Women in peacebuilding - "Forming ties across family lines"

the case of Rwanda[1]

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[1] The title quotes a verse from "Language Lessons", poem by a Rwandan university student collected in the work of Apol (2014, p. 15)
"But who will speak for the fathers now?
How can their clans unite,
form ties across family lines?"

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Introduction

The oversimplification of women's roles in conflicts has traditionally led to their depiction merely as victims and passive actors (Arostegui, 2013), facilitating a peacebuilding approach, which perpetrates blindness towards gender issues and women's inclusion (Gonzalez, 2016) (Snodgrass, 2010). Despite this general misconception, women have proved to be crucial actors in successful peace processes especially on the African continent, as illustrated by the examples of Somalia (Tripp, 2016), Liberia (Theobald, 2014), Sudan (Yahia, 2015), Rwanda (Mzvondiwa, 2007), Nigeria (Ibeanu, 2001) and Congo (Almagro, 2018). However, although these women's movements presented similar levels of civic engagement and political positions, the results achieved in terms of gender balance and implementation of gender-conscious peacebuilding programmes were completely different.

Women's consideration during conflicts is still minimal, despite important turning points like the UN resolution (S/RES/1325) on women and peace and security of 31 October 2000 and the introduction of the concept of Gender Mainstreaming, in which member states were encouraged to deal with the impact of conflict on both men and women. This resolution is certainly a landmark, as is not only urged member states to carry out more gender-sensitive peace operations but it also instituted the "Interagency Taskforce on Women, Peace and Security" to coordinate the UN system in reaching this goal. However, the implementation of the resolution has not always been effective (Kreft, 2017).

Among the African conflicts of the last 50 years, it is hard to find a more significant example than the Rwandan Civil War, culminated with the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi population. The genocide, the fastest ever recorded, saw not only the killing of many men but also the systematic use of rape as a weapon of war against women. The genocide lasted 100 days with a death rate of eight thousand people a day (Hudson, 2009). Surprisingly, 20 years after a conflict with violence and political meaning of this scale, Rwanda today shows one of the highest gender balance rates in the world (WEF, 2018). Not only the number of women in Parliament is incredibly high (60%), but several bodies have been created to encourage women's political participation and to advocate their rights (CNUR, 2005). But how are these results connected to the participation of women in the peacebuilding processes?

Considering the aforementioned frequent engagement of women in peacebuilding and their recognized importance, this thesis intends to answer the following research question: how and under which circumstances does women's involvement in peacebuilding reach positive results in terms of gender gap and more effective post-conflict reconstruction? More specifically this research aims to

analyse *why the Rwandan women's involvement in peacebuilding resulted in a sensible improvement in terms of gender gap and post conflict stability despite the equal levels of engagement of women in peacebuilding in other less successful examples*. In fact, we find women movements engaged in peacebuilding in many major conflicts in Africa, however, not in many cases, like in the Rwandan one, do we have a concrete inclusion of women in reconciliation processes and in the political and economic sphere.

As a counterexample, this research will take another incredibly significant and interconnected conflict into consideration: The Second Congo War. In this war, also called the Great War of Africa, the violence scale was massive, and rape was again used as a weapon of war. Women advocated for peace all the same, however, not only did not these movements result in a significant improvement in terms of gender gap, but the conflict never entirely ended leaving the country in a continual spiral of violence that persists to the present day.

The research approach of this paper addresses the gaps in literature on the topic by considering two frameworks: feminist theories and indigenous peacebuilding. The combination of these two frameworks helps reaching the answer that they struggle to provide separately. In fact, feminist theories highlight how the inclusion of women in peace processes is beneficial, not only in minimising the gender gap but also for the post-conflict reconstruction itself, theorizing that dealing with gender-related issues lowers the chances of future conflicts (Cockburn, 2004). However, they do not agree on how women should be included. On the other hand, indigenous peacebuilding theories focus on the importance of local practices and the efficacy of traditional processes to bring structural change (Hudson, 2009; Autesserre, 2008). Nevertheless, they usually do not consider the positive and transformational impact that women could have on these processes, if not as a side element. In order to answer the research puzzle, this study will outline in which ways women's movements affected post-conflict reconstruction in the aforementioned case studies, analysing how their impact can be reconnected to these two theoretical frameworks.

There are several elements that justify this thesis and its relevance. First of all, the topic is gaining more and more attention and even if the resonance of the UNSC Res. 1325 is increasing and many results are being reached all over the world, like the very recent protests lead by the so-called "kandaka" Sudanese women, there is still an incredible gap in security studies regarding gender issues (Oppenheim, 2019). The second strength of this study is that it connects two separate strands in literature, studies on local/indigenous peacebuilding and studies on gender and security. Thereby, this

study introduces a novel framework explicitly putting gender issues as the key for a successful[2] indigenous peacebuilding. Additionally, the relevance of this research lies also in the selected case studies. In fact, no study compares Rwanda and Congo within this specific framework, while there are several reasons why this comparison would be beneficial to make progresses in these theories. Firstly, the two cases have many similarities and interconnections, sharing timelines, issues, cultural elements and geography; however, the results achieved are diametrically divergent both in terms of gender gap and in terms of successful peacebuilding. Secondly, the time frame of these two examples, not in too recent times but still contemporary with the increase of international attention on gender sensitivity in peacebuilding, allows to analyse the effects of gender-inclusive and indigenous practices in the long run[3] and not only right after the signing of the peace agreements, like the rest of the literature. Final reason of the relevance of this thesis, is that it contributes knowledge to the subject, including elements usually ignored in the analysis, like the importance of economic empowerment and the effects of these more inclusive peacebuilding methods on the GDP, the importance of the governmental structure and the dynamics that take place in shifting the social perception of women.

This thesis will elaborate on this connection between indigenous peacebuilding and gender issues, suggesting that, like in the case of Rwanda, a method conscious of indigenous dynamics would encourage a more gradual, but also more efficient, change towards women; not only at an institutional level but also in terms of social recognition and empowerment.

[2] In this thesis the definition of a "successful" peacebuilding lies in a "process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict" (UN, 1992, p. 57) where solving "economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems" is intended with specific attention to improvements in the gender gap .

[3] especially after the 5 years from the peace talks, the moment of maximum vulnerability for backlashes of violence

Literature review

General literature on women and peacebuilding

Women's peace actions and long-term achievements in gender balance are often overlooked in correlation with each other, just as most of the literature does not explore how the involvement of women can bring a more effective impact on peacebuilding processes.

However, the limited literature on women and peacebuilding unanimously takes a stance towards the importance that gender-inclusiveness has on the peace process, therefore this is considered a starting point in this study. However, it remains to be explored under which circumstances and *how* women's action and inclusion are successful in some cases but not in others. Scholars have suggested many possible factors behind successful women's movements, but not all of them suit the case of Rwanda. The main answers to the research puzzle identified in this literature review are: simplification and victimisation of the role of women in conflict, traditional roles and indigenous practices the role that the economy has in the empowerment process, the impact of governmental bodies and top-down approaches, the persistence or not of a violent social situation, and finally the approach of the international community towards peacebuilding. Additionally, this literature review will analyse sources on the theoretical frameworks taken into account in order to highlight discrepancies and points of contact of both feminist theories and indigenous peacebuilding studies.

Perception: Stereotypes and Traditional Roles

The main element that can determine successful women's action in peacebuilding is the recognition of their role within the conflict and society in general. Conversely, the main problem of the general literature on women and peacebuilding, as emerged from the work of Lentin (1997), Karam (2000) and Gonzalez, (2016), is the portrayal of women as inherently pacific and exclusively framed within their social roles of mothers and caregivers (Isike & Uzodike, 2011). This perpetrates a misrepresentation that can impede their social and political advancement (Hudson, 2009; Gonzalez, 2016; Snodgrass, 2011; York, 1996) .

However, as noticed by Hudson (2009), their role in conflict is often active, not only in peace activism but also in fighting. In Rwanda, for instance, women constituted 37% of the leadership in the Rwandan Patriotic Front (Herndon & Randell, 2010) and similar numbers can be found in most African conflicts. Many authors stress the importance of considering women well-rounded actors to have a full account of their impact (Arostegui, 2013; Karam, 2000), proving that they are not only mothers and victims but an active part of the conflict (Tripp, 2016; Fuest, 2009). Additionally,

according to other scholars, women's peace efforts bring them to "challenge authorities", in contrast with the narrative of appeasement and acquiescence that surrounds femininity (Gonzalez, 2016).

Despite this excessive simplification of women's role has been addressed, in the perspective of this research the positions taken into account are too polarized. As shown, a part of the literature still portrays women as victims, while the other strand, though less consistent, attempts at giving a full account of all the other roles women cover in conflict. While this research agrees with this second strand, it might incur in the potential risk of diverting the attention from the impact that the conflict has on women. It is important to remark that such impact differs from the one affecting the men, in spite of the equal variety of roles.
Therefore, this research takes a third intermediate position, proving that women in Rwanda were considered credible peace actors firstly because they had multifaceted social roles, secondly because the trauma that they endured *as women*, gave them a different vision of both conflict and society.

Additionally, it has been noticed that often the end of a conflict does not necessarily mean the end of violent behaviours towards women, something that has been defined by Cynthia Cockburn as a "continuum of violence" (Cockburn, 2004). This is however an element almost never considered when talking of the successful results of women's movement. On the contrary, this thesis argues that the persistence of violent social behaviour, like in the case of the Congo (Autesserre, 2008), is detrimental both for women's movement and for society. In fact, ongoing conflictual issues taking place despite the official peace agreements, negatively affect women and, therefore, their political action.

In relation to the perception of women in conflict, it is important to take into account the incredibly various set of traditional roles that they cover in their own culture. This has led many scholars to observe that in many African cultures the symbolic importance of women - and their connection with concepts as rebirth and reconciliation – has indeed helped many movements in gaining a certain "spiritual credibility", Rwandan ones included (Herndon & Randell, 2010). In particular, concepts like *umubyeyi* – "mother" but also "life-giver" - and *abahubiri* – "spiritual power" - played a role in the cultural shift that happened towards women after the genocide (CNUR, 2005; Herndon & Randell, 2010; Issifu, 2015). This has been noticed even more specifically in relation to many pre-colonial African cultures where traditional roles often give women the roles of mediator and judges over conflicts (Fuest, 2009; Hodgson, 2000; Isike & Uzodike, 2011; CNUR, 2005).

