

# **Gender Relations: Women in Peacebuilding in Somalia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study's overarching goal is to examine women's roles in peace-building in Somalia, especially Benadir region, over the past three decades, from the years when the country was rife with unrest and ruled by warlords to the era of peace reconciliations and transitional governments to the present day, in which Somalia has a permanent government but is still in an unstable situation after years of dispute. In the context of Somalia, women have made notable contributions to the peace initiation processes and have played a vital part in peacebuilding activities. However, due to the Somali social structure, they are underrepresented in participating in formal peacebuilding processes such as peace negotiation, mediation, and decision-making. Therefore, the groundwork of the research is women's empowerment and same time addressing gender bias that kept hindering women's contribution in peacebuilding.

Furthermore, this study's objectives are based on three main areas: identifying women's contributions to peacebuilding. To determine the barriers that hinder women's contribution, how women navigate those constraints, so far how the situation of women in this post-conflict era is, and what is accomplished to engage equality and women's empowerment in participation in the country's peacebuilding.

The study is non-experimental research, in addition, to applying secondary data obtained from other researchers, institutions, and international organizations. Hence, the study identified two main factors that hinder women's contribution to

peacebuilding such as cultural norms and weak institutions that cannot provide protection for women's rights.

**Keywords:** peacebuilding, gender equality, women, conflict resolution

## ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, özellikle Benadir bölgesi olmak üzere, Somali'de kadınların barış inşası süreçlerindeki rollerini son otuz yılda incelemektir. Somali'nin kalıcı bir hükümeti olmasına karşın, yıllar süren ihtilaflardan sonra hâlâ istikrarsız bir durumdadır. Somali bağlamında kadınlar, barış başlatma süreçlerine önemli katkılarda bulunmuş ve barış inşası faaliyetlerde hayati bir rol oynamışlardır. Ancak, barış başlatma için yaptıkları tüm katkılara rağmen, kadınlar hala barış müzakerelerine, arabuluculuğa ve karar alma pozisyonlarına katılımında yetersiz temsil edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, araştırmanın temeli, kadınların güçlendirilmesi ve aynı zamanda barış inşasına kadınların katkısını engelleyen cinsiyet önyargılarını ele almaktır.

Bu çalışmanın hedefleri üç ana temelde belirlenmiştir: Kadınların katkısını engelleyen faktörleri belirlemek, kadınların bu engelleri nasıl aştığını incelemek, şimdiye kadar çatışma sonrası dönemlerde kadınların durumunun nasıl olduğunu, eşitliği ve kadınların güçlendirilmesini ülkenin barış yapımına katılmak için ne yapıldığını belirlemektir.

Araştırma deneysel olmayan bir çalışmadır ve diğer araştırmacılardan, kuruluşlardan ve uluslararası organizasyonlardan elde edilen ikincil verileri kullanmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, kadınların barış inşasına katkısını engelleyen iki ana faktörü tanımlamıştır: kültürel normlar ve kadın haklarını koruyamayan zayıf kurumlar.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** barış inşası, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, çatışma çözümü

# **DEDICATION**

**To my beloved mother**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CEDAW	Convention Elimination all Discrimination Against Women
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
SRC	Supreme Revolutionary Council
SYL	Somali Youth League
TFG	Transitional Federal Government

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

Peacebuilding is a systematic effort aimed at fostering collaboration and constructive engagement among individuals, organizations, and governments, transcending various societal divisions such as ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, nationality, and race. The primary objective is to achieve social justice using nonviolent means and to tackle the underlying structural factors that lead to the occurrence of violent conflicts (Kroc Institute 2018). In peacebuilding, many presumptions about men and women regarding violent conflicts exist. Alison (2007) argued that women are victims and men are warriors. El-Bushra (2012) mentioned that women are the first and primary victims of conflict and the most vocal peace activists. According to one theory, a stereotypical difference exists between nurturing femininity and aggressive masculinity. Male aggression is genetically and hormonally determined, and war is by definition "war against women" because it is meant to seize both "women's property" and "women as property." (El-Bushra 2012). Therefore, women's participation in peace processes goes beyond gender equality. It focuses on addressing conflict needs and root causes (UNWOMEN, 2022).

Nakaya (2004) states that women show a multifaceted approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As women, their participation is a matter of equitable representation, and sincere conflict resolution as peacebuilding necessitates an inclusive and participatory process. Again, as with women, it is frequently argued that gender perspectives contribute to the substance of negotiations. Similarly, Fearon (2021) argued that conflicts can only be resolved and peace can be initiated through an inclusive process, which necessitates the promotion of women to key positions to engage multiple stakeholders. Previous studies suggest that women who participate in peace processes tend to prioritize reconciliation, education, transitional justice, and economic development. In addition, women frequently advocate for excluded groups and the need to address the root causes of conflict. However, despite having firsthand experiences with violence, insecurity, and conflict resolution, women in war-torn countries are not taken seriously as sources of expert insight (UNWOMEN, 2018). Thus, women should not be considered only victims of violence or unrest as they have historically played and continue to play a part in armed conflict, organized civil society, human rights advocacy, participation in resistance movements, and participation in formal and informal peacebuilding and recovery processes as active agents (OHCHR, 2023).

Charlesworth (2008) argued that the notion of women being pacifists has emerged relatively late within international law literature and is presently being acknowledged by international organizations. The existing UN commitments (human rights treaties and resolutions) that have attracted the membership of the majority of states ever since the end of the Second World War have paved the way for women to be recognized and asserted to have equal rights in the determination of international peace and security.

Ambassador Chowdhury (2010) stated that UNSC Resolution 1325 is not meant to make war safer for women. Instead, it is meant to set up peace so that war and conflict do not occur again. Moreover, to make a real difference in the transition from the cult of war to the culture of peace, women must be present at the peace tables involved in decision-making and peacekeeping teams, especially as civilians. The resolution emphasizes the significance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to uphold and advance peace and security and restates the significant role that women play in conflict prevention and resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and post-conflict reconstruction (UN OSAGE, 2004). Today, 54% of UN member states have adopted the WPS 1325 National Action Plan, of which 29% are African (Acho 2022). Since the adoption of Resolution 1325, the frequency of gender-responsive language in peace agreements as well as the number of women, women's groups, and gender experts serving as official negotiators, mediators, or signatories has increased significantly. However, in several contexts, women's official participation may be temporary, their delegated roles may be more symbolic than substantive, and their ability to exert influence may face direct opposition from local cultural norms (UNWOMEN, 2015).

In Somalia, due to the implementation of UNWPS 1325 and the women's quota of 30%, Somali women's participation in peacebuilding has steadily grown in recent years. According to Amina Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, who visited Somalia after the 2016 election, when Somali women won 24% of the 30% women's quota "Despite the obstacles, the 2016 results demonstrate that progress is possible". However, in 2019 Somali Women's Conference, which was held in Mogadishu under the Somali Women's Charter demanded equal representation of

50% inclusion of women in all sectors, improvement of women's rights, and the elimination of gender-based violence. The charter also demanded an improvement of socio-economic rights including the rights of women's ownership and a review of the constitution (UNDP, 2019).

### **1.1 Research Problem Statement**

Even though Somalia has made progress in recent years, such as the establishment of a provisional constitution that confirms gender equality and forbids discrimination against women, Somalia still ranks fourth-lowest globally for gender equality (0.776) (UNDP 2012), and despite the complex role women continue to play in conflict, peace, and security, Somali women remain largely excluded from key political and decision-making processes due to the male-dominated clan system and the absence of a systematic approach to promoting inclusivity. They continue to be underrepresented in national and regional bodies that make decisions and formulate policies. (UNWOMEN 2022).

The indirect election related to the 4.5-tribe power-sharing system that has been serving Somalia for the last twenty-two years is another vital factor impeding women's participation in peace promotion. Horst (2017) argued that even the women's quota of 30% cannot compete with 4.5. On the other hand, women are considered minors under Somali customary law, but their rights are expanded under Sharia (Jama 2010). However, both factors are common in many things such as prohibiting women from being part of high-level decision-making bodies and equality. So far, many legal instruments that empower women and promote gender equality have fallen short of implementation as a result of these factors. Therefore, this study will examine why Somalian women are still underrepresented and do not participate equally in

peacebuilding processes in the post-conflict era despite making significant contributions to peacebuilding and changing the country's situation over the past three decades. Is it because Somalia's federal government has not established any policies that allow for equal participation, or because the culture does not value women's role in peacebuilding?

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of Somali women in peacebuilding and identify the challenges that are impeding women's contribution to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Moreover, the study points out what has so far been achieved in terms of women's rights and gender equality in Somalia in the post-conflict period.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

- In what ways do Somali women contribute to the peace process?
- What barriers prevent Somali women from being active in peacebuilding?
- How has the federal government of Somalia enabled women to participate in peace-building over the past 12 years?

## **1.4 Justification of Research**

The methodologies and techniques used in peace processes are not gender-neutral. Peace processes are still largely controlled by men because women in most civilizations have less access to and control over resources and power. To ensure that women engage equally with men in peace processes and the rehabilitation of war-torn societies, these inequalities must be taken into account in program formulation, implementation, and monitoring (Barandun, 2005).

Despite being in a post-conflict phase, Somalia continues to cope with inter-conflict, terrorism, underdeveloped institutions, and injustice. In this war-torn nation, women constitute the larger proportion of the overall population (50.15% according to a UN report) yet experience discrimination, violence, unequal resource access, and exclusion from government decision-making bodies. This shows that women in Somalia undoubtedly contribute to peace initiation meaningfully. Hence, this study will assist other researchers in understanding the fields of conflict, peacebuilding, and women's influence; how equal access to power and resources is essential for enhancing peace, and how post-conflict periods are vital processes to establish legal institutions that empower women's participation in peacebuilding and limit the factors that hinder women's participation.

