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From Fighters to Peacemakers? South Sudanese Women War Veterans in Conflict and Peacebuilding

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Declaration

I, Sara Noémie Plassnig, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature…………………………………

Date…………………………………………

To the strong women in Bidi Bidi ~ May their hopes come true

Acknowledgments

Abstract

Women war veterans in South Sudan were active in armed conflicts at the front as well as in peacebuilding efforts in their home communities. In 2000, the United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) was adapted to include women with their unique conflict experiences and needs in decision-making positions in conflict resolution. Twenty years later, this thesis explores how efforts linked to UNSCR 1325 are implemented in the case study of South Sudanese women war veterans. I explore factors within the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme which facilitated or hampered benefits for former women soldiers in the country, contributed to or restrained their meaningful participation in peace processes, and how their contributions to combat and peace have been acknowledged. To answer the research questions, eighteen qualitative interviews were conducted. Ten South Sudanese women war veterans who had participated in DDR and local peace processes as well as eight WPS experts were interviewed. In this process, I identified the following factors which deprived women from benefits intended by the DDR programme: lacking security at DDR sites, insufficient theoretical training, culturally insensitive childcare services, the prevention of a stable income and the failure to foster basic security in South Sudan. The thesis concluded that achievements by women war veterans in combat and peacebuilding received only little attention as they continue to be side-lined in the national peace process. By applying the Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) in the analysis, I identified patriarchal structures and the hierarchical order in the South Sudanese society as well as the neoliberal approach in international peacebuilding as potential root causes for the lacking implementation of UNSCR 1325 on the ground.

List of Acronyms

ARCSS Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan

AU African Union

CPA Comprehensive Peace Agreement

DDR Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

FCAS Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

FPCT Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory

GoSS Government of South Sudan

HLRF High Level Revitalisation Forum

IDDRP Interim Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Project

IDDRS Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards

IGAD Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

MGCSW Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare

NCDDRC National Council for DDR Co-ordination

NSDDRC North Sudan DDR Commission

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

OAGs Other Armed Groups

PKO Peacekeeping Operation

POC Protection of Civilians

R-ARCSS Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan

RTGoNU Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity

SAF Sudan Armed Forces

SDDRP Sudan DDR programme

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SGBV Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SNG Special Needs Group

SPLA Sudan People's Liberation Army

SSDDRC Southern Sudan DDR Commission

SSDF South Sudan Defence Forces

SSDM South Sudan Democratic Movement

SSLM South Sudan Liberation Movement

UN United Nations

UNDDR United Nations Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Organisation

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNDPKO United Nation's Department of Peace Keeping Operations

UNMIS United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNMISS United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNOCHA United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UNSC United Nation Security Council

UNSCR United Nation Security Council Resolution

WAAF Women Associated with Armed Forces

WPS Women, Peace and Security

Table of contents

I. INTRODUCTION

Women played an active role in South Sudan's armed struggles. They were soldiers at the frontline, new heads of households back home or supporters and peacemakers in their communities (John, 2006). After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, the first batch of soldiers and associates was discharged from the front. Four years later, war veterans enrolled for the first time in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme (GoS, 2005; Munive, 2014). DDR aims to reintegrate former fighters into their communities, so they can become active in the peace process, thereby focusing on requirements of women (Knight, 2008; Peacekeeping, 2020). Thus, DDR could be the ideal tool to implement efforts of gendered peacebuilding, and thereby creating peace that lasts (Castillejo, October 2017; Nilsson, 2012; Paffenholz, January 2014). At a time when the United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) celebrates its 20th anniversary as the first resolution to bring women with their unique conflict experiences into peacebuilding (UNSC, 2000), this thesis explores the resolution's achievements and failures. I examine how efforts linked to UNSCR 1325 are implemented on the ground by applying the Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) on the case of women war veterans in DDR and peace processes in South Sudan. My qualitative study is based on interviews with WPS experts and South Sudanese women war veterans who participated in DDR and local peace processes but now live as refugees in neighbouring Uganda. I have specified and justified the aim of the research in the problem statement below.

1.1 Problem statement

Despite the fact that that since the adaption of Resolution 1325 in 2000, international peacebuilding highlights the importance of reintegration and inclusion of female war veterans in South Sudan (UNSC, 2000), women are often side-lined (Pankhurst, 2000). While their male colleagues and partners were celebrated as liberators and rewarded with lucrative posts in the national military or politics, female fighters returned without recognition from the frontline. They were the first to be demobilised, but rarely received acknowledgment for their contributions to the armed combat against enemy forces. Neither were efforts by women war veterans towards a peaceful coexistence within their own communities recognised. As a result, female veterans did not have a voice in formal peace processes (John, 2006). Despite several attempts to include more women into peacebuilding processes in South Sudan, the peace arena overall remains exclusive. The few women who managed to enter, belong to the elite and are often

home comers from the diaspora. Female war veterans who belong to the lower class and missed out on education while having to stay at the front, are automatically excluded from the elite-prone peace processes on the national level (Stone, 2011b). This is problematic as former female soldiers have unique conflict experiences and their previous roles break with violent masculinity – a feature harmful to many civilians in the patriarchal post-conflict society of South Sudan (Sharon Elaine Hutchinson & Jok, 2002). Incorporating these women into peacebuilding could help to reduce militarised masculinity, and enable a more inclusive peace processes, which will lead to more sustainable peace in the country (Mayen, April 18, 2013). My thesis identifies exclusive factors in these processes. Moreover, I narrow the gap of knowledge on women's manifold roles in conflict scenarios by interviewing women war veterans from South Sudan about their experiences with the DDR programme and beyond. Thereby, I promote women as political agents and stakeholders in combat and peacebuilding, conscious to not reproduce the image of women in the Global South as inferior victims (Ayiera, 2010; Hudson, 2012). My thesis incorporates a narrative which credits the achievements of former female soldiers in the past and highlights capacities they bring to the future. I apply Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) as guiding framework to critically reflect on the public discourse of women in peace and conflict. Applying FPCT together with conducting interviews with WPS experts help to understand the complexity of women war veterans' roles in South Sudan. Hence, my thesis sheds light on three aspects specified in the UNSCR 1325; the roles of women in conflict scenarios are neglected, the needs of former women soldiers in DDR programmes overlooked and their agency in the peace process denied.

1.2 Research objectives

This thesis focuses on challenges and opportunities women war veterans face in war-to-peace transitions in South Sudan by assessing their DDR participation, the acknowledgement of their contributions and their opportunities to partake in peace processes. First, the thesis investigates how women benefited from DDR programmes in South Sudan. Secondly, it illuminates the roles of female war veterans in the country's peacebuilding efforts. I will try to identify gender-based inequality and discrimination of former women soldiers in DDR and peacebuilding. I further examine if DDR enrolment impacts participation in peace efforts by applying the gender lens. Moreover, I explore how the status of women war veterans in DDR and peace processes is influenced by the patriarchal and hierarchical society of South Sudan and neoliberal approaches in international peacebuilding. This thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding which barriers hamper a successful implementation of the UNSCR 1325.

1.3 Research questions

To explore the situation and status of female war veterans in South Sudan in times of conflict and peace in general, and in DDR and peace processes in particular, the thesis asks the following questions:

I.   Which factors within the three pillars disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration facilitated benefits for women war veterans in South Sudan? Which factors hampered them?

II.   How have contributions to combat and peace made by female war veterans been acknowledged in South Sudan?

III.   Which factors facilitated a meaningful participation of former women soldiers in the South Sudanese peace processes? Which factors hampered their participation?