Within this trend, many African women gained a credible position in the peacebuilding process through traditional roles that, either reinvented or brought back to life, allowed them to hold trials as judges or to create alliances trough facilitating actions like marriages (Isike & Uzodike, 2011; Dini, 2009; Mohamed, 2004; Amadiume, 1997).

Without denying the importance of these cultural elements in the legitimization of peace actions (Hodgson, 2000; Dini, 2009; Mohamed, 2004; Issifu, 2015; Ogunsanya, 2007), this thesis suggests two main counterarguments. Firstly, that these traditional roles, as the stereotypical connection woman-mother, are only useful instruments that women's movements have used in their discourses and propaganda actions to convey a message, taking advantage of an image that was already there. However, as some have noticed, these roles are not *per se* enough to give women a role, as they have to be combined with other elements in order to be reinterpreted to create a real social change and an efficient peace action (Herndon & Randell, 2010; Ogunsanya, 2007). In the Rwandan case, the major shift in the social perception of women happened when they acquired a role in the Gacaca system, which was traditionally reserved exclusively to men (Herndon & Randell, 2010; Izabiliza, 2005).

Maintaining this attention to pre-colonial African cultures, many authors notice that women's efficacy in peacebuilding also depends on their often-intermediate position between factions. An example is the aforementioned tradition of interclan marriages as a way to bring peace (Hodgson, 2000; Tripp, 2016). Conversely, this thesis agrees with another strand in literature that emphasises the capability of women to create networks, *even if* they belong to different factions (Hudson, 2009). In fact, in the Rwandan society, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa women got together, even if no tradition of interclan marriage existed.

According to this second viewpoint, this inter-factions role of women comes from their shared traumatic experiences during conflicts and not necessarily from inter-clan marriages (Ibeanu, 2001; Onyejekwe, 2005). This is an interpretation that this thesis will consider crucial, because it is free from stereotypes of women's natural vulnerability and peacefulness and takes into account their role as victims yet in a more "constructive" and less limited way. Violence and its results, like HIV and unwanted pregnancies, were certainly a unifying factor in the Rwandan genocide and they tragically facilitated the creation of interethnic women organizations such as ABASA or AVEGA (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

Structural Elements: Government, Society and Economy

An element that is mentioned but often disregarded is the role played by economic empowerment of women, usually consequential to the conflict (Tripp, 2016; Mzvondiwa, 2007). This is a crucial variable that can stabilize the new perception and roles of women in post-conflict society, giving them credibility (Karam, 2000; Izabiliza, 2005). In many conflicts, women gain an important economic role, which can contribute in giving them the authority to pursue political actions (Tripp, 2016). However, in the aftermath of a conflict, women are usually those more affected by economic drawbacks, losing the advantages gained in the war (Theobald, 2014).
Again, despite the limited attention that this element has gained, there is a clear gap in how economic empowerment is portrayed when speaking about women and peacebuilding. In fact, most studies treating economic issues where specifically focused on women and their condition during the conflict or right after, and not on the efficacy of the peacebuilding action itself. Conversely, many studies on peacebuilding focus on the importance often given to the implementation of a market economy (Autesserre, 2008; Paris, 2010), but without analysing the impact that the inclusion of women would have on it. In the Rwandan case, also due to the fact that women were a demographic majority after the genocide, women-led businesses proved to be very successful after the conflict and many women started leading households (Herndon & Randell, 2010), playing a crucial role in the cultural change towards gender issues (Izabiliza, 2005)

As a second element, only a few studies focus on the role that men and political regimes play in the successful affirmation of women's movements. In fact, virtually every study on peacebuilding speaks about the government but they only mention it in terms of reception of women's claims (Fuest, 2009; Ogunsanya, 2007; Tripp, 2016). Also, while most studies focus on the obstructionism that women face in the political arena (Dini, 2009; Fuest, 2009; Onyejekwe, 2005), almost none describes how male society and the population in general experienced a shift in the perception of women's role, not only within the limited framework of the peace talks. This is the sign that self-referential approaches can occur on both sides as it is impossible to believe that a cultural change towards a more inclusive society can happen without every actor playing a fundamental role. In the case of Rwanda, for instance, some scholars argue that men's positive attitude towards the new roles that women were playing was crucial, as it was president Kagame's effort in making those changes happen (Herndon & Randell, 2010). Within this debate, this thesis argues that certain elements have to be further explored. First of all, it is not only the government's will that makes a difference but also its structure, an element that almost no study takes into account. Even if Autesserre (2008) notices that the

centralized configuration of the Congolese government was detrimental for peacebuilding practices, women are not at all mentioned. On the contrary, it has been proved that the Rwandan decentralized system is crucial for the inclusion of women at each level (CNUR, 2005). The second gap identified is the lack of studies on the change in the social perception of women after the conflict and how it can be implemented. It is clear that in some societies this perception has shifted more than in others and often due to certain best practices put into place, like the trainings held with both women and men in Rwanda (Sentongo, 2011).

International Community

Some studies however move away from social or national dynamics to attribute the positive impact of women in peacebuilding to the attention that the International Community has given to the topic since the end of the '90s, culminated with the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 2000 (Tripp, 2016; Onyejekwe, 2005; Snodgrass, 2011). This resolution, evolved in a more complex cluster of guidelines called "1325 framework", promotes a "gender mainstreaming" approach in conflict, that should ensure the constant attention to gender related issues and the equal inclusion of women and men (Onyejekwe, 2005; Arostegui, 2013; Snodgrass, 2011; Karam, 2000; Kreft, 2017). Rwanda was an important case study for the implementation of the resolution, as the international attention caused by the genocide of 1994 played a role in the urgency to create gender-sensitive norms (Whitman, 2007; Madsen, 2018; Hudson, 2009). In Rwanda, even though the peacebuilding process started before the Resolution 1325, this concept of Gender Mainstreaming played a crucial role. Yet, oftentimes it has been noticed that its application was limited due to the lack of bottom-up approaches, that would give women the necessary competencies to be credible actors in the process (Autesserre, 2018; Muthuki & Janet, 2018; Herndon & Randell, 2010). This lack of competencies is rooted in the same social problem that caused gender inequality in the first place, as it is impossible to expect a perfectly formed class of women leaders coming out of decades of gender inequality without a proper transition period.

The position of this thesis on this debate is double folded. Firstly, the definition of International Society must be enlarged. As peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions are hugely internationally led, not only in terms of funds but also of mandates, the impact of the international community and the attitude it shows towards the topic has a huge impact, also on the effectiveness of women's action (Autesserre, 2008). However, according to this research, not enough attention is given to actors outside UN bodies, like NGOs, diplomats and regional networks. Women networks are hugely present in Africa both at a national and international level and they play a major role in peacebuilding

and promotion of gender-sensitive post-conflict reconstruction (Hudson, 2009; George, 2001; Almagro, 2018). Secondly, like other authors claim, the international society still follows a standardized idea of gender issues, while this approach should be translated into an "indigenous" perspective to be effectively applied to a more specific context (Hudson, 2009; Kreft, 2017). There is no country where women have the same claims or where they face the exact same issues, while often not only women are subject to stereotypes but also their needs are portrayed through pre-determined standards in western-centric peacebuilding frameworks.

Combining Feminist Studies and Indigenous Peacebuilding

Two main theoretical frameworks are helpful to discuss how women affect the peace process: feminist approaches to conflict and security and indigenous peacebuilding. However, none of the two seemed exhaustive enough to cover this research puzzle, which is why their combination is here presented.

Feminist studies are essential as they completely change the perspective of what we define as a conflict. They switch the focus on women and on the effects that conflict has on them (Arostegui, 2013) and on the variety of roles they cover (Amadiume, 1997). Interestingly, they also highlight how the same definition of conflict is blind to gender issues, since often a situation labelled as "post conflictual" presents for women the perpetration of the same dynamics of the conflict itself (Cockburn, 2004). Feminist studies also highlight different needs that women and men have in security studies, acknowledging that human security is not "gender neutral", since to different genders correspond different threats (Hudson, 2009, p. 291). Despite the progress, many feminist studies on Gender Mainstreaming emphasise the still excessive standardization of gender issues, often indifferent to the specificity of local contexts (Hudson, 2009).

Feminist studies are then crucial to change the perspective we have on conflict, however they generally present two main gaps. First of all, they often lack a broader vision on society and on the efficacy of peacebuilding in general. Furthermore, most of the times they are not inserted in a systematic study of the peacebuilding action and *how* it relates to women's condition, therefore focusing predominantly on grassroot movements (Almagro, 2018) and traditional social roles (Amadiume, 1997) but not, for instance, on the mandate of peacekeeping missions, on economic policies or on the level of decentralization of the government.

All these elements are taken into consideration by studies on peacebuilding, yet without relating them to women. Among these, we often find a differentiation between liberal peacebuilding and indigenous peacebuilding (Paris, 2010). Liberal peacebuilding is often accused to act accordingly to western views irrespective of the context, trying to rush countries towards a capitalist economy and a democratic system sometimes even worsening the conflict, as in the case of Rwanda (Paris, 2010; Autesserre, 2008). This led many studies to consider the possibility of an "indigenous method of peacebuilding" as an alternative (Snodgrass, 2011; Issifu, 2015; Paris, 2010). Indigenous peacebuilding methods are usually fluid in terms of political regime and more traditionally rooted in terms of social norms, they rely on alternative ways of decision-making and on “consensus” methods, attention to cultural roles and traditional reconciliation practices (Paris, 2010, p. 358). This kind of peacebuilding allows to connect local dynamics with the bigger picture, showing how solving problems at local level can affect the general success of a post-conflict reconstruction (Autesserre, 2008).