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

According to Kothari (2004), a research methodology is a systematic approach to solving a research problem. It is the study of how scientific investigations are conducted. Thus, this study is an interpretation of qualitative research. Auerbach (2023) defined qualitative research as the process of analyzing and interpreting text, interviews, and observations to identify meaningful patterns that describe a particular phenomenon. Mack *et al* (2005) stated that qualitative methods are useful for intangible aspects such as societal norms, socioeconomic position, gender roles, race, and religion. In this context, qualitative research is considered a suitable method for this study due to its various ways of seeking data, and formal and informal information.

As data sources, research applied secondary data obtained from different resources such as books and journals, that cover topics including women's rights, gender equality, and peacebuilding, reports from the UN, IGAD, AU, International

Organizations, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and policies and legal frameworks. Furthermore, case studies carried out by other researchers in the field of Somali women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution were employed in this research.

The research will go through the aforementioned procedures to enhance the research aim and expectations. Moreover, the study will engage a theoretical framework of feminist constructivism and social constructivism theories combined with the concept of gender and peacebuilding. Both theories will help to understand the perception of the study and increase comprehension of gender and peacebuilding.

### **1.6 Research Limitation**

This research examines the role of women in peacebuilding in Somalia, specifically in Mogadishu. Some regional states were mentioned in the research to bolster the research purpose and emphasize the gravity surrounding women's influence in peacebuilding in Somalia. The resource of the study is a secondary resource and data obtained from documents previously investigated about Somalia and women's issues for the last three decades. In addition, Other than the difficulty of obtaining documents from some online web pages due to limited access, obtaining accurate data that could give the exact number of women's participation in peacebuilding processes such as negotiation, mediation, and reconciliation also posed a challenge.

### **1.7 Thesis Structure**

This research study consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study, and the second represents the literature review, which discusses other scholars' and the author's opinions about women and peacebuilding. The third chapter discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework that serves as the study's

foundation. Subsequently, the fourth chapter presents the findings of the research while the fifth chapter presents a discussion of the findings. A conclusion of the entire study is presented in the last chapter.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and deeply explains the ideology of women in peace promotion by analyzing the existing literature on women's role in peacebuilding. In addition, this chapter presents the challenges and abstracts that affect women's influence in peacebuilding and how women navigate these constraints.

#### **2.2 Perception of Women in Peacebuilding**

The absence of women in battle can be attributed to their inclination towards peaceful pursuits which engenders their opposition to engaging in armed conflicts (Goldstein, 2011). In many societies, a sizable proportion of women—typically more than men—oppose war and work for peace. Women often engage in actions representative of their gender. For instance, Somali women exist at the local level. Throughout the history of every society, women have been seen as representations of peace. In Mediterranean mythology, female deities were viewed as symbols of harmony and were extensively venerated across the region. Maternal, affluent, and subservient were the features that best characterized the goddesses of peace (Elshtain, p. 44 2007). However, although Mediterranean myth places significant emphasis on the inheritance of peacefulness among women, it is worth noting that other narratives depict women as warriors, such as the Greek mythology surrounding the Amazons (Goldstein, 2011).

Despite the many shifts in human thoughts and civilization, the interesting thing is that the influence and inheritance notion of women's peacefulness survived through all that change. In recent decades, unlike before, the notion of women and peace relations has created strong debates among scholars of international politics. Due to the rationality of motherhood, Reardon (1985) asserted that women are antimilitaristic and naturally peaceful. She further elaborated that women engage in peace education to foster improved interpersonal dynamics within their households, localities, and global society (Quoted Skjelsbaek p 62, 2001). Although Sara Ruddick (1989) acknowledges the contextual nature of acts, whether they are violent or peaceful, she does not refute the significance of motherhood in peacebuilding. She asserts that mothering fundamentally involves endeavors to promote growth through protection, nurturing, and instruction. These activities can facilitate the advancement of peace.

It is commonly held that women are less combative and calmer than men (Tickner p 20 2019). Going through analyzing and discussing the women's influence in the First World War and Second World War. Tickner strongly demonstrated that "even if many of the peace movement's pioneers have been men, the majority of peace activists have historically been women, who have frequently organized in separate groups that emphasize maternal images in their activism". For instance, during the early 1960s, the US Women's Strick for Peace advocated for their maternal rights to promote the reduction of nuclear armaments, asserting that such weaponry posed a threat to the institution of the family rather than serving as a safeguard. Tickner also claims that women played a significant role in disarmament campaigns- "reaching critical will", and peace promotion in the First World War under the first Women's Organization

Women Peace Party (WPP), founded during World War 1 and later renamed Woman's International Leagues for peace and freedom.

During the conflict, women's motherhood emphasizes nurturing and non-violent roles (Caprioli 2000; Kaufman, Williams 2013). Bigio and Vogelstein (2022) argued that women can identify early warning signals of conflict. First, as the mother and family backbone of many households and communities, women are in a prime position to recognize warning signs of impending conflict such as the mobilization of forces and the concealment of weapons just as the Kosovo mother did in the war in the Balkans to empower peace and prevent conflict. Thus, women's care practices have served as a form of conflict management minimizing violence and fostering trust between communities and conflict actors like state and non-state armed groups. These practices are essential to human survival (Hedstrom et al. 2021).

When women are involved in peace processes, the resulting accord is more durable and more effectively implemented (Krause et al. 2018). Bigio and Vogelstein (2022) stated that women are seen by negotiating parties as honest brokers, more impartial peace mediators than men, dependable negotiators, and good communication facilitators. Moreover, women engage in high-profile strategies to encourage parties to initiate or renew peace talks and sign accords. Notable examples include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a group of forty female delegates participating in the 2002 Sun City negotiations collectively established a physical barrier by forming a human chain to impede the egress from the committee room. Their objective was to assertively request the delegates' commitment to be there until the formalization of a peace accord by their symbolic action while in Somalia, fasting in public as a form of pressure

resulted in a peace plan being drafted by the 1993 Conference of National Reconciliation's female observers being able to break their fast after twenty-four hours.

Cohn (2012) argued that women are not different from men when it comes to peace and conflict. They -women- raise sons willing to sacrifice for their country. Moreover, women both advocate for and oppose military conflicts. That they not only experience violence in the form of rape, torture, mutilation, murder, widowhood, and child loss, but they also enlist in and lend support to the very militaries and armed groups responsible for these atrocities. However, there are other theories that go beyond this understanding and criticize the essentialist notion of women's peacemaking capacities such as postfeminist theory, which highlights that women's roles in peace inheritance are defined by societal constructions and human action rather than gender.

### **2.3 Somali Women in Peacebuilding**

How do women contribute to peacebuilding? During the Somali civil war, a considerable number of women found themselves embroiled in conflicts involving their male family members (Jama, 2010). Despite the vulnerability of conflict violence and trauma caused by prolonged conflicts, women in Somalia organized peace talks, facilitated negotiations, and formed grassroots organizations to address the root causes of conflict and promote reconciliation within their communities (Jama, 2010; Gardner and Elbushra, 2014; Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013). However, due to the social structure of Somali society which empowers men more than women, women's influence in formal peace initiation was/is extremely limited.

Wilen (2022) argued that women continue to be sidelined in peacekeeping missions, peace negotiations, and peacebuilding processes, despite Resolution 1325 of the UN

Security Council drawing attention to the marginalization of women in peace and conflict issues. According to the UNDP (2023), gender bias in societal norms is a fundamental barrier to attaining gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Therefore, to eliminate gender disparity and emphasize the role of women in peacebuilding and state-building procedures, some countries, particularly those recovering from protracted internal conflicts, began to implement women's quotas. Such countries include Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and so many other African countries.

According to Krook (2007) and Piscopo (2008), the notable advancements in women's political representation over the past two decades may be largely attributed to gender quotas. Both authors asserted that the implementation of quotas not only contributes to the augmentation of female representation in political offices but also facilitates the diversification of the profiles of women elected. This, in turn, leads to heightened awareness and consideration of women's concerns within the public sphere and mitigates the gendered nature of political discourse. Quotas catalyze increased female engagement in politics and the advancement of state development. Similarly, Dahlerup (2001) stated that women's quotas are undeniably one of the most effective instruments for increasing women's representation in political decision-making if they are properly and prudently implemented.

Lukatela (2012) argued that failure to defend women's rights and unequal sharing of employment opportunities could jeopardize the long-term viability of governance changes and community stability in the post-conflict period. Considering the issues of women and gender in the post-conflict period which she presented in 'The Secretary-General's 2009 Report on Peacebuilding in the Immediate Post-Conflict Period',

gender equality and women's issues such as civil, political, social, and economic rights must be addressed and constitutionalized, gender equality must be implemented as a cross-cutting issue in all government institutions and plans. Moreover, an electoral gender quota must be adopted to prevent traditional gender roles from sabotaging gender equality progress in the post-conflict era. She contended that governments that adopted electoral gender quotas, such as Rwanda and Burundi, had a higher proportion of women in administrative institutions than those that did not, such as Cote d'Ivoire.

Rather than using women as samples to earn political attraction and support from society, Lukatela (2012) stated in her research that it would be best to establish a women's wing in the political parties so they could focus on developing women's leadership and formulating gender equality policy demands, including quotas, delegates, and gender-responsive policy-making processes. All these factors she mentioned show that the post-conflict period is crucial and sensitive, and to enhance peace and stability, it depends on how states respond and manage the situation, equality, and the inclusion of all people.