1.4 Outline of the thesis

In this outline, I briefly describe the sections following chapter 1 (introduction) to provide an overview and structure of the thesis. In chapter 2 (contextual background), I provide information on two big topics. First, developments within the South Sudanese conflicts and peace processes, with a focus on women soldiers and war veterans; Second, peacebuilding in general and its tool DDR in particular, thereby focusing on inclusivity and its gendered dimensions such as UNSCR 1325. Chapter 3 (methodology) introduces the methodological framework of the thesis. This section explains the process of secondary and primary data collection and analysis, assesses the quality of the study and discusses ethical considerations and limitations. In chapter 4 (theoretical framework), the concepts I was drawing on for this work – the Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) – are defined and justified. Chapter 5 (the case) builds on the background-chapter and serves as preparation for my findings. It explores the case of South Sudanese female war veterans in the DDR programme. In chapter 6 (results and discussion), I answers my three research questions by presenting findings on women war veterans in DDR, their status in the society, and their participation in peace processes. I triangulate these data and apply FPCT to generate a discussion. The final chapter 7 (conclusion) sums up the important parts of the thesis with regards to my results and UNSCR 1325 and suggests topics for further research.

II. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I provide background information of the main thesis' themes. First, I outline historical events in the South Sudanese wars and briefly mention milestones in the national peace processes. Thereby, I focus on the role of women soldiers and discuss local with relation to national peace processes. Second, I introduce the discipline of peacebuilding, in particular its efforts to become a more inclusive arena. In this section, I highlight the gendered dimensions of peacebuilding and its tool DDR.

2.1 The conflicts and peace processes in South Sudan

In this sub-chapter, I list main developments within the armed conflicts and subsequent peace agreements in South Sudan. The violent conflict has lasted for several decades in the country and is multi-dimensional in its historical, socio-economic, political and cultural aspects. I describe these aspects in a first stage to foster a general understanding of conflict and peace processes on the ground.

South Sudan suffers under a "legacy of violence", according to Øystein H. Rolandsen (2015), where an absence of violence means an absence of power, adds Johnson (2014). Ancient groups already used to fight – sometimes only to establish hegemony, argues Pendle (2014). Moreover, South Sudan fought for its independence over decades. The southern groups South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) and South Sudan Democratic Movement (SSDM) were in a large-scale conflict against Sudan. After the successful South Sudanese secession, however, Sudan turned around to assist these groups. This interference sparked internal violence, one feature shaping the young state from its very beginning. Violence culminated later with the fracture within the SPLM, out of which the opposition party SPLM-IO emerged, supported by neighbouring Sudan (UCDP, 2019). These developments created what Johnson (2014) calls a "wartime mentality" within South Sudan.

South Sudan is a kleptocratic state with a "militarised, corrupt neo-patrimonial system of governance", according to De Waal (2014). In this weak state, violence represents the only income-generating activity to some. Until 2011, more than 80 per cent of the defence budget went into salaries and pensions to feed this patronage system. Profit from South Sudan's biggest resource, oil, is used for loyalty payments (ACLED, 2019).

Land is the second biggest natural resource in South Sudan. When land rights were organised along ethnic lines, conflicts over ownership, access and borders turned into ethnic conflicts, together with disputes connected to cattle raiding. Moreover, South Sudan has a centre-

periphery cleavage. Recent decentralisation approaches created more rural administrative units, but the new institutions were organised in line with ethnicities and thus triggered tribal conflict (Pendle, 2014).

South Sudan's civil war is often portrayed as "tribal warfare". However, scholars such as Johnson (2014) do not see the ethnic dimensions as a cause for conflict per se. The population would not necessarily be divided. While the two dominant groups are Nuer and Dinka, Pendle (2014) explains that ethnic groups in South Sudan are by no means homogenous. Hence, ethnicity is constructed as a concept to craft a common enemy, legitimise and mobilise for fighting. Nevertheless, the country faces hardened identity politics. Numerous attacks are claimed to be ethnically motivated, thus, often provoke revenge-seeking behaviour. These dimensions continue to further threaten the state's weak integrity, according to Øystein H. Rolandsen (2015).

2.1.1 First civil war

South Sudan's cycles of armed conflicts date back to the colonial era, long before its independence, when the country was officially a region in Sudan. When Sudan became independent from Britain in 1956, the Arab-led government failed to establish whether the country would be secular or Islamic, nor did it implement a federal structure when it adopted the constitution. These unresolved issues sparked a rebellion by southern soldiers which marked the beginning of the first civil war, raging from 1955 to 1972. The war divided Sudan into a Muslim-dominated North and a Christian, Animist South.

2.1.2 The Addis Ababa Agreement

In 1972, the Addis Ababa Agreement was reached between the SSLM and the Government of Sudan which ended the war officially by granting certain regional autonomy to Southern Sudan and declaring Juba as the regional capital (GoSS, 2015). Ten years of relative peace followed, until 1983, when the then President Jaafar Nimeiri broke the peace agreement by introducing the sharia law, thereby neglecting legitimate southern leaders.

2.1.3 Second civil war

As a response to the broken Addis Ababa agreement, army officers from the South started another mutiny against the northern leadership. The Sudanese military based in the capital Khartoum sent Colonel John Garang to mediate the conflict. But Garang joined the rebellion instead and two years later, he was leading the insurgency. During the second civil war, fighters continued to join the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLM/A) in their rebellion

against the northern government (Øystein H Rolandsen, 2005). Six years into the conflict, in 1989, general Omar Al Bashir overthrew President Nimeiri. This event did not end the war which lasted for another 16 years, exposing the Sudanese population to unprecedented harm and killings. The level of violence increased mainly due to a huge influx of illegal firearms in this period, for the first time granting civilians access to automatic arms and weapons. While in most clans, inter-and intra-tribal fighting over land, cattle and water was part of their culture prior to the second civil war (see above), conflicts changed with modern weaponry. Women and children became targets and the scale of pure violence intensified (GoSS, 2015).

2.1.4 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

The official talks to bring an end to the long raging second civil war began in 2002 when a ceasefire agreement was reached between the Northern Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In 2004, the first peace deal was brokered by the regional bloc of Eastern African states, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Kenya, but fresh conflict erupted again in Darfur in 2005 (Hilhorst & Van-Leeuwen, 2005). The peace process succeeded three years after the negotiations had started when the conflicting parties, SAF and SPLA, signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. The agreement entailed arrangements which included the demobilisation of members of armed groups and the implementation of the UN's DDR programme (Munive, 2013). Following the CPA, the last large militia, the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), merged with the SPLA under the Juba declaration. More than two decades of Sudan's second civil war left two and a half million people dead and forced more than four million to flee from their homes – most of them were living in the South. The armed conflict devastated an already fragile economy, dismantled the weak social system, traumatised and disintegrated entire communities and thereby impacted mainly women and children (GoSS, 2015).

2.1.5 Independence

The CPA did not bring real peace to Sudan but rather a "state of suspension between peace and war" (Sharon E. Hutchinson & Pendle, 2015). Clashing interests between and within ethnic groups outlived the interim period of the agreement. The SPLA was and is still dominated by officers with a Dinka-background, which gave Khartoum an opportunity to mobilise non-Dinka combatants to fight the uprising in the South (Young, 2003). Despite the northern mobilisation, pro-independence forces from the South reached their goal, a South Sudanese state, when southern Sudan gained its independence on July 9 in 2011 and gave birth to the new nation South Sudan (Pelham, 2020). The Sudanese and South Sudanese government held post-

independence talks to continue working on outstanding CPA-issues. It quickly turned again to a battle of power over decision-making and resources. The negotiations were politicised, militarised, and highly exclusive. Although the framework of the talks required consultations and information for the public, almost only men from either the SPLM or the National Congress Party (NCP) participated in the process (*Mekelle Memorandum of Understanding Between the NCP And SPLM on Post Referendum Issues and Arrangements*, 2010). Nevertheless, after two years of mediation and pressure from the African Union (AU), the parties finally signed nine agreements (Mayen, April 18, 2013).