Many, like Autesserre (2008), have underlined how top-down approaches are insufficient in peacebuilding and that while a top-down intervention is crucial, the missing addition of micro-level local approaches would result in a failure. However, indigenous peacebuilding studies (Paris, 2010; Autesserre, 2008) still struggle to include women into the process, even if they would be valuable actors to implement these programmes, given their credibility especially at grassroot level. (Hudson, 2009). Traditional practices seem the best way to pursue change as they are widely accepted and recognized in society, as it happened in Rwanda with the Gacaca courts (Gonzalez, 2016; Paris, 2010). Even in the few studies where indigenous peacebuilding is read through a gender lens, like in the case of Hudson (2009) and Isike & Uzodike (2011), still it is visibly problematic to establish more general models through merely analysing specific cases. In general however, the overarching critique to liberal peacebuilding can give important insights for this puzzle if it is combined with a feminist approach.

Therefore, this thesis intends to adopt a combined framework of feminist approaches and indigneous peacebuilding methods in order to be able to re-read this wider general critique on liberal peacebuilding. Further, this study shall add additional elements on this general framework, starting from the hypothesis that effective participation of women in conflict can be done only through indigenous peacebuilding methodology and that this combination is not only beneficial in terms of gender balance but also in terms of security and stability of the whole process.

Methodology

This thesis has two objectives. The first is to research under which circumstances women's movements and actions in peacebuilding turn out to be successful. The second consists in how their action can impact post conflict stability. In order to do so, research has been conducted both on the most relevant studies on women and conflict and on critical studies concerning peacebuilding.
The most significant theoretical approaches on the topic have been identified, deciding to combine indigenous peacebuilding and feminist studies. Then, the thesis has chosen Rwanda as the main case study and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as the subsidiary case study.[4] This analysis then mainly focuses on Rwanda as a major case study, while Congo is considered as a secondary deviant case study, that is meant to furtherly counterprove the findings on Rwanda, but without an equal depth of analysis and applying a "worst case\best case" scenario approach.
The study of Rwanda is taken into consideration as an exceptional case study that, however, can add knowledge on the often-not-considered connection between gender issues, indigenous peacebuilding methods and effective post-conflict reconstruction. However, to strenghthen the argument of the thesis, the main flaws of the Rwandan example will be explored and addressed as well, demonstrating how, despite their presence, the argument of the research remains valid.

Since the research puzzle intends to explore the successful influence of the women's movements on peacebuilding and gender gap, this research has identified variables that will allow to quantify the effective impact of the women's action in the economic, social and political domain. The situation in Rwanda and its comparison with the DRC will be then read through the variables indicated by the UN in the "General overview on gender mainstreaming" (UN, 2002) namely:

- Inequalities in political power.
- Inequalities within households.
- Differences in legal status and entitlements.
- Gender division of labour within the economy.
- Inequalities in the domestic/unpaid sector.
- Violence against women.
- Discriminatory attitudes.

This thesis will focus on: inequalities in political power, differences in legal status and entitlements gender division of labour within the economy and violence against women. These four variables have

[4] Hereinafter referred to as DRC or Congo.

been chosen not only as the most relevant in the Rwandan case but also as the ones that better connect public and private domain, allowing the research to prove that a real social change in terms of both peace and gender balance has been implemented.

The methodology chosen is "process tracing" and the sources taken into account are mostly secondary sources. Among these, both academic and non-academic sources have been taken into consideration, like the World Economic Forum Gender Gap report and the annual reports on Gender Inequality from the AU. In addition, in order to shed light on the social perception of this switch in culture towards women, this research will also use interviews from women involved at several levels in this change in the role of women in Rwanda. A total of three interviews has been conducted, investigating mostly on the perception of this social change and how women felt their new role concretely evolved and was accepted into society. [5]The first interviewee was Yvonne Tangheroni Ingabire. Dr. Tangheroni Ingabire is the vice-president of the Italian office of IBUKA, an important Rwandan organization born after the genocide to give relief and support to survivors, implement peacebuilding practices and keep alive the memory of the genocide within the Rwandan as well as the international society. [6] Dr. Tangheroni Ingabire is a genocide survivor and she has collaborated with journalists and other Rwandan associations over the years, taking part in the debate on Rwanda with interviews and publications. The second interviewee was Jeanne d'Arc Cyuzuzo, a Rwandan journalist who is currently collaborating with the Royal FM 94.3 Kigali. Dr. Cyuzuzo has been a journalist for 7 years now and thanks to her role, she was able to give a technical opinion on the actual political and social actions that improved the condition of women. The third interviewee is Christine Safari V.d Boogerd, president of IBUKA in the Netherlands since 2017. She is a genocide refugee too and she has been working in IBUKA since 2005. These interviews helped in better understanding the social perception of the peace process through the experience of women who went through both the conflict and the genocide, giving a personal insight which would be hard, if not impossible, to find in academic sources.

This thesis will be organized as follows. Firstly, a general outline of the Rwandan and Congolese context will be provided. Secondly, the variables selected will be analysed to prove that Rwanda can indeed be considered a *successful* example. Thirdly, starting from the general analysis provided in

[5] These interviews were conducted in an informal way in both Italian and French and a copy of the questions is available in the Appendix.

[6] More information on IBUKA: https://www.ibuka.be/qui-sommes-nous/

the literature review, the elements that determine the success of women's movements will be studied in light of the Rwandan case study and, to a lesser extent, of the subsidiary case study, the Congo.

Chapter 1 – Overview of the cases

Context – Rwanda

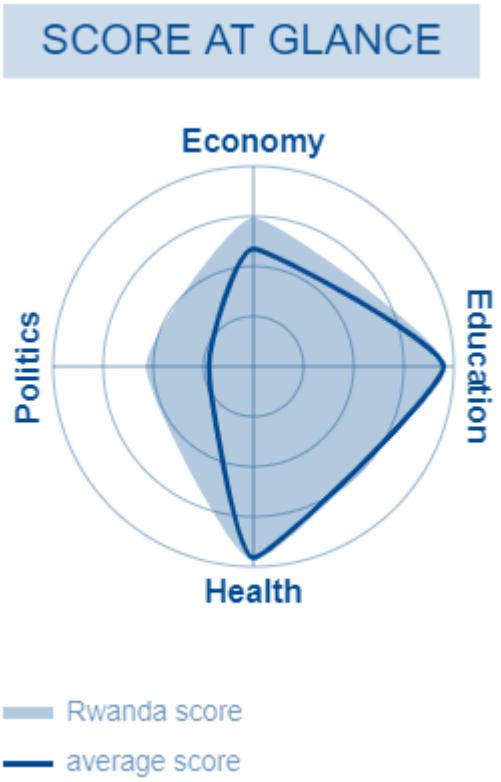

Figure 1 – RWANDA'S GENDER GAP SCORE (WEF, The Global Gender Gap Report 2018, 2018)

Women's political and social participation in Rwanda has historically been almost non-existent andthe advent of colonialism exacerbated both gender and ethnical divides (CNUR, 2005). During the interview with Yvonne Tangheroni Ingabire, she denied any relevant pre-colonial tradition related to women and highlighted the patriarchal foundation of the Rwandese traditional society, which made the change after the war even more evident. However, as in many African cultures, the traditional image of women in Rwanda is connected with their capability of bringing "harmony and peace" and their social role of mothers and wives in multi-ethnic marriages often created a link among the three main ethnic groups in Rwanda: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa (CNUR, 2005). Historically, the Tutsi population started occupying prominent roles of authority under the colonial regime, freezing into ethnic identities a population that was incredibly more fluid in the past. This led to an underlying social conflict that after the shutting down of the plane of the Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana, escalated into one of the fastest genocides of contemporary history.

As already mentioned, the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi population had horrible effects on women of every ethnicity. In fact, first rape was used as a weapon of war both by Hutu perpetrators against Tutsis and moderate Hutu women, thenby the Rwandan Patriotic Front as retaliation (Issifu, 2015). The number of women victim of sexual violence is around 250.000 and the 66% of these women contracted HIV\AIDS from these acts of violence (CNUR, 2005; Issifu, 2015). On the other hand, only 2,3% of the perpetrators were women (Mzvondiwa, 2007), even if many of these perpetrators

were equally responsible for crimes like rape and sexual slavery. This led to the first case in history of a woman (Pauline Nyramasuhuko) judged guilty of sexual violence as a weapon of war and a crime against humanity (Hudson, 2009). Women's role then was diverse, nuanced and most of the times non-fitting with femininity stereotypes and patriarchal models (Hudson, 2009).

Context - Congo

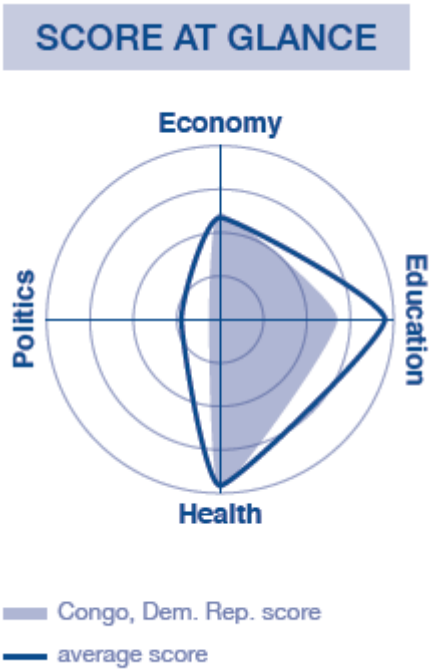

Figure 2 - CONGO'S GENDER GAP SCORE (WEF, 2018)

What happened in Rwanda is surely the result of several contingencies, however it is impossible not to notice the striking difference with a country culturally and geographically close, the Democratic Republic of Congo. The DRC hosted two of the major conflicts ever experienced by the African continent with the highest number of deaths since WWII, maintaining a more-than-instable situation in the post conflict period and incredibly high violence rates (Autesserre, 2008). The first war, in 1996, is also clearly linked with the Rwandan genocide as many ethnic conflicts were caused by the inflow of 2 million Rwandan refugees inside the country (Autesserre, 2018.). The instable post-conflict situation led to the Second Congo War in 1998 that officially ended with the Pretoria Agreements in April 2003 (Autesserre, 2018.) However, many subnational conflicts (for example in North Kivu in 2007) kept taking place, often fuelled by lack of demilitarization, inefficient social reconstruction and conflicts among minorities (Autesserre, 2018.). In fact, around 20% of the local struggles relapsed into conflict during the peacebuilding operations (Autesserre, 2008). The regions more affected by these conflicts where North and South Kivu, where local violence on ethnic basis exploded after the order to repatriate the Rwandan refugees living in the area (Autesserre, 2008). This was generally underestimated by the international peacekeeping missions operating in Congo at the time, as local violence was erroneously seen more as a criminal act enrooted in the society than an act of war (Autesserre, 2008). While of course this could be the case in many post-conflict situations, in the specific example of the Congo, it was clear from the beginning that the violence rates were so high that labelling the situation as "post-conflictual" could not be realistic (Autesserre, 2008).

