered help, saying that "If left abandoned, the child ex-combatant will

have nothing positive to do...and would prove a threat to a fragile peace” (in Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:4).

In a survey conducted by Mazurana & Carlson (2004), it was found that 55 per cent of respondents indicated that a woman in their community played a significant role in their reintegration. This percentage was higher than responses given to women and child soldiers by traditional leaders and international aid workers. According to the study population, community women provided guidance, shared meagre resources and most importantly, helped facilitate their skills training and education by providing childcare, clothes and food. McKay (2004:28) notes the example of women elders in the village of Mambolo in Western Sierra Leone, who assisted returned girl soldiers in the following ways:

They then tried to help them by talking with them and giving them small sums of money, cloth and traditional medicine. In addition, they taught some girls ‘how to cure’, using traditional medicine and midwifery so they could make money through a socially useful role in the community. They encouraged the girls through singing, so the girls could forget the past.

Women’s organisations have subsequently set an example for many of the female ex-combatants, as over 65 per cent of study participants said that they would like to join such organisations, which they regarded as offering practical assistance to those in need (in Mazurana & Carlson, 2004:5).

Women in the Aftermath of the Civil War

Similar to other women’s experience of the post-war period, there was no aftermath for women in Sierra Leone. The end of the civil war brought with it a series of new challenges and obstacles. Some of the daunting problems facing women in Sierra Leone was the consolidation of peace, rehabilitation of the infrastructure, reintegration of ex-combatants; resettlement of the displaced (both external and internal); and consolidation of advances in democratic governance. These were the key challenges facing women in Sierra Leone and if addressed thoroughly, could have transformed the country in the aftermath of the war (Sesay, 2005:189).

Rehabilitation of infrastructure – Health Care and Education:

Much of Sierra Leone's infrastructure was destroyed during the war, including hospitals and schools. Consequently, many women, especially those who suffered gender-based violence during the war, had inadequate access to assistance in the post-war period. Barnes et al. (2007:2) has noted that women in Sierra Leone have been offered limited assistance to deal with health, psychosocial, economic consequences of their experiences during war and subsequently continue to be discriminated against in the post-war phase. Furthermore, the failure to put in place mechanisms to prosecute perpetrators of violence and human rights violations against women have contributed to a culture of impunity around crimes of violence against women.

Women who were abducted, forcibly recruited or enslaved during the war faced particular challenges in the aftermath. These women are often blamed or stigmatised in the aftermath and are consequently hesitant to seek much needed assistance. UNICEF (2005:9) notes that victims of sexual violence become social pariahs in the aftermath: "They are rejected by husbands, families and communities and face impoverishment and humiliations". Aware of these circumstances, the International Red Cross (IRC) and the Sierra Leone government have collaborated to establish three Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC), locally referred to as "Rainbo" centres. Set up in Freetown, Kinema and Kono, each of these centres offer free medical, psychosocial and legal support. From March 2003 to September 2005, the Centres provided assistance to 1,769 survivors of sexual assault.

In addition to providing health care, each Rainbo Centre is also closely connected to a government hospital and provides free and confidential counselling, forensic medical examination and treatment, transport, food, clothes and legal advocacy. The SARC project has also gone to great lengths to ensure that female survivors have the option to see female doctors. Eight female doctors have been trained to conduct all preliminary medical consultations and to prescribe treatment at the Freetown centre. However, female doctors are not available at the provincial centres. In these cases, the project has trained two health ministry doctors to work alongside Rainbo midwives.

The international community has furthermore become involved in the reconstruction of the economic and educational sectors after the end of the conflict. Donor funding has consequently contributed education, adult literacy, health care, trauma counselling and skills programming, as well as credit and income-generating programmes schemes for a limited number of survivors of sexual violence (Human Rights Watch, 2002:68). In addition, long-term sexual and gender-based violence programmes have been established to educate communities about sexual and domestic violence. Furthermore, legal aid programmes have been established in the camps of internally displaced persons in the east and south of Sierra Leone (Human Rights Watch, 2002:68). These programmes have been very successful in changing the attitudes of IDP communities' towards sexual and domestic violence. The programmes have also empowered women to stand up for their rights.

Reintegration of Former Combatants:

Initial Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration programmes in Sierra Leone privileged male combatants at the expense of women and girls (Denov, 2008:19). Mazurana & Carlson (2004:20) note a variety of reasons why women and girls did not participate in formal DDR programmes with ignorance of the existence of the programmes and fear of what the process might entail being the most prominent reasons. As a result, many women and girls skipped the DDR process altogether and experienced 'spontaneous reintegration' whereby women and girls were forced to assimilate directly into their communities, return to new communities, or drift to camps for internally displaced persons in search of alternative methods of support (Denov, 2008:20).