2.1.6 Third civil war

Studies showed that large segments of the South Sudanese society were disappointed with the leadership performance of the post-war elite. Resentment culminated in late 2013 when the government of South Sudan imploded (Sharon E. Hutchinson & Pendle, 2015) and the third civil war broke out (Pinaud, 2015). Although the internal conflict erupted due to political rivalries between soldiers loyal to President and SPLM/A-leader Salva Kiir and those supporting Riek Machar who formed the SPLM/A-IO (Pelham, 2020), warmongers sparked ethnic animosities between Dinka and Nuer to mobilise for their agendas and made it look like an ethnic conflict (Kushkush, 2013).

2.1.7 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS)

Only a few weeks after the violent clashes erupted in early 2014, IGAD began renewed peace negotiations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Ten members from each party were invited to talks to cease hostilities between Kiir, Machar and their supporters (Wolf, 2014). As a result, the conflict parties signed the Cessation Of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) and in August 2015, the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS).

However, less than a year after the ARCSS was reached, fighting surged in July 2016. As a result of violence, hundreds of thousands were forced to flee and seek protection in UN sites (Pelham, 2020), and the Vice President Riek Machar fled from Juba (Soma, 30 January 2020).

2.1.8 Revitalised ARCSS (R-ARCSS)

Once again, IGAD called for peace talks. This time in June 2017 in the form of a High Level Revitalisation Forum (HLRF) (Soma, 30 January 2020) which was held in December. The SPLA, the SPLA-IO, other parties and representatives from the civil society agreed on a renewed cessation of hostilities and granted humanitarian access to guarantee the protection of civilians. The forum was supported by the UN, the AU and the Troika consisting of the US, the

UK and Norway. The efforts culminated in the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018 (Pelham, 2020). The pre-transitional period in which the parties were supposed to implement among other things the security reform had to be extended two times (Vhumbunu, 2019) and finally expired in February 2020 (Pelham, 2020).

2.1.9 Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU)

Although the ceasefire was held in most parts of South Sudan since the R-ARCSS had been signed, the situation remains fragile due to the slow implementation of the agreement (Pelham, 2020) including the formation of a transitional government. Half a year delayed, South Sudan formed the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) on 22 February 2020 (Vhumbunu, 2020). But the wounds of this conflict are far from healed in contemporary South Sudan where family members are living separated from each other in displacement, civilians are still heavily armed, a large segment of the population traumatised, substance abuse is widespread, the unemployment rate high, poverty is extreme, institutions are unfit and justice, law and order remains weak (GoSS, 2015). As a result of the conflicts in South Sudan, hundreds of thousands of people are dead. In 2020 alone , after multiple peace deals were signed, more than 1,000 South Sudanese were killed in inter-communal violence (GCR2P, 2020), almost two and a half million people were forced to leave the country and an additional one and a half million persons are internally displaced. Of the civilians who stayed in South Sudan, seven and a half million require humanitarian assistance and around six and a half million people are severely food insecure (UNOCHA, 2020).

Especially women and girls bear the brunt of violence in South Sudan, where the conflict deteriorated already poor living conditions and women's status. Almost every second girl is married off under the age of 18 (GoSS, 2018). Despite a decrease in child marriages in many countries, underage marriages are rising due to poverty (Buchanan, 2019). Women and girls were abducted for sexual slavery and sexual violence was used as a weapon in a war against them (Mold, 2018).

2.2 Women in the South Sudanese conflict and peace process

This sub-chapter focuses on women's engagement in informal peace processes in South Sudan and how their efforts on the local level are connected with the national peace processes. Within this context, I will present the roles of women who supported the armed conflict but also fostered peace in their communities.

2.2.1 Women in armed forces in Africa

Fighting women were neither a new development by that time nor a Southern Sudanese phenomenon. On the contrary, many women were affiliated in modern African armed conflicts (Coulter, Persson, & Utas, 2008), even more so in countries where ideology played a bigger role than in South Sudan. Independence struggles on the African continent have often been legitimised by a socialist agenda which included women's liberation (Nzomo, 2002). As a result, up to one third of combatants in some armed groups in Africa have been female (Mazurana, 2004).

Scholars mention various reasons why women joined and still join armed forces. While some women are abducted into a combative force, others participate in order to survive, or due to ideology (Harsch, 2005; MacMullin & Loughry, 2004). Female soldiers who are aware of gender inequality in their communities also fight against male oppression (Meredith Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998) or in order to seek revenge. Some girls and women enlist to escape domestic violence, poverty, or abuse by soldiers from enemy forces (Brett & Specht, 2004). Others, however, see fighting as a new opportunity to live more independently, to learn skills, or to obtain powerful positions (Mckay & Mazurana, 2004). Some female combatants report that they felt proud and self-confident when they carried weapons, and that their status increased (McKay, 2005). Scholars argue further that girls and women who join armed forces voluntarily are often courageous, independent and persistent (Keairns, 2002) – traits which are usually not valued in women by traditional and conservative societies.

Literature suggests that reasons why armed groups want women to join, on the other hand, can also be drivers for women to participate in military activities. Female dedication to liberation warfare is said to motivate men in their performance. Indeed, women combatants are often described by their comrades as more cruel than male fighters. Including women in battalions is sometimes also a strategical decision in order to demoralise enemy forces by outnumbering them on the battlefield or to legitimate warfare by showing unity (Coulter et al., 2008). Male combatants further wish women to be present at the camp to comfort them and to satisfy their sexual needs, which often leads to abusive behaviour by male fighters due to hierarchical norms in militaries in particular and patriarchal societies in general (McKay, 2005).

Women active on the frontline risk being raped, which is why some attach themselves to one combatant to at least prevent abuse by multiple soldiers (Coulter et al., 2008). If this man dies in battle, however, she often does not have much choice than to start a new liaison. Coming home from the frontline with one or more illegitimate children or simply after having lost her virginity,

stigmatises female fighters who are often abandoned by their families and communities. It is lawful that the male comrade who is the father of the illegitimate child also rejects her, if they are not married. Not being able to (re-)marry and having missed out on education during the time on the battlefield, women previously active in armed groups are vulnerable to fall into poverty. Prostitution is still often the only alternative for women who are left alone without any support to reintegrate into post-war society (Brett, 2002). As Turshen and Twagiramariya (1998) put it; "a change of the man's role from a breadwinner to a combatant entitled him to more rights […], the change of the woman's role from a housewife and mother to a combatant caused a further decline in her status […] women are reminded that whatever additional roles they are entrusted with, their original role as providers of sex comes first."

2.2.2 South Sudanese women soldiers in armed conflict

This sub-chapter explores the roles of female soldiers in the context of South Sudan's wars. Thus, I will introduce the supportive tasks with which women contributed to armed struggles and discuss their direct participation in military operations.