## **2.4 Challenges Impeding Women's Role in Peacebuilding**

### **2.4.1 Globally Challenges**

What are the challenges and barriers hindering women's role in peacebuilding? During her speech at the 2014 International Women's Day celebration at the United Nations in New York, Clinton described women's rights as a significant task that remains unresolved in the 21st century. Clinton, the former U.S. foreign minister, stated that although great strides have been made since the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality. Considering Clinton's argument as a foundational premise. Potter (2018) argued that the world

tried to overcome gender disparity by establishing international policy frameworks. For example, the CEDAW convention- also known as the Convention on the Rights of Women- demands states to develop women's rights in all social aspects, following the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) that requires increasing women's influence in conflict resolution and decision-making. In addition, the UNSC resolution 1325 which emphasizes women's role in peacebuilding in post-conflict. It is undeniable that international organizations made every effort to advance women's rights and gender equality. However, CFR- Council on Foreign Relations (2023) mentioned that women continue to make up a small portion of official peace procedures. Over the past quarter-century, from 1992 until 2019, the average percentage of women involved in major peace processes worldwide was 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories. Although there has been a significant advancement in the involvement of women (comparing to data from 1991-2011), it is noteworthy that almost 70% of peace processes still lacked the presence of women mediators or women signatories.

According to Diaz and Tordjman (2012), only 16% of the 585 peace agreements signed between 1990 and 2010 discussed or addressed gender and women's issues. Even though there is growing data indicating that the inclusion of women in negotiation processes enhances the quality of agreements and the probability of effective implementation, Ellerby (2016) stated that the problem of women's participation in peacebuilding remains a significant concern, mostly due to the prevailing male dominance.

### **2.4.2 Regional Challenges**

Many East African states are in the process of recovering from three decades of intrastate conflicts that destroyed almost everything and caused great casualties for both the individuals living in those countries and institutions. However, in recent years, Potter (2018) stated that the IGAD has developed several gender and women's rights legal protections. For example, the IGAD Gender Policy and Strategy, RAP (Regional Action Plan) for implementation of UNSC 1325, and Women and Peace Forum, which empowers women's leadership in promoting the gender agenda in peacebuilding and conflict resolution in Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa. With all of these accomplishments in a short period, Potter argued that feminists claim that the perception of gender equality is not indicated in the organization's overall mission, vision, or objectives.

In the context of Somalia, several scholars have pointed out that the obstacles impeding women's roles in peacebuilding are founded on Somalia's patriarchal lifestyle, which organizes the people along clan lines and allows men to wield great and unlimited control over socioeconomic and politics. According to Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013), the patrilineal society based on clan exogamy gives a woman dual relation, one from her father and another one from her husband, who generally comes from a different tribe. Therefore, for peace initiation, both authors claim that this relationship made women easy to initiate peace between both sides. However, when it comes to women's participation in social affairs, this system always questions where their loyalties lay. Similarly, Horst (2017) asserted that the traditional structure, which was centered on a clan system, prevented women from taking part in the restoration of their state. Whereas, Affi and Hassan's (2022), research carried out in seven regions in Somalia

stated that the main factors impeding women's role in peacebuilding and politics are culture, society, economic and political institutions, and a lack of legal framework (For example, women's quota is still informal).

## **2.5 Institutional Empowerment on Women's Role in Peacebuilding**

Somalia has witnessed considerable positive developments in recent years, stability, and improvement on an everyday basis (UN, 2018). At the same time, the advancement of women's rights and the establishment of a supportive environment for gender equality are seeing gradual progress, but with a considerable length of time required for its realization. The Provisional Constitution of Somalia guarantees the rights of women to decision-making involvement. To address and enhance women's rights and gender equality systematically, the FGS re-established the Ministry of Women's Affairs (UN, 2018) and adopted the Human Rights Road Map -HRRM (EISA 2022). Moreover, the increasing presence of women in the Federal Parliament, Senate, and cabinet is notable evidence of substantial advancement and the government's commitment to promoting women's expanded involvement in leadership and the formulation of policies (UN, 2018).

Reforming the law and creating new policies that empower the rights of women, dignity, and equity is another milestone achievement the FSG has been carrying out in recent years. In the early years of a post-conflict government's establishment, the government incorporated gender as a cross-cutting aim to the New Deal Compact's five main goals of peacebuilding and state-building (Kumuyi, 2013). Despite inadequate operationalization methods and implementation, the New Deal Act did not acquire a complement (UN, 2018). However, it set the path for gender mainstreaming in all government activities, for example, employment in the public sector, provision

of justice, and implementation of the special sector in the police force for GBV cases, raising the number of women in the justice department, especially the judiciary.

However, like any other post-conflict country, Somalia is still struggling with the effects of civil war. In simple terms, there is still a high number of gender biases, particularly gender-based violence, and gender discrimination as well as weak institutions and systems that cannot provide adequate protection for women's rights. Furthermore, the normative framework for gender equality and women's empowerment remains inadequate with weak enforcement. As long as conventional or customary law (Xeer) prevails (UN, 2018).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Although globally, various policies have been implemented to promote gender equality and women's rights, the literature indicates that bias and exclusion persist. In Somalia, the research indicated that Somali women made substantial contributions to peace advocacy and conflict resolution during the protracted period of the civil war. However, their efforts have been hampered by Somalia's patriarchal lifestyle based on clan structured society combined with cultural and social norms. That all empowers less women than men. Thus, to overcome the obstacles impeding the progress of Somali women, Somalia requires a robust legislative framework capable of addressing the societal norms and other factors impeding women's involvement in forthcoming endeavors.

## **Chapter 3**

### **THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This part of the research will broadly discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research. To address the research questions set out in the first chapter, the social constructivism and feminist constructivism theories will be applied. Moreover, gender concepts and peacebuilding will also be discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.2 Feminist Constructivist**

In the context of feminist constructivism theory, it is a theory that combines the principles of feminism and constructivism to observe the interaction of gender in world politics. Despite their differences in many parts, Lecher and Purge (2001) claimed that the interaction between feminism and constructivism complement one another and when combined, can produce better theoretical and empirical worldviews. Constructivism, for example, contributes to feminism as a theory of agency, while feminism contributes to constructivism as an understanding of power as an integral component of construction processes, despite the fact that constructivists lack the skills to explain how gender and power replicate, how and why some constructions emerge as more important than others, and other related issues because they leave the social production of power untheorized.

### **3.2.1 The Strength and the Purpose of the Theory**

For feminist constructivists, same as other feminists in IR, gender is socially constructed. In this context, gender is defined as the socially constructed presumptions attributed to individuals based on their male or female anatomical characteristics, encompassing behaviors perceived as masculine (male) or 'feminine' (female). In alternative terminology, masculinity is commonly linked to attributes such as rationality, authority, self-reliance, and engagement in societal affairs, whereas femininity is often associated with characteristics such as irrationality, safeguarding, domesticity, and personal privacy (Smith, 2018). Thus, feminist constructivists challenge conventional gender norms and roles by deconstructing them.

In addition, feminist constructivism theory also investigates power dynamics in the process of construction (Lecher and Purge, 2001). The feminist idea of power is simple: power is seen as something that comes from the state, is dominated by men, and has power over other people (Temperley, 2013). In other words, men are superior, women are marginalized. Feminist constructivism, in this context, focuses on how developing an identity leads to gendered power, and how gender is embedded into all practices and conversations (Lecher and Purge, 2001). The theory illuminates the power dynamics that serve as the foundation for gender disparities, and discrimination. For example, gender disparities and discrimination exist in the state, culture, and institutions both domestic and international.

Furthermore, Feminism, along with constructivism, theoretically shares many similarities with other feminism theories, for example, the perception of gender inequality that exists in international organizations, exclusion, injustice, the impact of the globalizing economy on women, insecurity, and dominant politics (Lecher and

Purge 2001). In addition, similar to other feminist theories, feminist constructivism recognizes the theoretical viewpoint that women should be seen not just as victims but also as agents, both during and after violent conflicts (Sjoberg, 2018). The theory believes subjecting women as victims of conflict, is a kind of refusing, limiting, and excluding women's role in peacebuilding.

### **3.2.2 Weakness of the Theory**

Despite the two theories coming up with great collaboration in the field of gender, but on the opposite, several scholars including Lecher and Purge (2001) claim that due to the fact that most constructivists disregard feminist literature and gender analysis, many feminists disagree with constructivism as an alternate middle ground. Moreover, the feminist constructivist theory deals with theoretical complexity, which in other terms means, that feminist constructivism can be excessively complex, making it difficult to operationalize and apply in real-world situations.

### **3.2.3 Applicability of the Theory**

Feminist constructivism theory focuses on many ways on gender and how gender interacts with politics. It seeks equality among sexes, and inclusion of women in all social aspects, the same as other feminism theories. For peacebuilding, the theory insights into how gender, social norms, and power dynamics influence the process of building and sustaining peace. Thus, this theory will assist the research in borrowing the feminist lens of gender and women's rights.

## **3.3 Social Constructivism**

At the end of the Cold War which is associated with the emergence of constructivism in international relations, Fennimore (2019) stated that constructivism emerged after previous theories had trouble explaining all kinds of 21st-century problems, including

civil wars, which are much more frequent than interstate wars, radical Islam and terrorism, financial crises, and economic collapse.

The rise of social constructivism in the field of peacebuilding is not related to a specific historical moment, but rather with the development of international relations and conflict resolution across time. The theory emphasizes society's and culture's roles in forming perceptions of peace, conflict, and security. It states that, rather than being an objective fact, peace is socially constructed through the shared norms, values, and beliefs of a given community or an international setting (Shula 2023).

### **3.3.1 Strength of the Theory**

Constructivist peace theories are typically grounded in the belief that peace is a constructive and evolving idea that arises from collaborative efforts and mutual comprehension, rather than just the absence of conflict (Shula 2023). Thus, from a social constructivist point of view, peacebuilding is about how to bring people together in a positive way to create something bigger than the sum of its parts (Howe 2021, Carey 2020). In this context, the theory emphasizes that peace is the result of social interaction, communication, and collaboration between communities and individuals. Therefore, in order to enhance peacebuilding, social constructivism requires an understanding of the genuine needs and interests of all parties. This means that the acceptance of peaceful standards and the social development of those norms must involve all facets of society equally (Howe 2021, Carey 2020).