Despite the agreements, peace was never really achieved, and the country never entirely recovered (Whitman, 2007). Today, there is an estimation of 1000 daily civilian deaths as a result of the socio-economic collapse of the country following the two wars and the subsequent unrests (Autesserre, 2018.). Rape rates are high, with 1,8 million victims counted in 2011 (EU, 2014). Additionally, the DRC is one of the countries with the lowest score in terms of Gender Gap as the WEF ranks it 144 out of 149 countries in the Global Gender Gap report of 2018. Among the 149 countries analysed by the report the DRC is ranked 148th in the world for women's education attainment and 136th in terms of political empowerment (WEF, 2018).

Similarities among the cases

Despite certain characteristics that make the two examples of Rwanda and Congo inherently different from one another, some elements coming out from the comparison give space for a more accurate reflection on the factors that made the post conflict period of two war-torn countries so different.

In both cases, there are two countries destroyed by the war, in the same period of time and in the same sub-region.

We cannot really address a cultural difference as the cause of Congo's incapability of coming out of the conflict since both countries share cultural ties, even without considering the extensive number of Rwandan refugees that settled in Congo after the genocide. In both countries, the conflict was largely fuelled by ethnic disputes. In Congo, this was between the indigenous communities in the Kivus and the Kinyarwanda-speaking communities, of Rwandan origins, already present since colonial times (Autesserre, 2008). This conflict exploded in the 90s with the inflow of refugees after the Rwandan genocide (Autesserre, 2008). Ethnic ties were particularly important under the government of Mobutu, who made traditional institutions part of the government structure thus influencing the access to land, power and rights accordingly to ethnic origins and therefore excluding some strands of society (Autesserre, 2008). The conflicts not only exacerbated local clashes but also made it possible for marginalized groups to take more power through alliances, both at the local and regional level (Autesserre, 2008). Four local conflictual areas were formed in eastern Congo after the end of the war fuelled by the military interference of other regional powers like Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi: North Kivu, South Kivu, North Katanaga and the Ituri province (Autesserre, 2008).

Also, the support of the international community was not different in the two countries as the DRC has seen an even bigger involvement in terms of external support than Rwanda. In fact, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is, up until now, the biggest peacebuilding effort the UN has ever undertaken both in terms of numbers and financial capabilities (Autesserre, 2018). Furthermore, the International Criminal Court started operating exactly in DRC and the European Union devolved there its first peacekeeping operation (Autesserre, 2018). Finally, women's movements were particularly active at grassroot levels, not only advocating for peace but also gaining non-traditional roles in the economy and joining forces in organizations and NGOs despite any political or ethnical belonging (Whitman, 2007). They also managed to have a role in the inter-Congolese dialogue (ICD), encouraging the government to enact the gender-sensible policies previously laid down in the official declarations and reaching the point of physically blocking the room where the peace talks were held to force the men to sign the Pretoria Agreement in April 2003 (Hudson, 2009; Whitman, 2007). Some constitutional provisions have been approved, like the introduction of a 30% women quota in the legislative bodies, exactly like in Rwanda (Whitman, 2007).

We have a similar situation then, with a similar level of engagement among women to achieve peace and among the international society. However, the outcomes are quite different. It has been previously noticed how common it is for a war-torn country to fall back into conflict or social unrest within five years from the end of the conflict (Autesserre, 2018; Collier & Sambanis, 2002). However, not only did Rwanda manage to escape this trend, but also women's condition improved.

Chapter 2 – Women in Rwanda after the genocide

After the war women covered a much more influential role in the Rwandan society. The number of women leaders both in the private and public sector increased enormously, especially in the domains that have been traditionally associated with men, like the infrastructure sector (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Possibly, their most important role in the aftermath of the genocide was to take part to the traditional judiciary system called Gacaca, through which they were able to engage in a reconciliation effort that encouraged a switch in the social perception of their role. Women's organizations like IBUKA, ABASA and AVEGA played a role in many other reconstruction-related processes – especially regarding the reintegration in society of orphans, HIV-positive women and refugees. As emerged in the interview with Christine Safari, in the Rwandan culture women are often associated with peace

and reconciliation, a cultural element that made their insertion in the peace-building process easier, helping them to acquire a more influential role.

In the post-genocide Rwanda, decentralisation processes together with traditional justice systems and political reforms have contributed to create a strong basis for a post-conflict period based on reconciliation (Sentongo, 2011).

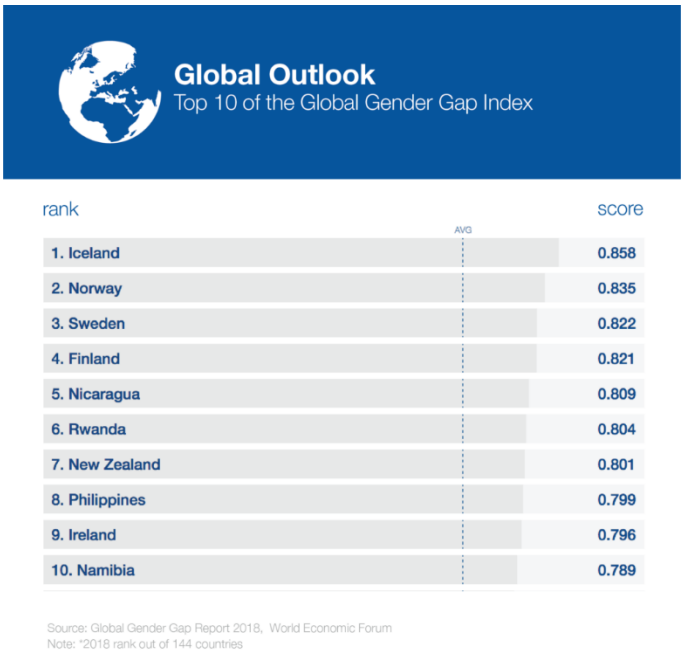

Figure 3 - (WEF, The Global Gender Gap Report 2018, 2018)

It is undeniable that women's inclusion was crucial to maintain peace and to forward the reconciliation process (Sentongo, 2011; Hudson, 2009). Furthermore, their empowerment contributed to a positive evolution of the economy of the country in the aftermath of the conflict, in 2008 recorded as one of the fastest growing in Africa (Herndon & Randell, 2010), leading to the fall of many gender-related stereotypes (Izabiliza, 2005). According to the Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum, Rwanda is in 2018 ranked 6th out of 149 countries for gender inclusivity, also showing a steady increase in its performances (in 2014 it was ranked 7th out of 142 countries) (WEF, 2014; WEF, 2018). Moreover, Rwanda is the 1st country in the world for number of women in Parliament, for enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education and for participation of women in the labour force, having the third lowest gender inequality index in Africa (WEF, 2018).

Women seem to improve their condition at all levels, but not at the same pace, as it can be seen from the analysis of the variables below.

Inequalities in Political Power

In order to establish a durable peace, the government implemented the strategies of two important documents, the new constitution and the "vision 2020", making historical decisions like the introduction of a 30% quota for women in parliament.

This is not a guarantee of success *per se*, and neither an exceptional case in Africa where half of the countries have similar provisions (Tripp, 2016). Rwanda is the only case in which not only the amendment is applied but the number of women doubles the quota (Tripp, 2016). Moreover, while

women advocated for a gender-based quota in many countries, often unsuccessfully, in the case of Rwanda women actually opposed the quota as they already felt involved in the political system (CNUR, 2005; Tripp, 2016). In any case, right after the introduction of the 30% quota, in the elections of 2003 women exceeded it reaching 40% of the seats, showing how progress was not externally imposed but internally implemented (Sentongo, 2011). This number kept increasing, while due to the decentralised system, women are ensured political power from the village level (Sentongo, 2011).

Finally, to the present day, many women occupy relevant cabinet positions asthe Minister of Trade and Industry, the minister of Local Government and the Minister of Health, reaching for the first time in 2018 a gender balanced cabinet with 50% of women (The Hindu, 2018).[7]

Moreover, member of the Supreme Court and of the Rwandan High judiciary council, Marie Thérèse Mukamulisa is also among the 12 redactors of the current Rwandan Constitution.[8]

Conversely, the institutional level of Peacebuilding in DRC was completely blind to gender sensitivity and indigenous practices. In the preparation committee meeting for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), only 6 women were present among the 73 participants and even those 6 where instructed not to raise gender issues (Whitman, 2007). In the ICD in Sun City, women reached the 9% of the whole number of delegates, after being trained by UNIFEM, which also sponsored 14 consultants to support them (Whitman, 2007). Nevertheless, women were completely absent both in the "political" and "legal" commission and in the "security" commission (Whitman, 2007). As a result, official provisions dealing with women victims of violence or with women that took part in the combat were not even considered and common declarations issued by FAS and WOPPA were not taken into account (Whitman, 2007). Unsurprisingly, the few decisions made in favour of women (like, again, a 30% quota) were never respected as the number of women in the government and parliament stayed almost non-existent, reaching today the 4,6% (WPL, 2019).

Differences in legal status and entitlements

In pre-genocide Rwanda a lot of structural inequality existed, especially in terms of inheritances and property laws (Karam, 2000). Women becoming *de facto* heads of the households after the conflict created several problems in applying the law, that was therefore changed due to the lobbying of women groups in parliament (Karam, 2000). During the constitutional process the Collective *Pro Femmes/Twese Hamwe* (that gathers all women organizations) successfully lobbied to have a gender

[8] Profile of Justice Mukamulisa: http://en.african-court.org/index.php/judges/current-judges

sensible constitution based on the equality principle (Arostegui, 2013). Again, in the interview with Jeanne d'Arc Cyuzuzo this openness towards women's proposals was credited largely to the government, since not only new laws were implemented but also unequal laws for women were abolished. However, different levels of education among women and men made women unable to get to know their rights, and therefore to get access to the resources provided by the newly implemented laws (CNUR, 2005).