The involvement of female warriors in southern Sudan dates back to the 19th century. During the second Sudanese civil war (1983–2005), the SPLA, the SAF and other groups increased the number of female soldiers they deployed. The SPLA had what is referred to as "The Women Battalion", named Katiba Banat, from 1984 onwards. However, Katiba Banat was operational for a short time only and most members played non-combatant roles. In general, women were pushed into supportive tasks, some coerced into sex work, while only very few had higher ranked or combat positions (Harsch, 2005; Komujuni, December 2013). Hence, the majority of southern Sudanese women contributed to warfare away from the front. This reflects the dominant perception of men being warriors and women should be kept away from the battlefield. The SPLA's military ideology encouraged men to join the battlefield and labelled them soldiers, while it promoted to safeguard women from active conflict (Stone, 2011b). However, even where women stayed behind when their men joined the military, traditional gender roles were challenged. Since men left their role as head of household, women took full responsibility at home.

Women's daily tasks during periods of conflict were similar to those in peacetime such as cooking, caring and nursing (Komujuni, December 2013; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Stone, 2011b). Additionally, they had to support sustaining the war by activities like transporting supplies to the front as well as caring for wounded soldiers, or cleaning up after a battle. Given the heavy and essential labour carried out by women during wartime, they considered

themselves fighters and soldiers. Moreover, many male soldiers did not consider support roles by female comrades as secondary (Stone, 2011b). Nevertheless, the involvement of women in the South Sudanese second civil war (1983-2005) is still debated amongst scholars, the SPLA, policy makers and former male combatants. For instance, Lydia Stone states that "whether South Sudanese women fought on the frontline in the 1983-2005 civil war is still a contested one, with men denying women's role in fighting while the women say they fought" (Komujuni, December 2013; Stone, 2011b).

Women who participated in the independence war would have remained mostly unrecognised was it not for the work of a few scholars such as Lydia Stone. In *We were all Soldiers: Female Combatants in South Sudan's Civil War*, Stone tells the stories of several brave and determined women (2011b). For her extensive research, the scholar interviewed women who are now civilians, SPLA members, women in South Sudan Police Service, DDR participants, Security Experts, UN staff and members of the Southern Sudan Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC). Stone's findings consisting of women's narratives about their roles in wartime were picked up by numerous academics. For her study, Stone interviewed South Sudanese women who were at the frontline and those who stayed at home – whereas both groups considered themselves soldiers. As one interviewee, a brigadier, explained to Stone: "Three quarters of women did support roles while one quarter was active soldiers. But everybody was a soldier, because even when not trained, women knew how to manoeuvre their way in the war. They were civilians but they were also soldiers (2011b)."

One of the outstanding characters described by Lydia Stone is Janet Bulen Mofatta. Mofatta was forced to join the army in the 1990's and became a lance corporal in SPLA's military police in the aftermath of the war. Together with 48 women and hundreds of men, Mofatta participated in military training after she had been forcefully conscripted. When it came to the first attack, however, only her male comrades were deployed. Mofatta and her aunt did not accept this decision and fought secretly among men. Their participation was said to have had a positive effect on the spirit of their male colleagues who did not want to be viewed as cowards. Despite the success, Mofatta was prevented from fighting again. Nevertheless, the division leader John Garang noticed her dedication and invited her to travel with him through the country. Janet Bulen Mofatta was one among many South Sudanese women who were either not allowed to fight, or whose act of fighting was denied afterwards. Stone mentions other female combatants whom were given logistic and administrative roles by the SPLA such as being a secretary or gathering information (2011b). These stories show that some women in South Sudan achieved

to challenge and overcome patriarchal barriers from their weaker position in society, in order to train alongside men and ultimately be accepted as comrades by some of them.

However, although South Sudanese authorities provided military training to women, female fighters were often not deployed. Women learned skills for warfare, which some also put into practice, but very few had ranks. Claims that women are weaker did not reflect the truth as girls were often stronger than boys in military training. The demoralising effect an injured female combatant was supposed to have on male comrades stood in contrast with the motivational aspects for soldiers who did not want to look like cowards in front of women. Furthermore, Other Armed Groups (OAGs) had a more significant amount of women on the frontline than the SPLA (Komujuni, December 2013).

A further influential factor behind the exclusion of women combatants during the second civil war was that army leader John Garang wanted women to continue bearing children. He foresaw that the conflict would last for decades and that it would produce many casualties. Garang therefore wanted to ensure the replacement of dying soldiers by keeping up the population growth. Thus, he even arranged for women to travel to military camps to become pregnant (Stone, 2011b).

2.2.3 Peace efforts by South Sudanese women

In this sub-chapter, I present a brief overview of female participation in the South Sudanese local and national peace processes in order to show how both are interlinked. Furthermore, I explore how female military engagement plays into peacebuilding activities of women soldiers or war veterans.

The discourse about Sudanese women in peace processes grew out of "The Forth World Conference on Women" which took place in Beijing in 1995 and brought attention on female peacebuilding overall. Parallelly, the Southern Sudanese society in general and its women in particular are said to have a tradition for tackling conflicts on the local level (Hilhorst & Van-Leeuwen, 2005). Mai (1 December 2015) argues that women tend to have a better understanding of local security issues, because they are often among the poorest people. Moreover, Adeogun and Muthuki (April 2018) say that many women's organisations in the country emerge on the grassroot level, thus, have better understanding of the needs of the population. Indeed, there are plenty of women's organisations in South Sudan according to studies by Hilhorst and Van-Leeuwen (2005) and Adeogun and Muthuki (April 2018). Kezie-Nwoha and Were (2018) list some of the peacebuilding activities women engage in, such as

mediating conflicts, organising interfaith praying, disseminating messages of peace in form of radio programmes or organising rallies in town (Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2018). The work of women and their grassroot organisations influenced the formal peace processes in South Sudan, which culminated in the agreements CPA, ARCSS, R-ARCSS and RTGoNU (see 2.1).

The CPA was signed in 2005 with only two female spectators. As a response to their exclusion from decision-making, women's organisations became vocal through political peace activism (Adeogun & Muthuki, April 2018). Another development during the post-CPA period was the establishment of the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MGCSW). Setting up a body which should focus on women's well-being was a positive step, however, scholars criticise that the ministry does not receive enough funding to tackle gender inequalities (Mai, 1 December 2015). Meanwhile on the local level, women's organisations translated and disseminated the CPA, so the population would have access to the peace agreement (Mai, 1 December 2015).

When South Sudan became independent in 2011, the transitional constitution addressed the inclusion of women in decision-making roles in Article 16 (4a), which foresaw "women participation in public life and their representation in the legislative and executive organs by at least twenty-five per cent as an affirmative action to redress imbalances [...]" (Mai, 1 December 2015). The first attempt towards a women's quota was born.

Throughout the formal ARCSS peace process, signed in 2015, 15 per cent of the negotiators were women. While the government delegation consisted of men only, one third of the opposition team were women, including one woman war veteran (Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2018; Wolf, 2014). On paper, the ARCSS recognised the need for more gender inclusivity. At the same time, women formed The Women's Bloc of South Sudan to represent women from all parties as signatory (Mai, 1 December 2015). The ARCSS provided for the inclusion of women in governance by highlighting the 25 per cent quota. However, it did not fully implement the transitional constitution, as the quota only pertained to the executive branch. Moreover, a lack of political will prevented the quota from being implemented (Giscard-d'Estaing, December 2015; Mai, 1 December 2015). The Bloc served as observers throughout the ARCSS process and monitored its implementation. To integrate women's voices, they organised the National Women's Peace Dialogue.

During the 2017 cease-fire agreement, hundreds of women marched peacefully in Juba to protest for the prohibition of sexual violence. Moreover, forty women's organisations came together to form the South Sudan Women Coalition for Peace and Development. They

developed a joint position on peace promotion in South Sudan to guide "women at the table" by briefing them before each peace talk and providing feedback afterwards. As such, grassroots activists could influence a formal peace process (Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2018).