According to Morgan (2005), the predominant theoretical frameworks behind peacekeeping and peace-building endeavors are rooted in neorealist and neoliberal perspectives on global governance. These perspectives prioritize material power as the primary determinant of authority, influence, and the pursuit of domination. In contrast

to other theories, social constructivism adopts a comprehensive approach that considers both material and discursive forms of power in order to enhance our comprehension of conflicts and the process of peacebuilding.

Therefore, the “literature on social constructivism and related approaches emphasizes the significance of various frames, such as national, organizational, professional, cultural, and gender, in influencing peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts”. Additionally, Howa (2021) argued these perspectives offer valuable insights into the reasons behind the failures of these endeavors. Social constructivists criticize liberal peacebuilding for its inability to effectively address issues such as inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and the absence of grassroots participation (Howa 2021).

### **3.3.2 Weakness and Limitations of Theory**

Despite the social constructivism theory looks more developed than other traditional theories in the field of peacebuilding. However, Skelly (2002) argued that generally, constructivism theory in peacebuilding had difficulty in explaining how to implement peacebuilding. According to Center-Morgan (2005), although giving space in peacebuilding to NGOs, politicians, and local people is a good start, focusing on ideas and identities can often make it harder to address the core causes of conflict. In addition, Center-Morgan demonstrated that social constructivism did not have enough empirical evidence to support its effectiveness in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

### **3.3.3 Applicability of the Theory to the Research**

The Social constructivists criticize other theories, for example, liberal peacebuilding for their inability to effectively address issues such as inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and the absence of grassroots participation (Howa 2021). Social

constructivism theory seeks a bottom-up peacebuilding process, that empowers every part of society to participate equally, acknowledges the importance of gender equality, and women's grassroots organizations, and rather than focusing only the politicians and leaders, the theory encourages or forces to creation of space for all and everything that can initiate peace.

Moreover, social constructivist perspectives on peacebuilding and conflict transformation are influenced by the critical theories of Johan Galtung. Additionally, they draw upon the cosmopolitan liberalism of John Burton's World Society approach, which focuses on the frustration of human needs. This approach shares similarities with English School rationalism and further develops Aznar's theory of protracted social conflict (Howa, 2021).

### **3.4 Feminist Critical Theory**

Just as there is no singular definition of liberalism or Marxism, there is no unique definition of feminism. Despite this, it is accurate to state that feminism is inherently based on an analysis of the economic, political, physical, and social subordination of women around the world and is committed to its eradication (Kinsella, p 147, 2020). Feminism advocates the attainment of gender equality and social justice, aiming to eradicate unfair limitations on women's aspirations and possibilities in life solely based on their gender. Feminism encompasses an examination of power dynamics and their resultant impacts (R).

It is essential to acknowledge that feminism is a diverse concept with no single feminist theory. Rather, there are numerous variations of feminism (Baylis *et al.* p 12 2020). Despite the differences, these approaches share a common concern: how

“sexes” are built in the context of authority and influence and how the highly dependent perceptions of masculinity and femininity produced by these power relations affect daily life. Feminist theories presume men and women have natural and biological (sex) differences; though some do not. The most intriguing study on this topic, however, investigates how gender influences and is influenced by global politics, that is, how different conceptions (such as the state or sovereignty) are gendered and how this gendering of concepts affects men and women differently.

Hence, Feminist critical theory, also known as feminist theory, is a broad and interdisciplinary framework that tries to understand and question how gender, power, and patriarchy interact with other social structures to shape people's experiences and societal norms. According to Rhode (1990), critical feminism is centered around the goal of improving women's social and economic status. It aims to support women most in need and empower them to enhance their self-respect, power, and ability to bring about positive changes in existing institutional arrangements.

### **3.5 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325**

Ever since the end of the Cold War, the nature of war in the world has changed, so as the way states and international organizations are dealing with conflict and peacebuilding. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 is one of the regulations that emerged from these global adjustments. It addresses the effect of war on women and the essential of women's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution, further demands to increase the women's role in decision-making in local and international institutions, to take precaution from sexual-related violence that might occur at wartime, and to develop policies that protect women (UN, 2019).

Over the past twenty years, this resolution has been crucial in facilitating the empowerment of women's involvement in peace-building and conflict-resolution activities. However, Mayan (2010) argued that the implementation of Resolution 1325 has significantly failed to meet expectations due to the existing high number of cases of gender-based violence, particularly sexual assault.

### **3.6 Conceptual Framework**

#### **3.6.1 Concept of Gender**

The concept of gender is multifaceted and frequently employed by researchers, politicians, and activists, typically in relation to matters concerning women or endeavors related to peacekeeping. Policymakers may lack a shared consensus on the conceptualization of gender, hence resulting in potential ambiguity and misapprehension around its definition (Cohn, 2012). Before conducting a gender valuation, it is essential to comprehend the meaning of the term 'gender'. According to Ramsbotham et al (p 305, 2011), gender is often used to describe how society and culture give different roles and duties to people based on their actual sex, whether they are male or female. It entails power and a hierarchical dynamic that exerts control over many facets of human conduct, as well as the entirety of social structures and practices.

According to Barandun (2005), gender - in contrast to the biological distinctions between females and males- pertains to the culturally acquired patterns of conduct and societal norms that delineate masculine and feminine roles. Correspondingly, WHO defines -gender as a set of socially created attributes and qualities that are associated with women, men, girls, and boys. This encompasses the societal expectations, conduct, and societal positions linked to individuals identifying as women, men, girls, or boys, as well as their interpersonal connections. Dina and Usable (2011) claimed

that gender is about social relationships as well as the advantages one gender enjoys over the other. Hence, gender defines access and distribution of resources, the ability to make decisions, and how women and men are affected by political processes and social development (Kanga *et al* 2014).

### **3.6.2 Gender Equality**

The concept of gender equality refers to women and men having equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities (UNWOMEN, 2001). Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality; it seeks to promote women's and men's full participation in society. It necessitates recognizing and respecting the differences between men and women, as well as the different roles they play in society. In addition, there are calls for the elimination of gender discrimination and violence against women, as well as the closing of the gender divide that exists in societies.

Browne (2023) posits that gender equality refers to the condition of equitable treatment irrespective of an individual's gender. Gender equality necessitates the equitable provision of socially significant goods, opportunities, resources, and incentives to both women and men. Gender equality does not signify the complete equivalence or identicalness of men and women, but rather denotes the equitable provision of opportunity and participation in violence-reduction programs and peace processes (UNWOMEN, 2015).

Hence, a potential approach to mitigating gender disparities is the endeavor to achieve gender equality, defined as the principle of ensuring fairness and impartiality in the treatment of individuals of different genders about their rights, privileges, responsibilities, and prospects. Gender equity seeks to enhance gender relations and

roles, as well as attain gender equality, through establishing social connections that do not subject either sex to discriminatory treatment.

### **3.6.3 Concept of Peacebuilding**

#### **Peace**

Peace is a tough idea to convey and much more difficult to explain (Garcia-Gonzalez, 2018). According to Brzosk (2021), the narrow concept of peace is based on the opposite concept of war. This means peace exists wherever there is no war. Nevertheless, there is a notable divergence of opinion among peace scholars regarding the definition of peace.

Former human rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. in 1958 said ‘True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice’ (Quote research, 2020) His concept suggests that the presence of justice is a crucial factor in achieving and maintaining peace.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (Frangsmyr and Abrams,1997) stated that peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value.... Peace can only endure when human rights are respected, and nurtured, and people and nations are emancipated. From his perspective, it can be stated that peace entails upholding human rights, promoting the welfare of individuals, and safeguarding the freedom of both individuals and nations.

The eighty United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon stated that peace means access to education, health, and essential services – particularly for girls and women; giving every young woman and man the opportunity to live as they choose; and developing sustainably and safeguarding the planet's biodiversity (UN, 2014). From his point of view, equality is essential for peace.

It is clear that peace is a process rather than a condition (Brinkmann, 2006). For peace to last, a large group of powerful interests must work together. For balance to be reached and different goals and needs to be met, everyone must be treated fairly and be respected. A long-lasting peace process depends on both a strong government and a strong civil society.

#### **3.6.4 Peacebuilding**

Peacebuilding is commonly employed as a comprehensive phrase that encompasses other related ideas, such as conflict management, resolution, mitigation, prevention, and transformation. Individuals who prioritize the overarching goals of peace and security over the issue of conflict tend to favor this perspective (Schirch 2004). The concept of peacebuilding encompasses a multitude of definitions and is subject to varying perspectives and interpretations. The term "peacebuilding" was introduced over thirty years ago by Johan Galtung, who advocated for the creation of organizations aimed at promoting sustainable peace. This approach involves addressing the underlying causes of violent conflict and strengthening local abilities to manage and resolve conflicts (UN, 2010).

The concept of peace building, as articulated in Boutros Boutros-Ghali's seminal report titled "An Agenda for Peace" in 1992, refers to the implementation of measures aimed at consolidating peace and averting the recurrence of violence (Barnet et al., 2007; United Nations, 2010). According to the Brahimi Report 2000, peacebuilding refers to the act of effort carried out after a conflict ended, with the aim of reconstructing the fundamental elements of peace and equipping individuals with the necessary resources to establish a state that goes beyond the cessation of hostilities.

While, the United Nations Secretary-General's Policy Committee defined peacebuilding as a range of measures aimed at reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities for conflict management at all levels, and laying the groundwork for long-term peace and development. Outside the UN there is great terminology diversity (Barnet et al 2007), for example, the European Union prioritizes the principles of conflict prevention and management as well as rehabilitation and rebuilding. The former refers to efforts to forestall imminent violence via management and the latter to eliminate violent conflict and promote peace.