On the contrary, in Congo it was impossible for women's groups to lobby successfully towards a more gender balanced constitution (Almagro, 2018). Despite the minimum age for marriage was raised from 14 to 18 years old, still women are *by law* subordinated to their husbands as leaders of the household (DRC, 2017). Moreover, inheritance laws tend to prioritize sons, even if out of the wedlock, over wives, creating a huge problem for widows of the conflict and facilitating the persistence unrest and of practices like sexual slavery (DRC, 2017).

Gender division of labour within the economy

As a result of the war, Rwandan women have gained access to areas of the job market that were before only accessible to men, often even reaching better results (CNUR, 2005; Karam, 2000). Despite not being completely balanced, their "scores" are significantly above the global average (WEF, 2018). In fact, now around 34% of businesses are led by women with an increase of 2,9% per year (CNUR, 2005).

Additionally, the government officially recognized the empowerment of women in all fields as an asset for an effective economic development (Arostegui, 2013). As a result, women were the backbone of all the socio-economic initiatives in the post genocide period (CNUR, 2005). The number of women heads of households is also increasing. After the genocide, Rwandan women took over non-traditional roles not only in the economy but also in the household, oftentimes becoming the principal, sometimes even the only breadwinner (Arostegui, 2013). Rwanda sees a constant increase of its GDP (in 2014 it was 4,54 US$ billions and in 2018 9.14[9]) and of its GDP *per capita* (1381 in 2014, 1854 in 2018). This data, when combined with

COUNTRY SCORE CARD

	rank	score	avg
Economic participation and opportunity	**30**	**0.743**	**0.586**
Labour force participation	1	1.000	0.669
Wage equality for similar work (survey)	19	0.754	0.645
Estimated earned income (PPP, US$)	41	0.677	0.510
Legislators, senior officials and managers	44	0.569	0.329
Professional and technical workers	112	0.632	0.753

Figure 4- Rwanda's economic participation scores (WEF, The Global Gender Gap Report 2018, 2018)

Rwanda's being the 1st country in the world for women's inclusion in the labour force (figure 4), provides interesting insights also on the increasing market power of women.

Differently from the Rwandan example, in Congo emarginated groups like women and young people were totally excluded from economic participation. Especially, but not only, under Mobutu, the economy was centralized, without investing in local offices. Moreover, the total lack of attention to the implementation of an efficient education system led to the exclusion of young people, especially girls, from actively participating in the private as well as in the public sector (Child Soldiers International, 2017; Autesserre , 2008). This and the continuous militarization have placed Congo in the 107th position for women's inclusion in the workforce (WEF, 2018).

Violence against women

Women in Rwanda managed to successfully lobby for laws against gender-based violence (Arostegui, 2013). In particular, in 2006 the FFRP (women parliamentarian group) proposed a bill on "Prevention, Protection and Punishment" of Gender-Based Violence, after consultations with UNIFEM and UNDP (UN, 2006). Violence against women remains an unsolved issue, with minors being the main victims (UN, 2008), especially in poorer or more crowded areas, like Kigali City (UN, 2008). In particular, violence seems to be higher when women take over economically relevant roles as breadwinners, since there is more probability of conflict with their partners (UN, 2008). Additionally, collection of accurate data is made difficult by a deeply rooted culture of silence surrounding sexual violence, typical of many Great Lakes countries, Congo included (UN, 2008). However, the Government has shown to be well-aware of the issue, officially recognizing that, despite the goals towards gender balance of the "Vision 2020" being on track, further effort is needed in terms of economic empowerment of women and in the fight against gender-based violence (MINECOFIN, 2011).[10] To face both issues, particularly successful results were achieved in the programmes for economic empowerment organized in some villages with the UNFPA Rota Found. There, women and men not only practically worked together for economic purposes but also had the chance of discussing common issues and problems, consequently, mitigating gender-based violence (UN, 2008).

Finally, despite sexual abuse still being a serious problem, women's councils have been implementing for years now camps and events to inform women on sexual violence, especially regarding minors (CNUR, 2005).

However, measures have been taken also in terms of family and marriage law. In 2016 a new law passed setting the minimum age for marriage at 21 and equal rights for both men and women within marriage. Previously, not only any sexual act against minors was criminalized but also knowing about it and not denouncing it could lead to a life imprisonment (LAW Nº 32/2016 , 2016 ; IPAR, 2012). According to Jeanne d'Arc Cyuzuzo, laws and sensibilization campaigns against gender-based violence are making a huge difference in the perception of women. At the same time, she says, their new role in the economy, thanks also to the increased access to higher levels of education, is helping in making their husbands not seeing them as property but as partners.

Sexual violence in DRC has been endemic as well, both during and after the conflict, when phenomena like bush wives, sexual slavery and mass rape kept being perpetrated due to the lack of governmental authority (Autesserre, 2018.). Especially in the areas where local conflict was not talked about, like North Kivu, rape rates reached more than 20% for women and 10% for men [11].

Today, women's health benefits of only 0.1% of the government budget, with only two hospitals in the country that have the necessary instruments to treat rape victims (Whitman, 2007). The prosecution of these gender-related violent practices contributes to the continuity of the dynamics and power relations typical of the conflict period, leaving a society frozen in a violent setting that is neither reflected nor addressed in the political façade put into place after the peace agreement. Also, the blindness towards culture-related issues results in the fruitless effect of the actions taken. For instance, the introduction of shelters for women victims of violence may generate no results, if the social stigma that surrounds rape in the Congolese society is not considered. Indeed, women are less likely to ask for help and will probably choose not to denounce the violence in the first place (Whitman, 2007). Finally, rape within marriage is still not considered sexual violence by law (DRC, 2017).

Critics to the Rwandan case

The Rwandan peace process cannot, of course, be considered as a model. This research intends to underline that even imperfect examples can reach important results. The first problem of the Rwandan process is that the inclusion of women has still often suffered from the lack of consideration of the

diverse roles they have, excluding them from the disarmament operations or from the Arusha peace talks (Hudson, 2009).

Also, it is important to notice that not all areas of women's rights have improved proportionally. While in the political arena the progression is visible, employment rates are still relatively low and gender-based violence at the domestic level is still present, especially in rural areas (Hudson, 2009; Herndon & Randell, 2010; EU, 2014). Finally, the lack of education and of economic resources poses serious obstacles to the application of gender-sensible norms and social equality (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

It is of the utmost importance to remember that, despite having democratically elected bodies at local level, Rwanda is not considered a democratic country by many members of the international community, as the activity of "ethnically aligned political parties" is limited in the fear of a backlash in ethnic divisions (Hudson, 2009). However, it is also important to notice that lobbying within the parliament is a well-established practice in all factions and it is the instrument that women have used to pass revolutionary laws (Herndon & Randell, 2010). Also, as significant as the democratic regime of a state is, it is important to understand how much our perception may be biased by a typically western view of democracy. In the words of Senator Inyumba, for the Rwandan government democracy has nothing to do with the "cosmetic" of elections and more with "social transformation" achieved through " working for the welfare of our people" (Herndon & Randell, 2010, p. 15). As partial as this interpretation may be, two elements should be further considered to have a more coherent idea of this debate. Firstly, the government has often clarified that their purpose is to set aside political rivalry that fuelled the genocide in order to bring forward both non-political and non-ethnic policies to let the country heal first (Herndon & Randell, 2010). Secondly, within the indigenous peacebuilding framework, the core aim of the process is to allow the nation to to self-determine itself, including also adopting a form of government that, if not democratic in the western sense, may still be valid in the actual situation. While in many African countries there is a "strong man power model", in Rwanda Kagame has shown to be able to balance two different conceptions of democracy, typical of the African continent. On one hand, a "constitutional democracy", more focused on legislative structure and constitutional reforms; on the other, an "utilitarian democracy", more focused on people and grassroot participation (Sentongo, 2011, p. 88). This created a gradual but steady process in the post-conflict reconstruction where also international entities, like the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, have acknowledged the current Rwandan government for bringing the country towards poverty reduction (Sentongo, 2011). It has also to be taken into account that the decentralized structure of the Rwandan government gives

a lot of power to locally elected governments, which have a leading role in implementation of practices connected with poverty, economy, health and justice (Sentongo, 2011).

In the end, while these flaws may have affected the final output of the post conflict reconstruction period, they were clearly not the decisive variables that determined the Rwandan result, since they can be observed in many other cases where, however, gender equality and post-conflict stability were not reached at the same level, or not reached at all.

Chapter 3 - What contributed to the inclusion

In 2003 Rwanda became the country with the smallest gender gap in politics worldwide, while being among the 9 poorest (Izabiliza, 2005). While this result may seem dependent exclusively on the reforms and the quota system introduced by the government, two things have to be underlined. Firstly, many other women's movements, like the Somali one, asked for the same quota system that was either not applied or not included in the constitution at all (Tripp, 2016). Secondly, in the Rwandan example an important element stands out: the simultaneous changes in both private and public sphere. In the same years of Rwanda's highest percentage of women in the legislative branch, the number of women leading households increased up to 35% (Hudson, 2009).This chapter will analyse which combination of elements contributed to the final outcome of the Rwandan peacebuilding process, starting from the possible answers to the puzzle analysed in the literature review: the perception of women through government and society, the support of the international community, the evolution of traditional roles, the elaboration of the trauma at grassroots level.