In 2018, renewed peace talks culminated in the revitalised ARCSS or R-ARCSS. This time, one mediator and 25 percent of all official delegates who participated in the negotiations were women. Members of the women's coalition served as official observers and signatories. Their demand for a 35 percent representation rate of women in decision-making was granted. Later on, more than five hundred women joined as a Women's Peace think tank to monitor the implementation of the R-ARCSS in a gender-responsive way (Kezie-Nwoha & Were, 2018).

2.2.4 Women soldiers in the South Sudanese peace processes

Some women held leadership positions connected to peacebuilding in South Sudan. Most relevant for this thesis are women with a military background, because they can be seen as real life examples of South Sudanese women who took on influential roles related to both – combat and peace. Such cases represent women who lead local courts. Even though women chiefs are still more an exception than the norm in the country, the number of female heads of local courts can potentially increase since only people with a certain past – women with a military background included – can become chiefs and manage conflicts on the sub-national level (Ibreck & Pendle, 2017). Another example of South Sudanese women connected to peace and conflict processes are female Nuer prophets. Religious leaders who are believed to channel powers over life and death have been embedded in the Nuer culture since the late 19th century. Nyachol is a woman prophet of the divinity Maani in Western Upper Nile in South Sudan who claims to bring security and wellbeing to "moral communities" (Anderson & Johnson, 1995). The leader received divinity during the emergence of violent conflict in December 2013, when she mobilised her followers against governmental forces (Sharon E. Hutchinson & Pendle, 2015). Furthermore, South Sudan has two cases of women politicians with army experience who were influential in the national peace process. Angelina Tenney was appointed as minster of defence in March 2020 (Malak, 2020). Rebecca Nyandeng Garang is one of the current vice-presidents and signed the peace deal R-ARCSS in 2019 (Francis, 2019).

2.3 Peacebuilding

After briefly defining the term peacebuilding, I explain the history and practicalities around it and focus on inclusive and gendered aspects of peacebuilding in this chapter.

Peacebuilding is a long process that includes everything from preventing conflict to transforming post-conflict communities into peaceful societies. Although most definitions are formulated around this notion, there is a disagreement about how wide or narrow the term peacebuilding should be applied (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006). Literature describes three phases of conflict: The time before violence breaks out, the period when the armed conflict is ongoing, and the stage after the conflict. On the ground, however, conflict often evolves in cycles of violent and peaceful periods, sometimes varying from region to region (Ibid). Peacebuilding can take place in any of these conflict phases or cycles.

2.3.1 A short history of peacebuilding

The field of peace studies was born in the aftermath of the Second World War with the aim to eradicate a nuclear arms race in the emerging Cold War (John, 2006). The term peacebuilding[1] itself originated from Norwegian sociologist Johan Vincent Galtung who in the 1970's founded the discipline of peace and conflict studies. Building on his distinction between negative peace as an end of violence and positive peace when reaching an entirely peaceful society, Galtung suggested to develop "peacebuilding structures" (1969). These structures are meant to promote sustainable peace by eradicating causes of conflict and building local capacities for conflict management and resolution (Galtung, 1976)[2]. Conflict management shifted its focus later towards preventing and tackling intra-state conflicts due to their increase (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006).

As peace processes have multiple levels, so do conflict. Peace practitioners have responded to this by organising peacebuilding into different tracks. Since the 1990s, multitrack approaches have become common practice in peace processes. John Paul Lederach (1997) came up with the model when he described the three tracks as top-, middle range- and grassroots-leadership. Until today, different peace initiatives are rolled out on different levels in a conflict-affected society, ranging from communal peace efforts to high-level negotiations (Palmiano Federer, Pickhardt, Lustenberger, Altpeter, & Abatis, 2019). Track One takes place in form of mediation within state leadership. Track Two is organised on the mid-level through resolution activities such as problem-solving workshops. And finally, the majority of the population is addressed at

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[1] The UN came up with a peacebuilding definition at the end of the cold war, in *An Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali, 1992) and later in the *Brahimi Report* as "activities undertaken [...] to reassemble the foundation of peace and provide the tools for building on those [...] more than just the absence of war" (UN, 2000).
[2] Johan Galtung's ideas were shaped by the political Zeitgeist of his decade. Incentives to reduce inter-state wars were addressed in the late 19th century in the Hague conference, later within the League of Nations and the creation of the UN after the Second World War.

the grassroot level in Track Three, through activities like trauma healing or community dialogues (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006). While all three peacebuilding levels are discussed in this thesis, the third track is the most relevant with regards to the case study of South Sudanese women war veterans in DDR and peace processes.

2.3.2 How it works

Peacebuilding can take place in form of various tasks reaching among others from implementing DDR programmes, supporting security sector reforms (SSR), assisting in elections or re-establishing governmental authority (UN, September 2010), to healing trauma and reducing poverty (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006). These activities can only be implemented after the UN Security Council (UNSC) has deployed a peacekeeping operation (PKO) to establish a minimum of safety and security necessary for their rollout[3] (UN, September 2010).

Multi-dimensional peacekeeping can take place in three phases. The first phase is to prevent armed conflict from happening, the second to manage prevalent conflict so an agreement can be reached, and the third phase begins after the armed conflict has ended – also called post-conflict or post-settlement (the latter if no agreement was signed). Peacebuilding mostly refers to the post-conflict period immediately after the conflict has ceased. This period lasts between one to five, sometimes up to ten years and entails a high risk of conflict relapse (Elliott, Collier, Hegre, Hoeffler, & Sambanis, 2003). This thesis refers with South Sudan as example mainly to post-conflict peacebuilding in a context of relapsing armed conflicts.

Transitional periods are a time of insecurity, instability and uncertainty where peace processes risk regressing. To prevent a renewed outbreak of conflict, it is crucial that sufficient resources are accessible, and that sustainable political decisions are made by a competent leadership. By building a common ground for peace, citizens and decision-makers alike establish a national ownership over the peacebuilding strategy. Peace will only be sustainable if the conflict-affected country comes to the point where it is able to continue peacebuilding without external assistance. Therefore, national capacity does not only have to be assessed before peacebuilding takes place, but should also be developed further. This analysis is part of a common strategy which should enable a broad range of participants to conduct national planning while ensuring national ownership of the process (UN, September 2010).

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[3] PKOs consist of military and police units, observers and advisers. They are mainly funded by member states cooperating with organisations and donors (UN, September 2010).

Planning peacebuilding activities must be based on the needs of the people living in the conflict-affected country. These might vary according to attributes such as gender, which a needs assessment can show. An adequate response to the need for safety, security and protection can be clearing mines, re-establishing the rule of law, reforming the security sector or rolling out DDR. Peacebuilding activities can support elections, inclusive dialogues or reconciliation. As conflict often destroys livelihood opportunities for people, peacebuilding tries to revitalise the economy and create employment, especially for former combatants and youth (UN, September 2010). This thesis focuses on how peacebuilding responds through DDR programmes to South Sudanese women's needs for safety, security, participation and livelihood opportunities.

2.3.3 Inclusive peacebuilding

Inclusiveness in the context of peacebuilding means that all groups within a conflict-affected society are able to participate somehow and are represented in political decision-making relevant for a peaceful transition (Castillejo, October 2017). Not only is peacebuilding an opportunity to discuss economic, political and social exclusion; inclusiveness is also seen as one of the most essential ingredients for conflict transformation (Kaplan, 2015). While a more diverse set of actors was previously believed to make peace processes more complicated (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006), the international community highlights the importance of diversity in conflict management today in blueprints such as the New Deal[4] (IDPS, 2011) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[5] (UN, 2015).