Other than international and regional organizations, the scholars who contributed to the definition of peacebuilding include Nduwimana, (2020) who claimed that peacebuilding is an essential stage of the peace process. It provides a unified and coherent framework in which the promotion of peace, the sustainability of measures taken to end the crisis, and the maintenance of positive outcomes from political negotiation comprise a set of interdependent objectives. According to this perspective, peacebuilding involves both resolving and preventing conflict.

Barnet (2007) described peacebuilding as an intended process of creating a positive peace, eliminating the fundamental causes of conflict, and enabling states and societies to develop stable expectations of peaceful change. Schirch (2004) defined peacebuilding as encompassing a wide range of endeavors that are directed toward enhancing the overall well-being and standard of living within a given society.

Hence, the meanings of peacebuilding according to international organizations and scholars are obviously the same in certain aspects and distinct in others, depending on

the perspective and goal of their activities. Barnett et al (2014) stated that peacebuilding possesses a wide range of definitions. However, diversity may be seen as a fundamental aspect of unity, as seen by the presence of consensus surrounding the definition of peacebuilding in terms of what it is not. Thus, peacebuilding involves eliminating conflict's root causes, promoting individual, social group, and state security, and nurturing stable peace conditions through a multidimensional and intrusive undertaking.

### **3.6.5 Gender and Peacebuilding**

Gender and Peacebuilding “examine the conceptual and practical connections between gender and peacebuilding” (Munro, 2000). Despite the difference in the definition of the terms – Gender and Peacebuilding, when both terms are combined, it emphasizes the significant role of both women and men in achieving and maintaining successful peacebuilding activities. It also acknowledges the importance of challenging prevailing social norms that may hinder progress. Thus, there are three distinct applications or understandings of gender in the context of peacebuilding. While these meanings are not mutually exclusive, the phrase highlights different aspects of the concepts. Munro (2000) made predictions regarding these perceptions.

*Approach: Gendered approaches to peacebuilding* - Peacebuilding is argued to be gendered, indicating that perceptions of peace and approaches to peace differ based on a person's gender (Munro, 2000). Therefore, gender approaches to peacebuilding require equitable participation of women and the incorporation of a gender equality viewpoint into all peacebuilding processes and activities. It acknowledges that conflict affects men and women differently and that gender roles determine – and are impacted by – peace-building results. The demand for women's participation stems from a

normative framework that recognizes equal participation as a fundamental human right (Merkel and O'Neill, 2021).

*Analytical tool: Gender Analysis of Conflict and Peace Initiation* – Generally, gender analysis facilitates the comprehension of the roles and status of men and women in society. It assists the process of recognizing who does what and why, as well as the power dynamics inside the household and the whole community. This examination of relationships, responsibilities, and power might aid in determining what makes someone vulnerable and others not (UNSDG, 2019).

Therefore, when it comes to gender inclusion in conflict analysis, it can improve the inclusiveness and efficacy of peacebuilding measures (Tielemans, 2015). She claimed that this is skillful through increasing awareness of the underlying gender power dynamics and how they influence and are influenced by armed conflict and peacebuilding. It gives insight into conflict causes, possible peace agents, and prospects for peace, as well as exclusion and discriminatory practices, especially in peacebuilding efforts. Thus, gender analysis illuminates the experiences of both men and women in the context of conflict and peace, evaluates their respective needs, and examines the dynamics of gender relations as they change during and after conflict and peace.

*Goals: gender and Peace:* According to Munro (2000), gender equality and peacebuilding can be perceived as objectives. The utilization of analytical methodologies and the incorporation of a gendered perspective in the realm of peacebuilding have the potential to culminate in the realization of both gender equality and peace. There exist two overarching beliefs pertaining to this subject matter: the

initial posits that peace engenders heightened gender equality, whilst the latter contends that gender equality fosters peace. In conclusion. The significance of integrating gender into peacebuilding is not limited to addressing violations of women's human rights or their economic, social, or justice requirements. Instead, a gendered perspective represents peacebuilding as an inclusive procedure for many (USIP 2015).

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The theories mentioned above will assist the research to achieve its aim and analyze the basic purpose of the research, for example, the feminist constructivist theory simplifies the study by explaining the importance of gender equality, and the promotion of the inclusion of women in politics. In addition, the theory will assist the research to look at the eyes of feminism on women's empowerment in the field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Whereas, social constructivism theory will contribute to the research on bottom-up peacebuilding that empowers the process of peacebuilding starting from down -grassroots, women, society- up to leaders, politicians, and other important individuals' participation. Furthermore, UNWPS 1325 will be used as Len to measure women's participation in peacebuilding in Somalia, in the period of post-conflict.

## **Chapter 4**

### **WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING: CASE STUDY**

#### **SOMALIA**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a brief introduction to the situation in Somalia, how conflicts affected women in Somalia, and how those women coped. In addition, the strategies and approaches women in Somalia engaged in to enhance peace and solve the disputes between the tribes. This will be beneficial in the discussion chapter for analyzing the reasons behind these disparities and identifying the primary obstacles associated with the advancement of women's role in peacebuilding.

##### **4.2 Background of the Case Study**

Somalia gained independence in 1960, After more than 70 years of European dominance (Reyner, 1960). During the initial decade following its independence, Somalia was governed by a civilian administration that adhered to democratic principles. However, in 1969, a group in the military—the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC)—staged a coup d'état and seized the country through a bloodless revolution, and then selected (members of SRC) Said Barre (the third president of Somalia) to lead the country (Metz p 37 1992). In 1991, clan-based rebels led by groups of members of the Somali army and politicians overthrew the military administration. Ever since that time, Somalia has been hosting hostilities and violence that caused hundreds of thousands of civilians to flee from their homes (UNISOM 1,

1997). Whereas other hundreds of thousands were targeted for violence like killing, looting their properties, and ethical cleansing. Responding to the crisis of humanity and non-stop violence against human rights, the UN deployed thousands of peacekeepers in Somalia under the mission of ‘Restore Hope’ to save the civilians and at the same time restore stability. Nevertheless, in 1995, UN soldiers drew from Somalia after several confrontations they had with warlords.

In the 2004 peace conference that was held in Kenya – after more than a dozen failed efforts by Somali warlords and clan leaders to set up a central government, a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established. However, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) seized control of southern and central regions of Somalia, after they cast out the warlords and suddenly declared war against the TFG. New war fronts were opened in Somalia, particularly Mogadishu. As members of the first phase of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), peacekeepers were deployed to Somalia to confront the ICU. Hence, today, Somalia is in a post-conflict period, and there are over twenty thousand African Union peacekeepers. Yet, security is fragile, and political crises still exist between tribes. Moreover, Somalia is struggling with international extremist groups seeking refuge within its borders.

### **4.3 Women’s Status Before the Conflict**

#### **4.3.1 Era of Decolonization**

Tracing the contributions of Somali women to the nationalist movement from 1943 to 1960 provides a rare insight into how women assimilated local politics before many of their contemporaries around the world (Ingiriis, 2015). Soon after the foundation of the Somali Youth Club (SYC), subsequently renamed the Somali Youth League (SYL) in 1947, their pivotal role in the fight against colonialism became apparent. Even

though none of the SYL's thirteen founders were female, agency women played a crucial role in mobilizing and recruiting as many individuals as possible for the cause of political independence. Somali women's independence movements, according to Ingiriis (2015), were the driving force behind a once-overlooked social transformation that virtually revolutionized society and compelled men and women to band together for colonial resistance.

Aided (2010) stated that besides SYL, there was a women's coalition known as SYL 'Sisters' who was responsible for carrying out the promotion of nationalist sentiment in - *Somalinimo*, the collection of funds and membership dues, the housing and concealment of nationalists from the colonial administration, and participation in the demonstrations. Furthermore, 'Sister' used to organize SYL meetings in *Isku Raran* every Sunday which was a kind of tea-drinking club where young and old people gathered to share nationalism movement information. Taking advantage of the gathering, 'Sisters' used to write and present poetry and Buraanbur to articulate discourses of nationalist solidarity and to call for the political mobilization of both men and women (Aided 2010). Despite all these efforts and sacrifices, Aided (2010) argued that the "historiography and metanarrative" of nationalism in Somalia are frequently characterized by "men, their movements and parties, and power struggles". In simple terms, the nationalist movement is framed as a masculine endeavor. While, unfortunately, women were categorized as victims of colonialism rather than partners.

#### **4.3.2 Post-independent and the Military Government**

Since the establishment of the Somali Republic in 1960, Somali women have been under-represented at all levels of government administration (Heritage Institute, 2022). In the first two post-colonialism governments women were excluded from decision-

making bodies of the government (Ingiriis, 2015). But they -women- were allowed to establish women's coalitions or women's NGOs (Aided, 2010) and also had the right to vote as most African women in the continent (Ingiriis, 2015). However, according to certain researchers on gender roles in Somalia, the military administration was a "golden age" for Somali women (Gardner and El Bushra 2014; Ingiriis 2015; Horst 2017).

Ingiriis (2015) stated that in the military administration, a considerable number of women occupied senior public positions and local councils, especially in the army. Horst (2017) argued that despite the tightening of state control and shrinking of personal freedom, women's issues were pushed for. Among the city's elite, discussions about women's rights and their place in the customary system flourished. Other remarkable activities done by the military administration included improving the national constitution by adding articles that indicate the protection of gender equality, and social, cultural, and political rights (Quoted UNDP 1994 Ganzglass Nov. 1981, 1-2), allowing 10% of parliament seat reserved for the women (Zechariassen, 2012)

The establishment of Family Law that enabled both women and men to inherit wealth equally banned polygamy, and gave women the right to seek divorce from their spouses (Mohamed 2015) was another progressive achievement by the military administration. After the law was announced, a controversy ensued among religious elders claiming that the law was against the Islam and culture of Somali society, and the government who saw them -religious elders- as an opponent seeking to create political chaos, suddenly concluded the adventure of Somali women's emancipation.