Role of government and society

Immediately after the conflict resolution the Rwandan Government gave women a role in the post-conflict reconstruction that for once was not a façade to comply with international standards (Izabiliza, 2005). This role was also recognized in the interview with Yvonne Tangheroni Ingabire, who highlighted a visible and clear political will of the whole government, not only of president Kagame, towards this goal. The Rwandan government saw the resilience shown by the women's groups as an opportunity to build lasting peace, recognizing their role and helping them to preserve it through clear political moves (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Additionally, institutions involved in gender mainstreaming processes are created from national to district level. The Ministry of Gender and

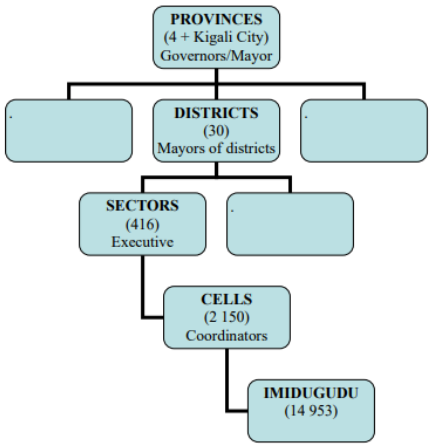

Figure 5-Administrative structure of Rwanda. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/vaw/VAW_COUNTRY_ASSESSMENT-Rwanda-1.pdf

Women in Development is at national level, but there are also officials specifically dedicated to gender at provincial level, vice-mayors of gender at district levels and women's councils at "cell level" (Mzvondiwa, 2007). The whole country is organized in "30 districts (akarere), 416 sectors (imerenge), 2,148 cells (utugari) and 14,837 villages (imudungu)" (CLGF, 2018, p. 1). This decentralized system reaches a capillary coverage, involving women in the decision-making process down to the smallest levels.

The Rwandan government recognised the importance of gender awareness not only as a matter of human rights but also of "good governance and good economic management", as President Paul Kagame declared in 1999 (Mzvondiwa, 2007, p. 103). Many argue that the change in Rwanda was basically top-down and was facilitated by the fact that the government is not democratically elected. However, it is also true that at district level, interesting democratic experiments took place in order to give voice to less represented groups like women, helping them building the expertise to compete equally in the political arena. In the case of Rwanda, not only the government instituted women's councils parallel to general local councils, but it also created a three-parts electoral mechanism to empower women at a local level. There, a separate ballot was created for women and also for youth, another underrepresented part of society (Mzvondiwa, 2007). The creation of these two separated ballots from the general ballot gave women the chance to compete in order to get into higher positions (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Another governmental body was the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission which stands out to have been always women-led (Mzvondiwa, 2007). Many laws were passed to fight against domestic violence or discrimination on land distribution, laws that in other countries were obstructed despite the requests of women groups (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

For instance, in DRC the Congolese government blocked any lobbying actions of women's groups, made even more difficult by the lack of the decentralization that, instead, in Rwanda facilitated the empowerment through traditional institutions like councils and the Gacaca courts (Autesserre, 2008).

In the DRC case, due to the lack of attention to the subnational level, no local reconciliation effort was implemented leaving space for "micro-level militias" and perpetuation of conflict dynamics also through the use of traditional positions of authority within communities (Autesserre, 2018, p. 177).

The action of the government -or the lack of it- has an immense impact on the social perception of women and in Rwanda, it facilitated the general support of the whole society to the changes taking place towards women. Due to the portrayal of the genocide as a "matter of men", women were perceived as the preferred actors to deal with its aftermath (Herndon & Randell, 2010, p. 11). Partnership and recognition of men were mentioned by many activists and peace builder and confirmed at an institutional level; for instance, *Pro Femmes* collaborated with the Rwandan Men's Resource Centre in training both women and men (Herndon & Randell, 2010). In the interview with Christine Safari, she outlined how raising education levels among women is leading to an increasing recognition of their role in the reconciliation process. This social recognition is crucial since, as Jeanne d'Arc Cyuzuzo noticed, despite women being the demographic majority, men where the ones having major political power and therefore the only ones that had the concrete possibility to create a more gender-inclusive system.

Role of the international society

The international society in the case of Rwanda played a unique role, especially compared to Congo. The lack of intervention during the genocide and the conflictual cooperation implemented before among powers like the US, France and Belgium negatively impacted the conflict (Lar, 2009). However, in reaction to that and to the mediatic impact of the genocide, the *post*-conflict phase saw one of the biggest efforts in peacebuilding ever undertaken by the international community, both in terms of funds and of political support (Lar, 2009). If in many cases international intervention means the promotion of externalised peacebuilding practices, in the case of Rwanda many initiatives were meant to enforce the indigenous methods. While promoting local tribunals like the Gacaca courts, the international society also instituted the ICTR, [12] "The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda", that condemned for the very first time genocide as a crime in International Law (Lar, 2009). This court conveyed several strong messages also in terms of gender-based violence, as it was the first to ever prosecute rape as an act of genocide (UN, 2014). However, the impact of the ICTR was not as effective as the Gacaca courts, especially from the victims' point of view, as it was felt as too slow and not really focused on reconstruction (Lar, 2009).

[12]Through SC Resolution 9957/1995

On the base of the Rwandan experience the UN Security Council decided to adopt the Resolution 1325 giving women's groups credibility and an universal language they could use to legitimize their action (Madsen, 2018).

Furthermore, the peacebuilding process was characterized by efficient coordination at regional or sub regional level (and not only at international one) that boosted the visibility of the women's action for peace through regional networks like the FERFAP (Federation of African Women Peace Networks) and the FAS (Femmes Africa Solidaritè) (Hudson, 2009).

In DRC, the presence of the international community had a less constructive attitude than that in Rwanda. Not only was there was animosity between the government and international peacebuilders but also in the case of grassroot organizations (especially when involving women) the presence of international actors was perceived as invasive without leaving space for "local ownership" (Almagro, 2018, p. 329). The perception of peacebuilders as "humanoids" completely external to the local context contributed to the lack of trust of the population towards the operations (Autesserre, 2008, p.16). It has been argued further that the funds that the international society has provided should have been not so closely tied to elections and more connected to local peacebuilding, perhaps implementing a longer but more socially enrooted process (Autesserre, 2008). Despite many protests from NGOs and foreign ministries (especially Sweden, UK, Belgium and Norway), no decentralized peacebuilding operation was implemented (Autesserre, 2008).

Transforming tradition - Gacaca Courts

Despite the fact that the post genocide rhetoric was fuelled with traditional concepts, like *umubyeyi* (mother\life giver), this thesis argues that, without denying the importance of pre-colonial models, the current role of women in the post-conflict Rwanda is not in continuity with the Rwandan culture but in in opposition. A proof of this change can be found in the Gacaca court system, evidently, the most important element in the empowerment of women in Rwanda. Part of the Rwandan tradition since pre-colonial periods to settle minor matters (Sentongo, 2011) , these traditional tribunals where instituted and re-adapted in 2005 to help achieve reconciliation at the grassroot level after the genocide (UN, 2014). , The aim of these courts was not only to prosecute perpetrators but also to encourage the indicted to actively demonstrate their will to reconciliate with the community, reducing sentences if signs of regret were shown (UN, 2014). They operated until 2012 with 12'000 community tribunals (UN, 2014).

Gacaca courts were more effective than the ICTR, with an annual rate of 1000 processes compared with a total of 72 processes of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Lar, 2009). Women were represented in all the Courts constituting 30% of the total number of judges (Izabiliza, 2005). They were considered even more important than male judges because of their traumatic experience during the genocide, that would have given them the authority and the credibility to be important agents of reconciliation (Hudson, 2009). Not only did women serve more effectively than men as presidents of the Gacaca courts (Issifu, 2015; Izabiliza, 2005) but, also, Gacaca courts proved to be more accepted than the ICTR by the 96% of the society in their authority, more effective in administrating law and cheaper than international courts (Herndon & Randell, 2010; Sentongo, 2011).

In Congo the situation was different. Despite chapter 5 of the Lusaka agreement considering reconciliation among its main points (Whitman, 2007), many actors including prominent figures in the transitional government completely disregarded this element sometimes ignoring or fuelling conflicts for their own personal gain while for the international community "local conflict resolution was considered an internal Congolese affair" (Autesserre, 2018, p.20).

Also, the lack of indigenous methods of transitional justice led the IPC to deal only with "small groups of very guilty perpetrators" without reaching the widespread coverage of the Gacaca courts (Autesserre, 2008, p.44). This came with the idea that local level dynamics were just a replica of national ones, and therefore that exemplificative trials would have dealt also with peripheric problems, ignoring how beneficial it can be to give communities the possibility to deal with their own perpetrators and criminals, not only for justice but, also, for further social reconciliation (Autesserre, 2008).

Traumatic experience and grassroot level

If what happened in Rwanda is in some cases seen as a top-down approach, it must be noticed that women in parliamentary bodies lobbied in the first place to have those laws passed by joining forces in diverse and interethnic groups (Izabiliza, 2005). Laws on equality on the workplace, on children's and women's rights, and on inheritance surely found a receptive government but were proposed and fought for by women groups (Izabiliza, 2005). Not only, at grassroot level Women's Councils played a vital role in encouraging women to participate in processes related to HIV, poverty, ethnical division and the Gacaca Courts (Izabiliza, 2005).

Women in the genocide suffered gender-based violence, therefore they were victims *because* of their being women. Rape and sexual violence where not only weapons of war but they were also fuelled with ethnical prejudice and sexualized portrayal of Tutsi and Hutu women (Herndon & Randell, 2010). This kind of gender-based discrimination that went even beyond the ethnic tensions at the core of the genocide made women the only social group in the country to be able to be united and organized across all ethnic, social and political lines (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

This led to the creation of interethnic groups like ABASA, an association of victims of rape, INEZA, a cooperative of HIV-positive women, AVEGA, Association of Widows of Genocide, IBUKA a post conflict organization created to support refugees and to keep the memory of the genocide alive. These groups of women played a crucial role also in managing the refugee crisis, with 3.4 millions of refugee coming back to Rwanda after the genocide and sometimes igniting new local conflicts (Sentongo, 2011).

For instance, in the interview with Christine Safari, it emerged that both AVEGA and IBUKA played important roles in the peace reconstruction process, especially in terms of women, orphans and refugees, the social actors that are usually more underprivileged after conflicts. In particular, AVEGA was crucial to improve life conditions of widows and orphans and to help them deal with the consequences of the war. IBUKA was decisive in creating a network among refugees and in building an historical memory of the trauma of the genocide that was based on reconciliation and peace.