Increasing evidence shows inclusion is crucial for sustainable peace and development (Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006). Although the political elite can temporarily implement a peaceful political system, it is usually accessible and inclusive institutions which establish long-term stability and resilience (Rocha Menocal, 2015). These institutions ensure that local communities are heard on the national level (Rausch & Luu, 2017). If peacebuilding fails to be inclusive, societies are more vulnerable to fall back into conflict. Clare Castillejo (October 2017) mentions the post-independence settlement in South Sudan as an example where only the elite and not the broader population was involved in the peace agreement. As such, the country relapsed into conflict once the deal broke (Ibid). Indeed, most researchers agree that inviting different actors to take part in the peace process does not only make it democratic but also more durable (Paffenholz, January 2014). Desirée Nilsson (2012) assessed over eighty peace

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[4] The New Deal addresses support for fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) in five goals (IDPS, 2011).
[5] SDG 16 highlights peacebuilding in "Peace, justice and strong institutions (UN, 2015)."

agreements over a period of fifteen years to confirm an increase in sustainability of peace settlements if the civil society participates.

2.3.4 Gendered peacebuilding

Gendered peacebuilding is one aspect of inclusive peacebuilding, as any peace process without including people with different genders would be highly exclusive. Moreover, it is vital for the durability of peace. For instance, studies suggest that 30-40 percent of female participation make a difference in peace processes such as negotiations. Furthermore, gender-sensitive conflict analysis is necessary for the sake of accuracy, effectiveness, and professionalism. Being gender aware also helps to identify the power distribution among parties to the conflict. Only if inequalities are understood, interventions can be planned appropriately (Reimann, August 2008) and the peace process as a whole can be successful.

Although people with all genders are actors for change, conflict and peace, it is mostly women who prevent conflicts, bring communities together and organise movements for peace around the world. Their peacebuilding activities are vital but to a large degree unrecognised (UN, 2017). One reason is that women's engagement for a peaceful society usually takes place in mid-level leadership and grassroot organisations while men are the ones making decisions in more visible, official peace negotiations (Reimann, August 2008). Gendered peacebuilding tries to recognise women's roles as peacebuilders by acknowledging often undocumented efforts on the community level and including them in formal processes.

As much as women's involvements in peacebuilding vary from those of men, so does violent conflict affect them in a different way, making gender awareness and peacebuilding inseparable. In conflict-affected countries, power differences tend to increase, and with them the vulnerability of all civilians, in particular marginalised groups. As a result, conflict often deteriorates the situation for women and girls on the ground (UN, 2017). Taking measures to protect them from gender-based sexual violence is as important (UN, September 2010) as avoiding their victimisation (Reimann, August 2008). Against all odds, conflict can also open windows of opportunities for women, such as joining fighting forces or becoming the head of household. Experiences of increased gender equality, however, are usually only short-term. Many women find themselves in the same position as prior to the conflict or suffer from a deterioration of their status in the conflict aftermath (John, 2006). As such, women have unique conflict experiences which are to be incorporated into peace agreements through the process of gendered peacebuilding.

2.3.5 Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

To strengthen the gender aspect within peacebuilding, the United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSC) adopted the *Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. At the time of writing, the Resolution 1325 celebrates its 20th anniversary. Since 31 October 2000, this resolution calls for a stronger participation of women in peacebuilding, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence[6] (SGBV), the protection of needs and rights of girls and women during and after violent conflict, and a gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding (UNSC, 2000). In order to implement Resolution 1325 within and beyond the UN system, an interagency WPS taskforce was formed, consisting of UN representatives as well as external observers. It follows an action plan with annual reports and checklists (UN, September 2010). Of particular relevance for this thesis is the fact that the resolution also addresses the peacebuilding tool DDR: "The UN encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants [...]"; "the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution (UNSC, 2000)."

2.4 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR)

This chapter defines the term DDR, explains its three pillars disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration as well as elaborates women's participation in the programme.

The UN defines DDR as "a process of removing weapons from the hands of members of armed groups, taking these combatants out of their groups and helping them to reintegrate as civilians into society, [...] to support ex-combatants and those associated [...], so that they can become active participants in the peace process" (Peacekeeping, 2020). Developed in the 1990s as part of the UN's post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts (Knight, 2008), DDR is an essential element of peace operations in countries such as Colombia, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda until today (Komujuni, December 2013).

DDR operations are often implemented in the aftermath of civil wars after a large amount of the population, including women and children, had been recruited for militia (Watteville, 2001). If peace negotiations or victory by a warring party brings an end to the armed conflict, troops are discharged. In these situations, arms trade is often a profitable business. Former fighters who

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[6] The UNSCR 1820 broke the silence about sexual violence such as rape as a weapon in war and crimes against humanity. It gives the mandate for PKOs and urges governments to bring justice for victims and survivors. Critics claim it fails to address root causes of SGBV which are deeply rooted in the patriarchal society (Hudson, 2012).

still own weapons can pose a risk to national and regional security by becoming "spoilers" of peace and development, therefore require special attention (Bell & Watson, 2006). As already mentioned, DDR aims to tackle this risk, ultimately by transforming former combatants into active peace process participants. In my study, I explore contexts of this transformation, thereby focusing on women. But first, I shall describe the three programme stages below (Knight, 2008).

2.4.1 Disarmament

The first stage of the DDR process is to disarm combatants and armed forces. This step includes the collection, control, disposal, documentation and management[7] of ammunition, arms, explosives and weapons. If the conflict ends through a negotiated peace process, former combatants are expected to hand in weapons voluntarily. In case of a military victory – which it was for the SPLA in South Sudan – the party which won usually does not surrender arms. UN peacekeepers usually collect, store or destroy weapons. The aim behind disarmament is to enable a safe environment so the peace process can proceed (Knight, 2008).

2.4.2 Demobilisation

Fighters are expected to transform from combatants to civilians during their demobilisation, the second phase of DDR. As part of demobilisation, ex-combatants register at centres and gather at cantonment sites. They hand in arms, often in exchange for money and receive assistance for themselves and their families such as transportation to their home communities (Knight, 2008).

2.4.3 Reintegration

Reintegration is the final part of the DDR programme and defined as "the process through which an ex-combatant acquires civilian status and gains sustainable employment and income" (Munive, 2014). It is a long-term process where the ex-combatant is supposed to adapt to a peaceful life. In some cases, communities have to be convinced to take fighters back. In South Sudan, however, this was not an issue. Ex-combatants usually receive a compensation package in form of cash, vocational training or scholarships. In this DDR stage, refugees and internally displaced persons are repatriated and rehabilitated. A forum for truth and reconciliation is set up and destroyed infrastructure is reconstructed. Sometimes during this phase, former combatants join the newly established national military (Komujuni, December 2013). This was very much the dynamic of the DDR process in South Sudan, to which I will

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[7] The management of ammunition, arms, explosives and weapons refers to the storage or destruction of the same as well as de-mining activities (Knight, 2008).

come back to later. Despite being often viewed as a national responsibility, reintegration processes need assistance from third parties. They are supposed to change economies on the small scale and identities on the personal level by supporting former combatants in finding a sustainable livelihood. The process promotes entrepreneurship by encouraging informal economy trades such as blacksmith, motor vehicle mechanics, carpentry etc (Munive, 2014). Overall, reintegration is successful when national capacity grows, conflict-affected people become income-generating community members and conflicts are addressed peacefully (Komujuni, December 2013).