One salvation for girls such as these was a special project, which was initiated in Sierra Leone in 2003. The project was established to identify and assist approximately 3 000 girls who had not been included in the initial DDR programmes. Throughout 2003, 724 women registered with the program, 110 were reunited with their families and 460 enrolled in skills training or income-generation programmes. UNICEF (2005:17) subsequently launched the "Girls Left Behind" project, which was a short-term intensive

intervention for abducted girls and young women to ensure their protection and reintegration and to offer them basic education and skills training. The program focused on women and young girls who were either still living with their captors or who had been abducted and had been released or had escaped.

Services offered through the programmes subsequently included basic primary health care for women and their babies, medical care for war wounds and sexual trauma, specialised care for severely traumatised children and young women and adolescent health care. In addition, access was provided to schooling through the Community Education Investment Programme, and to skills training, small business development, apprenticeships and non-formal literacy, numeric and life skills. The majority of the girls who participated in the programme reported that they had felt like outcasts in their communities once they returned after the war, but after participating in the programme they felt more confident, respected and more capable of settling conflict and much happier (UNICEF, 2005:19).

Nearly a Decade Later: Current Challenges in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone's civil war was officially declared over in January 2002. Following extensive donor engagement since then, the country is largely considered to be making the transition from post-conflict recovery towards long term development (Barnes et al, 2007:6). However, according to the United Nations Human Development Index, Sierra Leone is still one of the poorest countries in the world. Ranking 180th out of 182 countries in the 2009 HDI index, the country remains to have some of the lowest life-expectancy rates and adult literacy levels among the countries ranked.

Women and girls' position have also not improved very much in the post-war period. According to Barnes et al. (2007:2), women have been offered limited assistance to deal with the health, psychosocial, and economic consequences of sexual violence experienced during the war and continue to experience discrimination in the post-war period. In addition, the failure to put in place mechanisms to prosecute perpetrators of

gender based violence has contributed to a culture of impunity around gender related crimes. As such, the important peace building role of women during the conflict has not translated into greater decision-making power in its aftermath.

There have, however, been some positive developments. The current law reform process has lead to the drafting of three new “Gender Bills” related to women’s rights. Although these Bills were signed into law by the Parliament in June 2007, a need still exists for the Bills to be widely disseminated and coupled with sensitisation strategies in order for them to have an impact. There is thus hope for the women in Sierra Leone, even if the post-war period is characterised by an equal amount of setbacks and victories. As long as Sierra Leonean women can demonstrate the same levels of resilience and strength in the post-war period than they did during the war, there will be positive progress in the future.

Conclusion

The introduction of this thesis states that war has traditionally been regarded as an exclusively male activity – A perception held in both practice and in theory. This thesis has, however, found that war is very much a gendered activity and involves and affects women as much as it does men. As demonstrated in the eight chapters of this thesis, women are very much involved in war and not only are they active participants, but their participation has slowly come to be acknowledged and recognised around the world. It has become increasingly impossible to ignore women in war in the post-Cold War environment as not only academics, but also practitioners are becoming aware of women's diverse experiences during war.

The original aim of this thesis was twofold: First, this thesis aimed to compile a comprehensive literature review of the discourse that has been produced on women in war. Second, this thesis aimed to use this literature review to explore exactly what women's experience of war is in the post-cold war environment and asked a number of questions to aid in its analysis. In terms of the first aim, this thesis found that a number of quality pieces of literature have been produced on the topic of women in war over the past twenty decades. In the literature world, a consciousness has come into being of the different roles that women fulfil during war, of the changes that occur in gender and power relations, of the violence and challenges suffered by women and of the ways in which they mobilise themselves during war.

With regards to the second aim, literature reviewed has demonstrated a growing awareness and understanding of women's experiences of war. Not only has the authors reviewed here demonstrated an understanding of women's diverse experiences of war, but they've also reflected an awareness that this is a diverse topic that requires continued study and research. This continuing research will be of fundamental importance since history has shown that if one does not understand the specific circumstances, experiences, roles, vulnerabilities, and capacities of both men and women in war, one will tend to

construct homogenous strategies of response that does not address gender-based differences, and this generally tends to disadvantage women.

To elaborate on the brief comments above, this conclusion has been sub-divided into four sections. The first two sections address the observations made by this thesis in terms of the original aims set out in the introductory chapter. The first section will discuss the literature on women in war reviewed and the second section will focus on the information gathered on women experiences of war. These two sections are followed by a third section, which discusses the limitations of the existing literature in terms of content and approach. The fourth and final section consists of a short discussion on recommendations for future study and will identify areas that require further research.