All of these organizations where born after the genocide, and many were then united under *Pro-Femmes,* the umbrella organization in direct contact with the Government, while prior to 1994 the examples were more limited (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

In Congo however the effectiveness of external actors was subordinated to their being part of a UN network or a diplomatic one (Autesserre, 2008). For instance, both the "Life and Peace Institute" and the "Search for Common Ground" gave a lot of visibility to local conflicts through radio and tv programmes, also trying to solve local problems through workshops (Autesserre, 2008). However, their capacities and their budget were limited (Autesserre, 2008). Further, Human Rights Watch investigations on the situation on North Kivu had an important impact on the management and perpetration of violence in the area (Autesserre, 2008). A relevant case is the "Rien sans les femmes" campaign (RSFL), a movement that involves both Congolese and International NGOs. This movement reflects many of the key elements already seen in the Rwandan case: lobbying for more inclusive policies (especially in regards to the number of women in parliament), pursuing a narrative of unification, which is a-political and inter-ethnical, holding training for women through an equal partnership with international northern European NGOs (Almagro, 2018). However, despite some

accomplishments, the results of RSLF did not match the effort as they were mostly ignored by the government and excluded by UN Women initiatives (Almagro, 2018).

Chapter 4: Theoretical Analysis

Why women should be included

It has been largely argued that gender imbalance and lack of consideration for women discrimination makes internal conflicts more likely (Hudson, 2009). It has also been hypothesized that patriarchal systems may be at the basis not only of conflicts but also of the failures of the international community to solve these conflicts (Enloe, 2002). Under this interpretation, including gender sensitivity in peacebuilding processes should not be an option. However, *how* should women be included? The Rwandan example gives us some interesting insights that can be connected with theories on indigenous peacebuilding.

The need to consider gender in peacebuilding processes was already addressed in the UNSC resolution 1325, inspired by the Rwandan experience (Hudson, 2009; Madsen, 2018). However, this resolution alone has not reached the expected results even leading sometimes to backlashes when not applied in a culturally sensitive fashion (Hudson, 2009). As important as this milestone is in the "Women Peace and Security" domain, it has to be then part of a larger plan.

With this debate going on, it has always been difficult to understand how peacebuilders should act in order to ensure a stable peace process that includes gender awareness. This thesis suggests that the inclusion of the concept of indigenous peacebuilding is able to contribute to solving this issue. This is a cultural-sensitive approach that gives preference to reconciliation approaches and traditional institutions to implement peace practices. Gender awareness through indigenous practices would be more effective in addressing the traditional blindness of liberal peacebuilding towards women, and it would also enable the peace process to perform more efficiently by addressing root causes of the conflict that are overlooked when gender is not taken into consideration.

In fact, the very meaning of "post-conflict" is changed if we consider women. The common definition of post-conflict is intended as "a period when predominately male combatants have ceased to engage in official war" (Handrahan, 2004, p. 429). However, in terms of violence, rape and systematic mechanisms of oppression, conflict for women continues after the termination of the fighting

(Cockburn, 2004; Enloe, 2002.; Gonzalez, 2016; Handrahan, 2004). All the above-mentioned elements, when not addressed, raise the possibility of a backlash in conflict, as proven by the Congo case (Cockburn, 2004; Autesserre, 2008).

Women's approaches are then often not only in favour of peace agreements but also against the "normalisation of violence" both on the military and on the personal scale, as it makes the peacebuilding process ineffective (Gonzalez, 2016, p. 5).

In the case of ethnic conflict, the consideration of women appears even more crucial as "ethnic rape" is not only a weapon of war but also the way to impose ethnicities in the conflict (Handrahan, 2004). In fact, "male group identity" plays a crucial role in the conflict, and ethnic rape is often used to define the identity of a group, becoming the very field where the conflict is disputed (Handrahan, 2004, p. 432). As already said, in the Rwandan genocide Tutsi and Hutu were largely defined as ethnic identities through the idealization of the characteristics of the women of each group (Herndon & Randell, 2010). This instrumentalization of gender in order to justify ethnic conflicts makes women the group that most likely will join forces in movements not defined by ethnicity, nationality, social status etc. (Herndon & Randell, 2010).

Finally, women should be included because, when given a voice, their action is effective .This was proven continuously in examples like Libera and Somalia and even in Rwanda when, after the genocide there was an insurgency of former refugees organized in groups such as *Inrahmwe* and *ex-FAR* (Izabiliza, 2005). In this post-genocide conflict women played a crucial role right from the beginning, talking to the involved parties and convincing them not to fight (Izabiliza, 2005). Also due to their action, this was a relatively small post conflict drawback, unlike we saw in many other post-conflict societies where conflicts seem endemic, like in the example of the Congo (Autesserre, 2018.).

According to feminist studies, the only way to achieve gender justice in post-conflict is to tackle the problem at several levels: legal, to deal with structural discrimination of women, restorative, to punish violations of women rights, and distributive, to re-allocate resources in a more equal way (Hudson, 2009). However, this is not necessarily the order of priority that women aim for in a particular conflict, and their exclusion from the peace talks makes the commissions overlook the fact that, while political victories in terms of rights and quotas are important, women could have different and more urgent needs, for example in the social or economic sphere (Hudson, 2009). Liberal peacebuilding is an insufficient method to pursue these three goals as it often offers a perspective that is gender-neutral and blind to specific cultural contexts (Hudson, 2009). However, liberal values should not be completely abandoned as the scope of peacebuilding is not to re-create the society before the conflict but to further transformational changes that will create a more stable situation (Paris, 2010). This is a

fundamentally important point as it was shown in the previous sections that repristinating "normality" as it was known before the conflict could be counterproductive as it likely includes all the elements that created fertile ground for the conflict in the first place, for example in terms of ethnicity, gender identities and violence (Handrahan, 2004).

Indigenous peacebuilding

"Liberal methods of peacebuilding" include rapid conversion to market economy and quick transition to democracy (Paris, 2010, p. 337). However, due to the low rate of successful operations, liberal peacebuilding is often deemed as ineffective (Paris, 2010). It has been suggested that liberal ideals have a potentially wider range of action than the strict one used until now (democratic elections, market economy etc), accused of not addressing the real driving causes of the conflict they should solve (Paris, 2010). In the case of Congo for example, it was noticed that the rush towards an election for which the society was not ready, combined with the lack of attention to local violence, was most likely one of the causes of the failure of peacekeeping operations (Autesserre, 2008). To maintain liberal values as a guide in effective peacebuilding, it is important to understand local contexts and realities. While many times democratic elections have worked perfectly, in other cases, like in Rwanda and in Liberia, they were at the basis of some of the most violent conflicts of the continent (Paris, 2010). In the case of Rwanda for example, ethnical and political rivalry merged immediately before the 1994 elections, leading to the genocide (Paris, 2010).

It has been noticed that the extensive power that international peacebuilders exert may weaken the initiative of the civil society to go towards a culturally closer reformation of the political system (Paris, 2010). Another crucial element of the traditional peacebuilding culture is the non-interference principle, that in the case of the Congo served to justify the lack of local peacebuilding in areas like the Kivus, as the local struggles going on there where felt like internal matters to settle (Autesserre, 2008). If the purpose of peace-building is to create and efficient government able to maintain peace, this process should be as domestic as possible, where the creation of new institutions is open to local forms of government (Paris, 2010).

The cultural distance that traditional peacebuilding has shown to the country it operates in has been evident, also through some misconceptions that have exacerbated the failures in this field. For example, in the case of Congo, the horrendous violence rates have often been justified as inherently part of the Congolese culture and society (Autesserre, 2008). Additionally, in DRC the choice of ignoring indigenous peacebuilding methods led to focus on three main objectives (democratic

elections, *national* reconciliation and reunification) that were not matching the real needs of the population (Autesserre, 2008).

Conversely, the characteristic features of the indigenous way of peacebuilding are "consensus decision making, restoration of the human\resource balance and compensation, ensure reciprocal relations between groups" (Paris, 2010, p. 358). Merging this approach with a liberal one would allow to create institutions that the people will recognize and more likely respect (Paris, 2010). But how can a sustainable peace be accomplished while implementing an indigenous approach, without risking the re-affirmation of those same power struggles that where at the core of the conflict in the first place? The key, according to this thesis, is the inclusion of women, combining the conclusions of many feminist studies and indigenous peacebuilding.

Indigenous peacebuilding in Rwanda

Starting from what has been said on feminist studies and indigenous peacebuilding, this section of the thesis will show how the most successful elements of the Rwandan peace process are an effective combination of these two frameworks.

This thesis suggests that what worked in Rwanda, was the empowerment of grass-roots women groups and the elevation of their achievements on a higher level, mixing indigenous top-down as well as bottom-up approaches. Yvonne Tangheroni Ingabire for example, gave testimony of a switch in the social perception of women after the genocide, especially thanks to indigenous methods such as the Gacaca courts. In this regard, she mentioned how especially women were the authors of pressures at the local level against the reintroduction of the death penalty and discouraging methods not focused on reconciliation.

As it was seen via the reforms implemented by the Rwandan government in terms of local elections and local women councils, the importance of the grassroot level is crucial to drive social changes into place, as it not only imposes a particular reform but it also impacts the perspective of society on the role of women (Mzvondiwa, 2007). With the law 003/99 the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission was created, an organ specifically focused on reconciliation showing how one of the main points of indigenous peacebuilding was actually among the government's priorities (CNUR, 2005). Further it is important to notice that the reforms have not been implanted from another culture but are a modification of the pre-existing traditional institutions, helping with a more gradual but more rooted change in society. The Commission periodically organizes public debates to promote

reconciliation and national unity, and to prevent any future conflicts among social groups in the country (CNUR, 2005). Additionally, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission created programmes focused on governance and human rights alongside more culturally-connotated ones like the *Ingando* and the *Itorero* programmes, meant to specifically further Rwandan values, to fight the genocide mentality and to encourage participation in the post-conflict reconstruction (UN, 2014).

The *Ingando* in particular is a traditional method with pre-colonial roots to find solutions to common problems of the community, using a participatory and reflective approach (Sentongo, 2011). This method was implemented into a mandatory program for prisoners in the post genocide era, where a condition for their release would be to take part in *Ingando* programmes, reflecting on their crimes and on how to avoid their re-occurrence as well as reflecting on political and social problems Rwanda was facing (Sentongo, 2011). The programme has also been widened to the whole community as a way to reflect on improvement of social issues, and redirected towards specific social groups, including women (Sentongo, 2011).