2.4.4 Women in DDR

Women have traditionally either been deemed less eligible for DDR benefits than men, or left out of the programme completely – a failure the UN's Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Organisation (UNDDR) has admitted and stressed: "[…] women have often been excluded from DDR processes because of, amongst others, stigma, security concerns, inadequate eligibility criteria or women's poor access to communication sources used to announce the DDR programme. Ensuring women's access to DDR programmes, addressing their specific needs and protecting them from violence is critical to ensure successful reintegration […] (UNDDR, 2006)." The UN has further addressed this issue in the Security Council Resolution 1325 (see 2.3.5).

Reasons for the discrimination of women in DDR are partly due to the programme's main intention – providing security. By applying a narrow focus (Knight, 2008), DDR excludes everyone who is not seen as a potential threat. As a result, a common entry requirement used to be the handing-in of weapons. Since women often do not carry firearms and are viewed as "supporters", they are seldom prioritised when it comes to demobilisation and reintegration (Stone, 2011b). Moreover, reintegration packages are often not finalised when women's trauma and wounds are still fresh (Knight, 2008). Moreover, the training component was criticised as being limited to very few activities such as sewing (Stone, 2011b). All in all, women do not have equal access to demobilisation benefits, which is problematic because DDR dismantles their support systems.

Scholars like Andy Knight (2008) argue that women require access to DDR from the beginning, the demobilisation, since they carry an enormous burden in post-conflict societies. Flexible programmes such as in Liberia, where requirements to participate were changed to guarantee a better access for women, are said to have brought positive results – especially when the reintegration process is tailored towards age, gender, education and physical conditions.

Despite some positive results, however, the DDR design is questioned regarding women's needs in post-conflict scenarios. One argument is that women would need a much broader reintegration and recovery framework than what DDR offers (Knight, 2008). The programme in South Sudan is one example where women were included from the early stage on. Nevertheless, the efficiency of the South Sudanese DDR programme is questionable (see 5.2).

III. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I explain the research process by justifying my method choices and discussing difficulties and limitations. I chose a qualitative approach for my research which focuses on patterns how actors make sense of themselves and their surrounding (Berg & Lune, 2012b), because my thesis explores subjective interpretations of South Sudanese female war veterans about their experiences. My research examines their social roles and statuses, i.e., how they are perceived by others. I aim to find out more of the latter by also conducting expert interviews. My thesis follows the six main steps defined by scholar Alan Bryman as qualitative research (2012, p. 384): formulating general research questions (see 1.2), selecting relevant subjects and locations, collecting relevant data, analysing data, selecting a theoretical framework, narrowing research questions, gathering more data, interpretating data again and formulating findings (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 26). These stages are explained in this section.

3.1 Qualitative research design: A case study

Alan Bryman defines a research design as "structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data". It offers guidance and a framework for collecting and interpreting data (2016, p. 40). There are different types of research designs and this thesis uses the case study design.

Robert Yin defines a case study as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (2009, p. 18). Bryman argues that the cases which are studied are usually interesting by themselves in order to serve as research objects (2016, pp. 60-61). Bruce Berg and Howard Lune (2017, p. 171) highlight two elements prevalent in case studies. First, several methods and sources for data are necessary to examine the case. Second, the research object must represent a case of some sort of category (Ibid). I used a single-case study design for my thesis, because I examined the participation of women war veterans in the South Sudanese DDR and peace processes with which I want to illuminate the bigger picture of women's roles in conflict and peace. To gain a deeper understanding of my case, I applied multiple research methods, which will be explained below.

3.2 Data collection

In research, the gathering of data to investigate research questions is called "data collection" (Bryman, 2012, p. 14). Each data collection method sheds light on different aspects of the same social reality. By combining methods, researchers can gain a more complete

picture and verify their findings in the process of "triangulation". Triangulation does not only include data gathering of one object in multiple ways, but also the use of multiple theories and analyse procedures. Thereby, triangulation aims to relate findings for better validity (Berg & Lune, 2012a, pp. 5-8). The following sub-chapters outline the methods I have used for to collect and analyse data.

Collection of secondary data

I gathered secondary data by reviewing literature and other sources. Lune and Berg (2017, p. 26) define a literature review as the activity to immerse in a topic in order to define a research angle. I collected academic literature, reports, assessments, blueprints and newspaper articles dealing with the issues gendered peacebuilding, DDR, WPS, the South Sudanese conflict and women war veterans' roles in these fields. This process consisted of going through websites of organisations, research networks and academic platforms. It provided background knowledge of the thesis topic, a base for writing the literature review and enabled me to choose the theoretical framework.

Theories describe certain processes by generalising specific behaviour in order to make sense of it. When a theory is applied, it connects ideas and generates concepts (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 23). By reviewing literature, I came across Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT), a hybrid study, inspired by multiple disciplines and part of feminist theory (Weber, 2006), which I choose to use for my thesis (see 4.1).

Formulating research questions and objectives as well as the problem statement was also part of this stage (see 1.1 to 1.3). Moreover, viewing secondary data allowed me to identify experts on the South Sudanese conflict, gender and peacebuilding and WPS as well as to generate content for the interview guides for both interview groups, the female DDR graduates (group A) and the expert group (group B) (see annex 2 for the interview guides used).

Collection of primary data

Researchers collect data from a chosen sample (Bryman, 2012, p. 14). Sampling cases for research are units relevant to the research question (Ibid). Together, all these units form the sample size, which depends on the scope of the study population. The wider the scope and the more heterogenous the study population, the bigger the sample should be (Ibid, p. 425). My research design is comprised of a small sample size due to feasibility reasons and the relatively homogenous study populations of South Sudanese female veterans who participated in DDR and WPS experts who focus on the conflict in South Sudan.

3.2.1 Sampling

I chose the subjects and location based on my research questions (see 1.2), but also took other factors such as accessibility and costs into consideration as advised by experienced researchers (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 37). My study populations are South Sudanese women veterans who participated in the DDR programme and experts from multiple fields with knowledge about issues connected to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in the South Sudanese context. Both study populations have experience and knowledge relevant for my research questions and were accessible. The setting of my data collection is a desk study, consisting of remote expert interviews and an outsourced field study of the South Sudanese diaspora in the refugee settlement Bidi Bidi, Northern Uganda. The refugee camp is accessible with a research permission granted by the Office of the Prime Minister in Uganda and safe compared to conflict-prone South Sudan.

Samples

My study samples are divided into two groups. Group A consists of female ex-soldiers who participated in the DDR programme in South Sudan, and now live as refugees in the neighbouring country Uganda. The women were interviewed in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement in Northern Uganda. The respondents from Group A are referred to by numbers from 1 to 10 through this thesis, in order to protect their anonymity[8]. Each of the ten women has her unique story, experience and perspective, yet they all have things in common; they were part of the SPLA, have experienced displacement, survived conflict, and graduated from the UN's DDR programme in South Sudan. Their roles and responsibilities are manifold and include providing for their family (2, 3, 5) – some of them as head of household (1, 6) – solving internal petty issues (9), contributing to their communities (2) and working for their own businesses (4, 10). In addition, most of them were conscripted to the army but not on the SPLA payroll. All of the interviewees have experienced displacement – be it multiple times (8, 9) or one time (1, 3, 5, 10). Half of the survey participants live together with their families (1, 3, 5, 9, 10). However, some of them were previously separated from their family members (1, 7, 9, 10), often as a result of violence. Most of the female war veterans live in a partnership. Three women said they live together with their husbands (4, 9, 10), while two reported they are married but currently live in separation (8) due to the conflict (3). One interviewee had been married (7) and another women reported that her husband died in the armed forces (1). One of the former soldiers said she is divorced (6), and one had never been married (2). The same interviewee is also the only

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[8] This aspect is further elaborated in the section on ethical considerations (see 3.5).

one without children (2), while the other women have between two and six children (see annex 1 for profile of interviewees).