1. Literature on Women in War Reviewed

Literature on gender and conflict and on women in conflict has been growing steadily over the past twenty years, beginning with an acknowledgement of women presence in war and developing into concrete analyses and examinations of the many ways that women are involved in and affected by war. This includes texts dealing with the ways in which war affects women and girls differently from men and boys, the particular vulnerabilities and capacities that women develop in conflict, and the different ways in which relief and other forms of assistance and the cessation of hostilities can affect men and women. Authors on gender and conflict, furthermore, come from fields as diverse as international relations; anthropology, human rights, geography, gender studies, law and political science, and many are actively involved in health, humanitarian work, conflict resolution, peace keeping and activism (Thompson, 2006:346). As a result, the literature available on gender and conflict and women in war addresses women experience of war from the pre-war period, throughout the conflict and well-into the aftermath and focuses on a variety of women's experiences; and all of this from a wide-array of perspectives and opinions.

The literature reviewed for this thesis was very diverse. In fact, a wide net had to be cast to find literature focusing specifically on gender and conflict. Of course, a few key authors stood out, such as Cynthia Enloe, Jean Elshtain, Dyan Mazurana, Cynthia Cockburn, and J Ann Tickner. Much of the rest, however, were individual or a group of researchers committing their research for publication in journals or to be presented at a conference. The majority of the literature reviewed was, furthermore, prepared by women. Literature on gender and war produced by men was the exception, with Joshua Goldstein's book *Gender and War* (2001) being one of the few noteworthy exceptions. In addition, most of the literature reviewed here focused on a particular of conflict, like women's experiences of war, women's gender roles during war, violence against women in conflict, women's inclusion in post-war decision-making procedures and women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. It was very seldom that a piece of literature, whether a book or article, focused on more than one of these aspects at a time.

In addition, most of the studies focusing on "gender" and conflict tended to focus more on the experiences of women and seldom included the experiences of men as well. Thus, these studies were more women orientated than gender per se. This is a common misinterpretation of the meaning of gender, as in these cases gender is automatically equated with what is female and not with what is male as well. In truth, when the topic of gender is addressed, it should refer to both the experiences of female and male. Similarly, studies focusing on gender and conflict or women in conflict, once again focused more on women than on the conflict aspect. The literature available on the affects of gender on conflict and vice versa is not very concrete and mostly favours one aspect over the other. As a result, authors have not focused on why war in the post-Cold War environment has developed in such a way that it affects women so profoundly, but have rather looked at how war is experienced by women.

2. An overview of Women's Experience of War: Answers to Thesis' Original Questions:

The literature reviewed has offered a rich source of information on women's in war and has provided valuable insight into women's experiences of conflict in the post-Cold War environment. The literature reviewed has offered both understanding and insight into women's lives during war and has highlighted both their victories and their hardships. As such, this thesis was able to find answers to the questions originally set at the beginning of this research project. The following has been observed:

1. Women are victims, survivors and active agents during war. Not only do they transgress traditional gender boundaries during conflict, but they also transform themselves into active agents and mobilised participants of the war effort. Women have so-to-speak stepped out of the domestic sphere to take up arms alongside men and in many cases, have used these opportunities to establish successful careers for themselves in the armed forces. They have consequently become direct participants in war and are no longer necessarily confined to the sidelines as passive supporters or observers to masculine prowess. Women have also empowered themselves as breadwinners, single head of households and community leaders in the absence of men. They have taken up tasks and activities previously reserved for men in order to provide for their families and maintain their communities, and in doing so they have addressed gender stereotypes of female weakness and dependency on males. As a result, women have been able to shift their traditional gender identities and adjust power relationships in their favour.
2. Women's agency is not restricted to the conflict period. They are just as active and organised in the post-war phase. Women are no longer satisfied with men returning from the battlefield and making all the important decisions. Instead, they have been actively advocating their own participation in decision-making structures and have found innovative ways to incorporate their own interests and concerns in the agendas of post-war negotiations and reconstruction efforts. Women have become particularly active at the grassroots level and have