Moreover, while from a western perspective gender sensitivity is part of the domain of individual human rights, in Africa it is important to remember the stronger presence of "collective rights" over individual rights, making gender mainstreaming more connected to the wellbeing of the community than of the individual (Hudson, 2009). In this sense, women's inclusion is felt as something serving the community and therefore more quickly accepted as necessary (CNUR, 2005).

Additionally, the use of the Gacaca courts as a method of justice reflects indigenous peacebuilding methods and values as this kind of restorative justice has not only proved to be more efficient than an internationally implemented method but it also allowed for a gender inclusion that was more effective (Izabiliza, 2005).

Finally, the new Constitution of the country and the "Vision 2020" document reflect indigenous peacebuilding values and the participatory (and gender-inclusive) way used to write them contributes to build a sense of belonging towards institutions, one of the most important elements of indigenous peacebuilding (CNUR, 2005).

The important aspect of the indigenous methods adopted in Rwanda is that their objective was not to erase the trauma but to deal with it in a constructive way. As Christine Safari said in her interview, the purpose of IBUKA and other organizations dealing with the results of the genocide is to "forgive but never forget".

The validity of the Rwandan approach to peacebuilding appears even more pertinent when confronted with the actions taken at the same time in Congo.

The Congolese peacebuilding mission did not consider an indigenous method and instead followed the traditional peacebuilding culture, leading to the implementation of a "one-size-fits-all approach" (Autesserre, 2008, p.85). Despite the 2003 UN Mandate recognizing that local tension had to be resolved, the plan was never implemented and eventually abandoned in 2006 (Autesserre, 2008).

According to Autesserre(2008), who probably led the most comprehensive study on the peacebuilding operation in Congo, there were three main misconceptions that made the MONUC mission fail: the exclusive focus on national and regional peacebuilding, ignoring local variables, the fact that Congo was considered and dealt with as a post-conflict situation while conflict was still ongoing at the local level, and finally the general idea that violence is a "normal social feature" in Congo, not necessarily caused by war (Autesserre, 2008).

The top down approach and a strict interpretation of the non-interference principle made the mission choose not to deal with local violence, ethnic conflicts and non-state actors, ignoring the cultural and social issues fuelling the endemic violence that was taking place at local level, including sexual gender-based violence (Autesserre, 2018). The general exclusion in politics of women and the blindness towards gender issues continued even after the Peace Agreement, without gender justice being mentioned in the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in 2013 (Almagro, 2018). Even when mentioned, gender issues were almost exclusively focused on the trauma that women endure and not on their empowerment as valid political actors. For example, the National Action Plan to implement UNSC 1325 (2010) was only focused on Sexual Gender Based Violence (Almagro, 2018). The main focus of the peacebuilding forces was then to ensure that democratic elections would take place as soon as possible (Autesserre, 2018). However, the democratization process was too short and did not leave time for the new institutions to be adequately recognized by the community, to women to take part in the democratization process (many of them did not even vote as they were not aware of their rights) and for a constitution that was reflective of the real issues the country was facing, including rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, like women (Autesserre, 2018).

In general, hasty and top-down implemented elections, while often seen and portrayed as the only way to achieve improvements in terms of human rights, have often failed in bringing democracy and rushed the end of the peacebuilding process, often considered terminated once elections are held (Autesserre, 2008). In the case of Congo for example, not only did elections mark the end of the transition period but they also shifted the focus from more urgent issues. For instance, the army was deployed to protect the electoral process instead of dealing with conflicts still ongoing in the country (Autesserre, 2008).

Concluding Remarks

This research has demonstrated that gender equality has proved to be matter of interest, not only for good governance and human rights, but also for peacebuilding. Therefore, it is important to include the former in the post-conflict reconstruction processes.

The Rwandan case study shows how peacebuilding cannot refrain from taking gender mainstreaming into consideration, in order to reach a more efficient post-conflict reconstruction. As emerged from the comparison with Congo, gender issues are not just "a plus" in peacebuilding efforts. In fact, without considering them, the peace process would disregard a whole set of issues that would make the recurrence of conflict more likely.

However, this research shows how gender mainstreaming and feminist approaches cannot be labelled as universally applicable and therefore it is important for the involvement of women to take place in an indigenous peacebuilding setting, where their position can gradually but steadily switch to a role that is respected by the society. The reason why women are effective agents for this kind of peacebuilding lies in the fact that they are not only socially perceived as more prone to build a reconciliation-based peace, but also that, as victims of conflicts, the population sees them as more entitled to deal with this kind of issue (CNUR, 2005). This has the power to change the perspective of peacebuilding completely, where a leading role is given to victims and not to those responsible for the conflict or to external international peacebuilders. Further, it has been recognized how the empowerment of women plays an important social role in the post-conflict, also in cultural terms as building a new identity and new cultural values helps avoiding the same dynamics that could cause conflict again (CNUR, 2005).

Therefore, four crucial points arise from the comparison between Congo and Rwanda.

First of all, local dynamics have to be taken into account to avoid the persistence of violence after the official conflict resolution. The so-called "continuum of violence" is detrimental not only to society in general but also to a gender-sensitive peacebuilding. As women are the first victims of violence, the persistence of a violent environment blocks any possibility of social advancement they may have. In order to tackle this issue, it is not only important to implement less fund-dependent and more locally oriented indigenous methods of reconciliation, like the Gacaca courts in Rwanda, but also to create programmes to further equal social and economic advancement within the population. As seen in the case of the Congo, women's exclusion from reconstruction programmes, especially financially, gave them no other alternative than to continue being part of conflictual dynamics, like in the case of

bush wives. Conversely, in the case of Rwanda, their economic empowerment also led to a less violent and economically developing society.

Secondly, in order to pursue this aim, special attention should be given to the structure of the governments in post conflictual settings, instead of to the rapidity of elections. As seen in the cases of Congo and Rwanda, it was not only the political will, but also the decentralized\centralized structure of the state that made the difference in effective inclusion of minority groups, like women, in the peacebuilding process.

Thirdly, the international community has to work on equal level with local actors to be effective. A top-down approach is, undeniably, essential. However, it would not have positive effects if not implemented by local authorities and if it doesn't valorise the bottom up elements already there, such as grassroot organizations and local women's movements. Thus the Res. 1325 in itself is an important tool for both governments and women groups to include women in peacebuilding. However, the case of Rwanda has shown that women's organizations, even while using it to gain credibility internationally, had to translate the content of the Resolution according to their specific context to integrate it into the peace process (Madsen, 2018).

Finally, this thesis has argued that it is crucial to take traditional roles and institutions into consideration, especially regarding women. These traditional roles should neither be discarded nor confirmed too rigidly, but they should be considered in a transformative way that fits the needs and goals of the post-conflict society, like in the example of the Gacaca Courts.

In the light of these arguments, this thesis has several policy recommendations to put forward. It is important to reform liberal peacebuilding efforts, not in their values and final goals, but in the practices used to reach these goals. First, it is of outmost importance to consider the complexity of women's roles in conflict, as well as the specificity of the challenges they face. Disregarding this will not only result in economic and social backlashes, but also in the maintenance of a militarized society that will be more likely to keep conflict-like dynamics in place. Second, it is crucial to give women a central role in the subsequent peacebuilding processes. In order to do so, it is fundamental for the international society to adopt an indigenous and culturally sensitive approach that matches the needs of the women and of the society itself to generate an effective and deep-rooted change.

Despite several achievements, there is still a long way to go towards a more just and gender-inclusive post-conflict reconstruction. However, in the words of Jeanne d'Arc Cyuzuzo, if the time is right and the whole society shares a common goal, cooperation is possible.

Appendix

Interview Questions

Interviews were conducted in French and Italian in an informal way and answers were not only strictly connected to the questions. However, these questions have always been the starting point. The original questions were of course in French, here they are also translated in English.

QUESTIONS THESE SUR L'IMPACT DES FEMMES DANS LE PROCÈS DE CONSOLIDATION DE LA PAIX
Questions, thesis on the impact of women in the peacebuilding process
• **Est-ce que vous pourriez donner des brèves informations sur vous-même ?**
Can you give some information on yourself?
• **Le Rwanda est l'un des premiers pays du monde en matière de participation politique des femmes. Pensez-vous que ce changement dans les droits politiques des femmes a également apporté des changements dans leur vie privée (en termes de violence domestique, d'accès à l'éducation et aux ressources économiques ...)?**
Rwanda is one of the first countries in the world in terms of political participation of women. Do you think that these changes in women's rights have also brought changes in their private life (in terms of domestic violence, access to education and to economic resources?)
• **Dans beaucoup des témoignages les hommes sont décrits comme des agents fondamentaux pour rendre l'autonomisation des femmes plus facile après du génocide. Est-ce-que vous êtes d'accord ? Et si oui, pourquoi il y a eu dans le contexte rwandais ce type de collaboration qui est si rare dans les contextes post-conflits ?**
In many testimonies, men have been portrayed as crucial agents in making the empowerment process easier after the genocide. Do you agree? And if yes, why do you think there was in the Rwandan example this collaboration so rare in many other post-conflict cases?
• **En Afrique et dans le monde, il y a de nombreux mouvements de femmes pendant et après les conflits. Néanmoins, le cas du Rwanda était unique en matière de participation et d'inclusion des femmes. Quels sont, à votre avis, les éléments qui ont le plus contribué à l'autonomisation des femmes dans le contexte Rwandais?**

In Africa and around the world there are many women's mouvements during and after conflicts. Nevertheless, the Rwandan case is unique in terms of inclusivity and participation of women. What elements have, in your opinion, contributed the most to the empowerment of women in this particular context?
• **Selon vous, quel rôle a joué le gouvernement Rwandais dans l'évolution de la condition sociale et politique des femmes ?**
What kind of role do you think the government played in the political and social evolution in the women's condition?
• **Pourriez-vous expliquer le rôle des associations comme AVEGA, IBUKA etc. dans la consolidation de la paix après le conflit et pourquoi il est important que les femmes soient incluses dans ce type d'organisation ?**
Can you explain the role of organizations like AVEGA, IBUKA in the post conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding processes, and why is it important for women to be included in this kind of organization?

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