#### **4.4 Somalia Civil War in Gender Perspective**

As Goldstein (2001) argued 'War is an act of gendered violence.' Abdi (2007) and Ingiriis (p 214 2011) argued that the political crisis that resulted in the downfall of the Somali government in 1991 has had significant and intricate ramifications on the lives of Somali women. As a result of the gendered consequences of war, Somalia has become a country that hosts widespread human rights violations, especially gender-based violence that directly and indirectly affects hundreds of Somali women and girls who live inside the country and across the borders of neighboring countries. Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013) stated that in the early years of turmoil, rape was used as a war strategy by tribe militias to humiliate or dishonor opponents, force people to give up their properties, or as a forced marriage tactic and sometimes as ethical cleansing.

Similarly, Mussa (2015) argued that due to lawlessness and disorder, along with the failure of customary law that used to provide social protection for women, children, and old people, women in Somalia were subjected to all forms of physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological violence. In addition, child marriage and forced marriage were employed as strategies for safeguarding the well-being of young girls and as a form of sexual violence, the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) has persisted as a widespread cultural norm. Other than widespread violence against women, Bryden, and Steiner (1998) stated that the war left a mass of widows and orphans after tens of thousands of men were killed. Due to sorrow and separation, tens of thousands of Somali women were forced to live as refugees in foreign countries or internally displaced persons. The pressures of war, displacement, destitution, and despair have shattered the marriages of tens of thousands of additional women.

Aside from systemic destruction and violence, Horst (2017) and Cawa (2007) argued that conflict came with norms and social transformation. According to Cawa (2007), Sharia law became widespread as a result of the conflict. Although religion was a kind of coping mechanism that women applied to stay strong in critical times of conflict and tolerate life in camps, the author argued that religious elders started to use religion as an instrument for social change, particularly in the lives of women and girls living in the country. Horst (2017) argued that the resurgence of customary law *-xeer* combined with tribalism resulted from the virtual exclusion of women from participation in all social aspects. She claimed that this type of system isolated and marginalized women due to the gendered nature of the clan system, which ensures the loyalty of its male members more than female members. In addition to customary *xeer* and tribalism, several other scholars including Gardener and Elbushra (2014) have argued that conflict altered gender relations in Somalia, where women became the sole breadwinners of their families, family caregivers, and household decision-makers. Abdurahman (2007) stated that shifting gender relations provided Somali women with unprecedented social and political opportunities while also placing huge limits on them. Undoubtedly, women in Somalia inherited severe impacts from the conflict such as lack of access to healthcare and education, lost their loved ones (brothers, husbands, sons, or other male members of their relatives), and experienced trauma from a prolonged war. However, this did not stop them from being active role players in advancing peace and settling disputes.

#### **4.5 Women's Contribution to Peace and Conflict Resolution**

Despite the existence of patriarchal structures and clan-based societies, women have positively influenced social reconciliation throughout the Somali region (Interpeace, 2010). Peacebuilding, according to feminist constructivism, entails not just official

agreements but also grassroots actions. Women are involved in their communities, promoting reconciliation, offering humanitarian relief, and assisting with post-conflict rehabilitation, all of which contribute to long-term peace (Kaufman and Williams, 2013). This part of the study presented several peace accords in which women carried and participated, strategies women in Somalia engaged in to solve tribe disputes, and peace initiation.

#### **4.5.1 Somaliland**

Somaliland (self-declared independence in 1991), is different in several ways from the rest of the other regions in Somalia. Firstly, the conflict between the government army and rebels in Somaliland commenced in the early 1980s, a decade before similar conflicts erupted in Mogadishu. Secondly, following the collapse of the central government in 1991, Somaliland experienced relative peace and stability. although there were initial tribe disputes early years. However, political leaders and traditional elders swiftly initiated reconciliation efforts in the region.

In this context, Somaliland women's influence in peacebuilding and conflict resolution emerged earlier than other regions in Somalia. Jama (2010) argued that "Somaliland's peacebuilding conferences in Borama and Sanaag (1993) and Hargeisa (1996) would not have happened if women had not worked together to put pressure on the leaders to step in and end the wars". Indeed, those women were unable to bear the consequences of the disagreement and disputes so they gathered the traditional elders and politicians, prepared a venue and food, and observed and inspired participants to carry on until an agreement could be reached. However, with all that effort and sacrifice, without clear justification, Horst (2017) argued that women were excluded from participating in the negotiations and decision-making.

Although women in Somaliland were underrepresented in national peace decision-making, Dini (2018) argued that this does not prevent those women from being crucial role players in preventing and defusing disputes within their communities. In response to several conflicts between various clans in Somaliland, women in these communities organized peace rallies gathered resources to support conflict-affected individuals and groups, and appealed to conflicting parties to stop the violence. Similarly, Bryden and Steiner (1998) stated that those women in that region arranged a series of events including “peace walks” and “prayer gatherings”, demonstrating that they -women- demanded peace and stability.

Despite the early establishment of stability and governance, women in Somaliland have not been able to attain substantial representation in either the parliament or local councils. In September 2012, lawmakers in Somaliland declined to adopt a measure that aimed to establish a quota system for enhancing female participation in the legislative body (Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013). Women are engaged in administrative roles as employees, but, their representation at the decision-making level is limited (Bryden and Steiner 1998).

#### **4.5.2 Puntland**

After Somaliland, Puntland state was the second region to establish self-autonomous administration. In this region, women's role in peace advocacy emerged soon after the conflict of the Galkayo in 1993 (Galkayo Peace Accord). Using networks with other female peace activists to reach out to more neighboring clans, women banded together between the warring clans and their militias to try to persuade them to lay down their weapons and come to a peace agreement. Thanks to those women, they brought an end to the war, and the Galkayo Peace Accord served in that region for more than a decade

(Rayale et al 2015, Gardner and El Bushra 2014, Bryden and Steiner 1988). Following the establishment of the Hufan Initiative led by Hufan Artan in 1994 in Bosaso. By addressing direct looting that was targeting women's properties and increasing the number of rapes, Hufan Artan brought together women's groups to demand greater security. They staged protests, halted all activities, and created an ad hoc women-led policing service to patrol streets. This led to the establishment of the police force in Puntland (Svensson ed 2012, Gardner and El Bushra 2014).

In Puntland, women played a pivotal role in both establishing the state administration and fostering unity among the various tribes in the region. Svensson ed (2012) stated that in 2001, a dispute between the regional administration and political opponents emerged due to the expiration of the government's term and not holding the election on time. Women in Puntland have come together to take the lead in facilitating peace negotiations between the opposing groups and campaign to arrange the "Isimada Peace Conference" and organize peace forums between society, particularly women, youth, and professionals. Those women's efforts concluded nine months of instability and political crisis in Puntland.

Unfortunately, Esha Gelle (Svensson ed 2012), former minister of the Ministry of Women Affairs at Puntland State, asserted when the 'Isimada peace conference' ended and the last conference was called at 'Garowe' to make a power-sharing agreement between the oppositions and government. Due to the selection of participants based on clan, none of the tribes selected or wanted women to represent their positions. Hence, the peace efforts of women in Puntland State serve as a notable example of how Somali women actively pursued peace and how serious they were about gaining stability during those challenging periods. It also explains how women's efforts to initiate peace

and conflict resolution go unrecognized, and how they are marginalized, underrepresented, and excluded from decision-making.

#### **4.5.3 South and Center of Somalia (Mogadishu)**

Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013) both stated that the civil war in Somalia severely affected women in Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Galkayo. During the early 1990s, after the disintegration of the central government of Somalia, the city of Mogadishu acquired the moniker 'ghost city' owing to the extensive devastation of its infrastructure, significant loss of life, pervasive presence of armed groups, and the indiscriminate targeting of innocent civilians. In contrast to the aforementioned regions, Mogadishu also served as a hub for numerous political parties vying for governance. However, in the absence of successful leadership transitions, the city experienced fragmentation into multiple administrations, each under the control of warlords who garnered backing from their respective clans.

Within that difficult situation, Mogadishu women's involvement in peace initiation emerged from a self-volunteering act, for example, "saving countless civilian lives during the great famine of 1991–1992, by knocking on doors and delivering food to houses" (Johnstone, 2007); assisting in the relocation of numerous families who have migrated from their regions and experienced the unfortunate loss of their properties due to looting like Dr. Hawa Abdi (Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of Hawa Abdi and her daughters' foundation) who resettled more than 90,000 people on her property, which is now known as "Hope Village" (Robbin, 2013). Subsequently, those individual women transitioned into collective grassroots organizations that actively engaged in community development and the promotion of peace (Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013).

Asha Elmi, the founder of Save Somali Women and Children's organization, emphasized that women in Somalia, instead of being seen as victims of war, preferred to be recognized as agents of change. she also stated that as mothers, women in Somalia refused their daughters to go through the same negative pain that they went through. Therefore, while men were in the bushes planning how to defeat other clans, women in Somalia, particularly women in Mogadishu, were meeting and discussing peace initiation without a third side mediating. Crossing tribes made borders like the Greenline in the city, knowing that if the militia got them, they might get hurt (BYU Kennedy Center 2009).

In building peace, Rayale et al., (2015) stated that as their counterparts' women in regions, Somali women in Mogadishu engaged in the traditional ways of peacebuilding which started by utilizing their cross-clan relationships to facilitate dialogue and lobby clan elders to establish and carry out peace negotiations. Similarly, Johnstone (2007) stated that using women's coalitions, women in Mogadishu carried peace rallies and lobbied with political leaders to diffuse tensions and reduce violence between clans and armed faction leaders. Oftentimes, she claimed that those women achieved success by being perceived as impartial mediators, utilizing their familial connections as "mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives of combatants".