- advocated for an end to hostilities, a cessation of violence and for the recognition of their wartime efforts. They are no longer passive observers, but are active agents both during and after conflict. Furthermore, when given the opportunity to participate in formal negotiations, women have made use of the opportunity to not only bring their wartime experiences to the negotiating table, but also to address women's concerns and incorporate their interests in the post-war environment.
3. Women make many political, economic and social gains during conflict. However, it is still the case that most of these gains are reversed in the post-war phase. The reasons for this are numerous: In many cases, women themselves give up their wartime gains themselves, either due to an unawareness of the gains they have made or an inability to consolidate those gains. In other cases, women's gains are forcibly taken from them because men demand that the gender status quo that existed prior to the conflict be reinstated in the post-war phase. Whichever the case, a need exists for women to entrench their wartime gains and for this to happen, women have to be allowed to participate equally with men in the rebuilding of the countries after the end of war. If they can do this, they will be able to rebuild a society that recognises their needs, expertise and abilities as much as it does men's. The first step to entrenching women's wartime gains is to rebuild a society that incorporates the interests of women and does not relegate them back to the private sphere.
 4. The International Community has increasingly become aware of women's experiences during war and has in many cases formulated a response to assist women during conflict situations. Efforts have also been made to address women's specific needs during conflict through implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender awareness tools. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 remains a milestone in this regard and further hope is created with spin-off resolutions, such as UNSCR 1820. However, an urgent need exists for these resolutions to be fully implemented and for their implementation to be adequately monitored. Thus, these potentially powerful mechanisms have to become more than words on a paper. They have to become deeds in practise.

3. Limitations to Existing Literature:

Despite the many literary achievements focusing on gender and conflict or women in war, there are still several important areas of the literature on conflict where there is little or no gender analysis. As Cynthia Cockburn (2004:25) says, “Gender has a curious way of being both simultaneously present and absent in popular perception.” The majority of the current literature available on conflict is still, as Thompson (2006:343) says, mainly about men’s involvement in war, whether they are creating it, profiting from it, provoking it, supplying it, doing the fighting, directing it, or suffering from it. This gender blindness is perpetuated when writers specifically identify men as the main or sole actors in armed conflict, or fail to question the assumption that men’s experiences and perspectives are universal. Literature on women’s experiences is less popular and is usually addressed as a separate issue. It is seldom that a study is found that focuses on both the experiences of men and women simultaneously. Women’s experiences are usually addressed individually and this is reflected in the literature: It is not people in war, but either men in war or women in war, but never both.

In addition, many of the authors who write on gender and conflict write from their particular areas of expertise or focus on a specific national or regional conflict rather than doing a global analysis. Authors on gender and conflict, as previously mentioned, come from very diverse, yet specified fields. As a result, they tend to not address the wider dynamic of conflict as a global process; instead they concentrate their attention on the particulars of a conflict in a certain time and place and its effects on women, on men, and on their relationships with one another. Or, they tend to focus on only one aspect of women’s experiences, such as their experience as female combatants, single head of households, sole providers or as refugees. While these specific studies are essential and of great value, their specific focus may be one of the main reasons why particular studies of gender and conflict are not tied into a more global analysis (Thompson, 2006:346). A more holistic approach is needed in order to address gender and conflict on a more adequate basis.

4. Recommendations for Future Studies:

A lot of valuable and irreplaceable literature is currently available on the topics of gender and war and women in war. However, opportunities exist to both expand on existing literature and to create new areas of study. As an option, future studies can aim to adequately explain conflict from amongst other theories, a gender perspective. Much of the mainstream literature focused on contemporary conflict is still dominated by outdated theories about the causes and mechanics of war. One should look beyond the classic approaches of realism and liberalism and instead focus on issues such as gender and environmentalism, which are key challenges today. Consequently, future studies can focus on challenging our current way of viewing today's conflict and introduce new perspectives, such as examining contemporary wars as methods to adapt to globalisation's challenges and then, can also explain how changing notions of gender identities fit in with this

Gender perspectives can also be incorporated into new theories of conflict. It is important to entrench the habit of applying a gender perspective to conflict theories; and the only way to do this is by continuously applying a gendered lens. Gendered violence in contemporary conflict is an important example of this. Much focus is placed on gender-based and sexual violence against women in war and focuses on women's experiences of these acts. However, little work has been done on how and why gender bases and sexual violence has become a tactic of war in the post-Cold War environment. Emphasis should shift from approaching violence against women as a by-product of war to focusing on gender based and sexual violence as an organic aspect of contemporary warfare. A need exists to explain why and how combatants today see sexual violence as part of their strategy.

Thus, much important work has been done on the topic of gender and war and women in war. The literature produced not only serves as an invaluable source of information on women's experiences of conflict, but also creates a foundation for understanding women's experiences of war. However, many opportunities exist to expand, elaborate on and contribute to this topic. New areas of research, which will hopefully offer future

recommendations on effective means to combat violence against women during war, are waiting to be discovered and explored. A future awaits where women are equal to men both in times of peace and in times of war.

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