Those women's grassroots organizations were more diplomatic, and very contemporary (Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013; Bryden and Steiner 1998). Due to the cooperation, those women's grassroots organizations had with international organizations, their way of dealing with the conflict and peacebuilding was quite different from other women's in the regions, their activities toward peace initiation covered many different areas like "human rights advocacy, disarmament, peace and

security, gender equality, and advocacy of women's inclusion in decision-making and peacebuilding processes". For example, the IIDA organization established the "Somali Women Agenda" (SWA) that brings together both women in the country and Somali diaspora women to enhance the role of women in the decision-making bodies of the local councils and regional administrations (Jama, 2010).

Hence, those women's grassroots organizations reinstated public services that have been disrupted as a consequence of violence, including vital sectors such as healthcare, education, transportation, and water supply (Johnstone, 2007). Engaged in public dialogue that brought together a wide range of people, including traditional and religious elders, youth, and women in order to enhance peace in the society. Ingiriis and Hoehne (2013) stated women's grassroots organizations were successful in enhancing the "social power of women", and also peacebuilding and community development.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The history of Somali women's involvement in the country's transformation is far from the few sentences presented. These women played different categories at different times; they were once daughters whose parents married them to an adversary so that they could serve as a link in the chain of peace, sisters fighting beside their brothers to gain independence, and women seeking emancipation. When the government fell, they were mothers who were at the front lines of the war to stop and save their families and daughters. Throughout these eras and categories, women played a significant role in social engagement, peace advocacy, and family protection. Anyone who wants to comprehend what it is like to be a woman, mother, or daughter in conflict can undoubtedly see through the eyes of Somali women. Thus, from this

part of the research, several conclusions can be drawn out. Despite the existence of conflicts and violence, women in Somalia showed strength and resilience through those difficult situations. Second, they were active peace initiators between their communities and the regions they were living in. Lastly, despite their efforts, they were always cast out or sidelined when decisions were made due to their gendered nature and the male-dominated, clan-based social structure.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The discussion and analysis of this chapter are based on the aim of the research. By the principles of research theories that support the notion of gender equality, and inclusion of women in peacebuilding. This will provide a deeper understanding of the study's aim.

#### 5.2 Somali Women as Peacemakers

The terms peace and peacebuilding in the Somali language are Nabad and Nabad-Dhis (Dini, 2018). It refers to policies and programs aimed to restore stability and effective social, political, and economic institutions after a war or serious upheaval. Traditionally in Somali society, women as mothers are most appropriate to be peacebuilders, to safeguard stability in the houses and inside the community (Gardner and ElBushra, 2014). Thus, to fill this standard, Svensson ed (2012) stated that women in Somalia have carried out initiatives to build peace and agreements within the clans, the communities they live with, and the regions they belong to. Thus, as research findings show, Somali women have contributed significantly to peacebuilding and conflict resolution for the years the country was in chaos. Even though the majority of their involvement was informal, they carried out their task with creativity and diplomacy, took into account the variables that exist, and utilized their marginalized role in society as a peace initiation strategy.

Research conducted by Heritage Institute in 2022 in seven regions in Somalia stated when people were asked to identify three ways women contribute to the society and the country, the respondents identified family care (43%), peacebuilding (23%), economy (20%), and politics (13%).

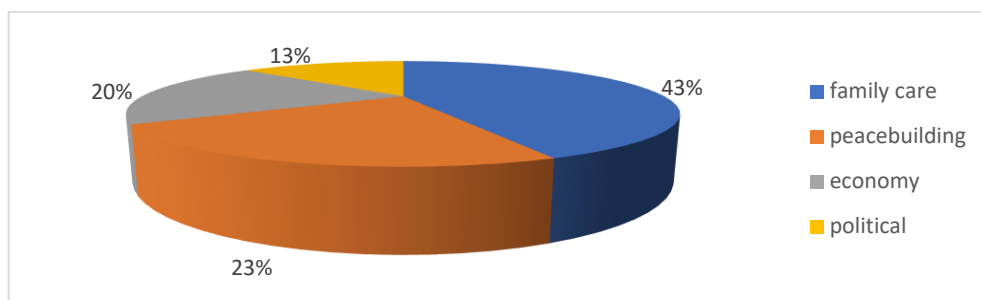


Figure 1: Contribution of women in the society

Locher and Prugle (2001) asserted that the experiences and social situations of women provide distinct perspectives that contribute valuable insights to the fields of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Starting from the basics, due to the absence of men, women become those solely responsible for their families, economically providing income, and taking care of the children (Gardner and Elbushra 2014, Ingiriis and Hoehne 2013). for non-stop conflicts and violence, Somali women have been on the front lines calling out to stop the violence and killing, organizing change-making groups in their communities, serving as relief providers and peace advocates, organizing dialogues, and building relationships with the community. Their resilience and determination have allowed them to navigate through challenging circumstances and play a crucial role in rebuilding their society. By actively participating in various initiatives, Somali women have ensured their families' survival and contributed to their communities' overall stability and progress.

The Arta Peace conference in Djibouti in 2000, could be a good example. Despite it being the first peace conference, Somali women's grassroots organizations were allowed to participate in the negotiations. they become active dialogue promoters at the negotiation, a “pressure group”, and at the same time, they connect and encourage the traditional elders, and politicians to remain in the conference and sign the peace agreement (Zachariassen 2018 Ingiriis and Hoehne 2013). As a result of women’s inclusion, Zachariassen (2018) stated the transitional charter that came out from that conference specified the rights of the minority Somali societies (tribes don’t get any representation), children, and women. In addition, the Arta peace conference concluded almost one decade Somalia had no central government.

“The world was tired of Somalia's never-ending problems. Before the Arta meeting, thirteen attempts to bring peace to the country failed. I believe without those women’s efforts Arta peace conference would not have succeeded. I witnessed people wanting to leave the conference and women refusing, telling them unless the aim of the conference had been reached, no one would leave. They were a pressure group, whenever, an issue emerged, they were there solving it, said Khadija Diriye (Astaan TV, 2023)”.

Hence, including women in peacebuilding not only better serves the interests of society as a whole, but also gives women a chance to exercise their fundamental human rights as full participants in such initiatives. In this context, it is essential to overcome the obstructions that prevent women from participating in peacebuilding. Somali women deserve to be recognized as leaders, not solely based on their gender, but rather for the significant contributions they have provided to their country and the sacrifices they have undertaken.

### **5.3 Factors Enabling Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding**

This part of the research will discuss the factors that assist women in gaining access to peacebuilding and how those factors promote women’s participation.

#### **5.3.1 Existing Policies and Legal Frameworks**

Since Somalia moved to the post-conflict period, several legal protections for women’s rights were adopted, signed, and developed. Starting from the provisional constitution which was rewritten again after half of a century envisioned gradual advancements in safeguarding women's rights across both the social and political domains, there is a lack of clear guidance on how to effectively enforce and guarantee the implementation of these protections (IIDA, LAW, 2014).

National Gender Policy in 2016 was another milestone activity. The policy intended to enhance women’s rights in political participation, economic empowerment, and equal access to healthcare and education. This policy enabled women to gain 24% in the 2016 election. Other than Human Rights RoadMap, Somalia recently adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) of UNWPS 1325 to address sexual violence during the conflict and empower women’s participation in decision-making, peace negotiation, reconciliation, and security (UNSOM 2022). Nevertheless, several attempts to seek approval for the original Sexual Offence Bill from the federal parliament failed numerous times, and constitutionalizing women’s quota did not succeed either. In addition, the FGM Bill is still not approved and implemented. Furthermore, Somalia neither signed nor ratified CEDAW. Even though many Muslim countries signed and ratified this convention, Somalia due to religious elders did not sign. The Maputo Protocol, an accumulation of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa has also been signed by Somalia but has not yet been ratified (UNDP 2012-2015).

Several scholars argued that the post-conflict period is an opportunity for developing legal frameworks that pledge strong legal protection for women's rights. However, the situation in Somalia is different. The issue of women's rights is very sensitive, some people consider that it is not part of their religion, and some consider that it is completely against the culture and social norms of Somali societies. Considering these factors, it is hard to develop or establish a regulation that provides women's rights.

### **5.3.2 Political Participation and Women's Quota**

Women's inclusion in decision-making forums is essential for political accountability and gender-inclusive governance. Exclusionary processes, on the other hand, will jeopardize long-term peace, stability, gender equality, and economic recovery according to Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General (UN, 2016). Women in Somalia have used women's quotas of 30% to gain access to decision-making positions in government institutions particularly senators, parliament, and the cabinet for the last recent years. The most common types of women's quotas in use are reserved seats, legal candidate quotas, and voluntary political party quotas. In Somalia, women use reserved seat quotas in which each tribe has three seats. One seat is compulsory to reserve a woman, and those who had two seats had to reserve one seat for women but those tribes got one seat in the proportion of tribes' power sharing will/ and openly allowed women and men both to equally contest. However, the tribe has the last decision.

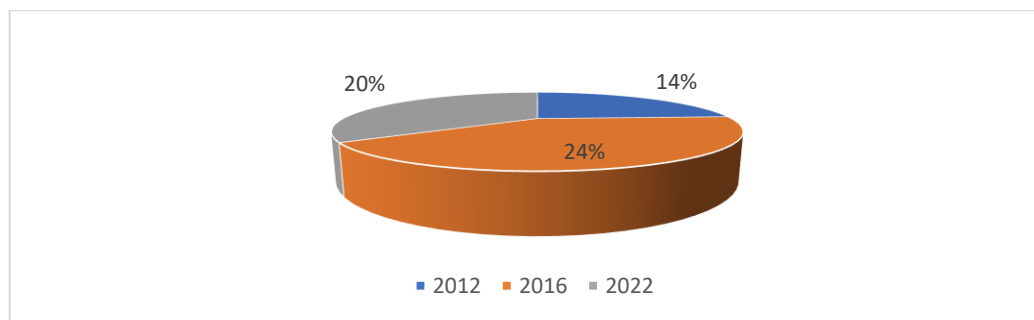


Figure 2: the percentage of women elected last three elections

Indeed, women's quotas enabled Somali women to gain access to political participation. However, in recent years, the number of queries regarding whether women's quotas support Somali women or limit their influence has increased considerably. Koshin (2022) claimed that despite its flaws, the quota has done much to legitimize women's participation in public life and the making of policy that directly affects and empowers the status of Somali women. What would it be like without women's quotas in a country like Somalia? Would women gain the percentage they have today, even if it is little? Truly it's difficult to predict but one thing that could be learnt from the last three elections from 2012-2022 is that, without quota, women would not have a seat in parliament. For example, in 2012 the installation of a permanent federal government in Somalia, despite, the political stakeholders were agreed to implement gender equality through all processes of peace-building, and presented in their agreement to allocate 30% of seats of parliament for women. Yet traditional elders refuse to elect women (Affi and Zainab, 2022). Hence, as Koshin mentioned, women's reserved quota in Somalia helps out women.

#### **5.4 Factors Hindering Women's Role in Peace Peacebuilding**

This part of the research will present obstructs and challenges that exist and hinder women's role in peacebuilding.

### 5.4.1 Culture and Social Norms

Somali traditional culture is primarily patriarchal, combining nomadic pastoral customs and conventions with Islamic doctrine (UNICEF, 2002). In this sociocultural dimension, gender roles are explicitly defined and housework is separated. Men possess the most authority and decision-making power. They are liable for the family's financial security and safety. Meanwhile, women are expected to fulfil obligations that are distinct and complementary. They are primarily responsible for food acquisition and preparation, childrearing, and other domestic tasks. As a result of the categorization, it is clear that culture neither empowers women nor inspires equity among the sexes. Moreover, unlike Sharia law, it disregards more women's rights such as the right of inheritance. In some areas of Somalia, particularly urban areas, a widow must marry her deceased husband's sibling to inherit his properties. In terms of education, girls do not prioritize as much as boys do.

*Somali customary law, or xeer Soomaali, is a collection of unwritten customs and practices passed down orally through generations. These provide reciprocal rights and duties between kin and clans in household concerns, social welfare, political relations, property rights, and natural resource management (Bradbury and Healy et al., 2010).*

According to Bryden and Steiner (1998), under the cultural principles of customary law *xeer*, a woman does not exist as an independent legal person. Before marriage, a woman is subject to her father's jurisdiction, and after marriage, she is subject to her husband's jurisdiction. As a result, a woman is de jure subject to the rule of men for the rest of her life. In this setting, women are neither considered responsible for themselves nor capable of being responsible for others. In addition, a woman is prohibited from participating in the assembly (*shir*) (Cerulli 1964, Quoted Bryden and Steiner 1998).

Cultural principles -customary law *xeer*, as Ingiriis (2011) stated, play a pivotal role in the proliferation of violence against women's rights. For example, a girl from a family who has been found guilty of a crime is sometimes made to marry a member of the family who was wronged. In other cases of rape, the person who was raped has to marry the person who did it to keep her honor and that of her family. Hence, Somali culture and social structure largely exclude women from participating in direct decision-making processes. Most communal choices - whether about war, peace, migration, marriage, or divorce - were solely male matters, usually reached by broad consensus among lineage leaders (Svensson ed p 203 2010). In the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, it is observed that women are often not recognized as significant stakeholders in the process. This statement expands upon the conventional belief system that asserts women have no involvement in conflict resolution as long as men are the primary combatants, even though women are integral members of society and are disproportionately susceptible to various forms of violence compared to men. Consequently, the extent of women's impact on dispute resolution and peace initiation is significantly restricted.

#### **5.4.2 Gender Equality and Gender Discrimination**

Gender equality and women's empowerment are two of Somalia's greatest challenges (UNDP, 2022). In a study conducted by the SIDRA Institute in 2016 about gender equality in Somalia, 86% of the respondents (13 out of 15) stated that gender inequality exists. On the other side, when asked the respondents if the needs of Somali men and women are equally discussed and addressed in society, slightly over half of the respondents stated that the requirements of Somali men and women are not discussed and addressed in an equal manner. Moreover, the research claimed that the main factor contributing the gender inequality is culture, starting from family to community.

Hence, the assessment of gender equality in Somalia is a complex matter that is shaped by a range of circumstances, including societal norms, armed conflicts, economic difficulties, and political dynamics. According to the UN Somalia gender equality report 2018, the country has significant gender inequality, placing it in the fourth-highest position worldwide. The report highlighted that Somalia is experiencing a significantly high rate of maternal mortality rates, extremely high gender-based employment (women unemployment 74%), Female genital mutilation (FGM 99%), child marriage (45%), and sexual gender-based violence. Moreover, the report stated the presence of clan-based patriarchal political institutions and cultural norms, along with the persistent issue of insecurity, significantly hinder women's capacity to effectively advocate for increased participation and representation in political processes and policy-making.

On the other side, although there is no national data, sexual violence is still ranking high. According to the UN (2021), 400 civilians, mostly girls were victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence in 2020, a nearly 80 per cent increase from 2019 levels. Whereas, in early 2021 the United Nations confirmed over 100 cases of sexual violence against women. As the report stated the vast majority of those responsible for the atrocities were armed men, also most of the cases took place and were documented in IDP camps. 70% or 80% of those who live there (IDPs) are women and children (UNDP, 2012). Therefore, sexual violence against women, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence are, according to Somalia's social norms, inappropriate topics for open discussion. Consequently, women and girls who experienced such violence preferred to conceal themselves. GBV cases contribute to a lack of proper punishment mechanisms against the perpetrators. Hence, to eliminate or limit those factors, UNDP

(2015) argues that Somalia needs to formulate, revise, and update relevant policies, laws, strategies, and regulatory frameworks that prohibit gender equality, empower women's participation in all social aspects, and also reduce all violence against women includes sexual violence.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Examining both the enabling and hindering factors helps to figure out exactly why, after all the contributions women in Somalia have made to peacebuilding, they are still underrepresented. First, enabling factors: the research found that Somalia ratified the majority of human rights body treaties and also carried out the implementation of UNWPS 1325, which emphasizes women's role in peacebuilding and reconstruction in post-conflict countries. In addition, the provisional constitution's article indicates equality among the sexes in decision-making and prohibits violence against women. Combined, all three factors clearly show that institutional women's rights are the right way forward to development for establishing a new Somalia. However, due to a lack of implementation and weak institutions, neither those policies provide protection for women in Somalia nor do they assist women's ambition to gain equity in decision-making in government bodies.

As a result of gender inequality, gender discrimination, culture, and social norms, women's peacebuilding efforts and their participation in state issues such as decision-making, security, and resource access are severely hampered. Moreover, as Bryden and Steiner (1998) argued culture fails Somali women. indeed, arguably, Somali culture is the primary obstacle that hinders women's involvement in crucial activities such as peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives, and decision-making. Culture

contributes to increased violence against women, discrimination in society, and further challenges the country's regulations.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSIONS

Despite the progress made by women's rights from the rest of the world in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, some authors argued that over the past six decades, Somalia has been an independent nation. Limited progress has been made in the realm of women's rights but this does not imply that women's demand for access to government decision-making bodies and equity was absent. Somalia is recovering from a prolonged civil war that destroyed almost all its resources. Throughout that long history, it shows that achieving equity among males and females is a critical issue in Somalia, and before going to that point, there are several barriers to break including the cultural principles which play a significant role in the lifestyle of Somali society particularly Somali women's role in society.

Regarding the research question 'In what ways do Somali women contribute to the peace process?' the research illustrated that the influence of Somali women in peacebuilding and conflict resolution emerged soon after the collapse of the central government and they engaged several different strategies to initiate peace in between the community such as the establishment of grassroots organizations aimed at addressing the underlying causes of conflicts and offering alternatives for dispute mediation and peace enforcement; utilized their membership in their tribes as a truce envoy between two hostile parties, demonstrations, advocacy, campaigning, lobbying and reading Buraanbur 'women's poetry' to send a message about the damage the conflict is causing and how they are feeling about it. Despite all these

efforts and sacrifices the women made, the study also showed that women were always sidelined from participating in negotiations and decision-making. The research also identified cultural and societal conventions as factors that impede women's involvement in peacebuilding. Based on cultural norms, there is a lesser degree of encouragement for women's rights. Consequently, their societal function is significantly limited, as is their involvement in peacebuilding endeavors and the process of decision-making. Moreover, the research indicates that Somalia has implemented institutional measures to promote women's rights and gender equality. For example, the establishment of policies and legal framework that all indicates the rights of women, ban violence against women and discrimination also emphasizes equity among the sexes. However, due to the weak fulfillment and lack of implementation, women's rights and gender equality are in a very critical position.

Compared to periods of conflict, the research illustrated that women's influence in peacebuilding changed due to the evolving of the situation. Women were used to engage grassroots organizations to influence peace initiation and advocate peace, carrying dialogues in the community and both politicians. They were an active key role player in peacebuilding and community development. However, the post-conflict period, shows that women's influence on peacebuilding is not as active as it used to be.

In conclusion, this research enhances the ideology of understanding women's role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts, particularly in regions like Somalia. which endured a protracted period of conflict that necessitated additional years to establish peace. The research recommended several areas to do research including Somali women in economic sectors, in the field of women and legal enforcement.

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