All interviewees of Group B have insider knowledge, or first-hand experience working with women in conflict and peace processes in South Sudan. All interviewees are female and partly African nationals. The interviewees in Group B are referred to by the Roman numerals I to VIII throughout this thesis. Three of them were staff of independent organisations working with peacebuilding, thereby focusing on gender issues (I, III, V). Two of these organisations were international – one from the humanitarian sector (III), the other from track-two-peacebuilding efforts (I) – and the third organisation was national and grassroot (V). Through the expert who worked for this local NGO (V), a female Director General of a regional DDR programme (VI) was interviewed for this thesis. Another expert who contributed with her knowledge on South Sudanese women in DDR was a conflict adviser (VII) for one of the Troika-countries'. Three more scholars (II, IV, VIII) participated in this research, two from the Global North – one investigated local justice systems, conflict management and women chiefs (VIII), the other focused on South Sudanese women in peace processes (IV) – and the third academic (II), coming from Africa, focused on women's organisations in peacebuilding (see annex 1 for profile of interviewees).

Nonprobability purposive sampling

Neither of the samples allow for generalisations, as they are part of a nonprobability sampling form. In nonprobability sampling, the researcher has to understand which sample could reflect the study population and produces a "quasi-random sample" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 38). I used the strategy of purposive nonprobability sampling, which presupposes the knowledge about specific attributes prevalent in the study population in order to be able to choose a small group who represents them (Ibid, p. 39). I was aware that Uganda hosts a large amount of South Sudanese refugees and that many of them live in the Bidi Bidi settlement, located at the border. The field assistant who conducted the interviews knew that some of the residents have the attributes necessary for the research sample.

Sequential sampling through snowballing

I identified most units of my second sample, experts on WPS in South Sudan, throughout my literature review and secondary data collection. However, some were located through sequential purposive sampling, and so-called "snowballing" (see Table 1), as I asked interviewees for referrals (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 39). By doing so, my sample of experts grew throughout the research (Bryman, 2016, p. 410). Every sample unit fulfilled necessary criteria to answer the

research questions. Thus, criteria can change if research questions change (Ibid, p. 418). This was the case with some expert interviews.

Table 2

Single-case study design table						
Group	**Sampling**	**Primary data collection**			**Samples**	**Units**
A	purposive nonprobability	Qualitative interviews	structured	survey-based	female DDR graduates	10
B	purposive nonprobability sequential; snowballing		semi-structured	telephone-based	female WPS experts	1
				web-based		4
				e-mail-based		3
					TOTAL:	**18**

3.2.2 Interviews

I chose structured survey-based and semi-structured telephone- web- and e-mail-based interviews as methods for collecting data, as shown in Table 3. Lune and Berg define interviews as a way to gather data "in form of words, shaped by perspectives of respondents and conventional discourse practices" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 67). Interviews are an appropriate method, if the researcher wants to find out what people think about a topic (Ibid). Since I am interested in exploring the opinions of South Sudanese women war veterans and WPS experts about DDR and peace processes in South Sudan, interviews represent a fitting research method. The next sub-chapters describe the interview types used for this thesis.

Structured interviews

Structured or standardised interviews determine formulation and sequence of the questions. They are similar to survey interviews and particularly useful when more than one person conducts the interviews for better comparability of replies (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 68). I chose this data collection method for the interviews in the field (see Table 4), for which I had designed a questionnaire. My interview survey consisted of simple questions of which I thought of as sufficient with regards to my research questions, clearly understandable for the interviewees and comparable in later analysis. These considerations were based on the setting; multiple interviewers (two) and interviewees with little education. Moreover, I assumed that simple wording would allow for better translations of the questions.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-standardised interviews are "more or less structured", according to Lune and Berg (2017, p. 68) and follow a general interview schedule. As such, this research method allows for variation of question-wording, -order and spontaneous follow-up questions (Bryman, 2012, p. 212). Semi-structured interviews fit if research questions can be answered by understanding how interviewees interpret relevant issues (Ibid, p. 471). I used the semi-standardised approach for the expert interviews (see Table 5) to be able to reorder, add or skip questions from the interview schedule according to the interviewee's field of expertise. Furthermore, I did not anticipate all subjects to find equal meaning in my questions due to their diverse backgrounds. Semi-structured interviews allow for an explanation of concepts and definitions, which I assumed to be helpful given my study topic. Moreover, I pictured that unexpected directions could emerge during the interviews such as anecdotes about fieldwork and wanted to be able to follow side-tracks. I intended to let interviewees lead the conversation to a certain degree because of their experience in the research topic. As expert interviews took place before and after the field survey was conducted, I aimed to receive information useful to design the survey and to better understand statements from the interviewed women war veterans.

Telephone- Web-and E-mail-based interviews

I chose to conduct the expert interviews remotely via online chatrooms, e-mail correspondences and telephone conversations due to the scattered geographical locations of the interviewees (see Table 6). The characteristics of telephone- web- and e-mail-based interviews are outlined by Berg and Lune (2017): All three interview types can take place synchronously or asynchronously. Chatroom or telephone interviews are an exchange of questions and answers in real time. They allow reacting to a response by asking follow-up questions or changing the direction. Video cameras enable experiences similar to face-to-face interaction (Ibid, pp. 78-80). The use of chatrooms with video turned out to be particularly suitable for my expert interviews given their semi-structured nature. Thus, observing nonverbal cues was a helpful guide for the direction of the conversations and timing to pose probing questions. However, so-called "e-interviews" who are asynchronous conversations have other advantages, as the interviewee is not committed to respond swiftly which is beneficial for subjects with a busy schedule (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 80). I experienced in two cases that e-mails were the most convenient medium of exchange mainly due to different time zones and new challenges caused by Covid-19 such as the home-schooling of kids simultaneously to home office obligations.

3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis consists of management, analysis and interpretation of generated data, according to Bryman (2012, p. 14). In this paragraph, I describe briefly how I have analysed my data. I followed instructions from Lune and Berg (2017, p. 184): I transformed gathered data into text by transcribing the interviews, developed codes, which later turned into themes, sorted the materials accordingly, identified patterns, examined them isolated from each other – also in terms of existing theories, and establish a small set of generalisations. I used thematic content analysis for the interview transcripts to interpret collected data, which is one of the most common ways of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2012, p. 587). At the beginning of the coding and analysis process, I assigned case numbers to the transcripts of interviews conducted with experts (I-VIII), and those conducted in the field (1-10). I decided to use my research questions as main coding categories and generated sub-themes from interview questions. I colour coded each identified category and sub-category in the transcripts. Quotes which fitted into several themes were multicoloured. I organised them into new documents – one document for each category, which Bryman calls "in the past, cutting and pasting in the literal sense of using scissors and paste" (2012, p. 577). However, I sorted the data in digital documents. I looked through the colour-coded content for similarities and differences, thereby trying to generalise similar responses and contrast opposing ones. Throughout this process, I was able to reduce the data to see themes and patterns (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 41). Moreover, secondary data helped me to make sense of the generated primary data.

3.4 Quality assessment: Trustworthiness

The quality of research must be assessable and for this purpose, natural science research uses the concepts validity and reliability. Since qualitative research in social sciences is significantly different from studies in natural science, researchers such as Bryman suggest a different concept for quality-check, called trustworthiness. Trustworthiness consists of four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (2016, pp. 384-386). Below, I will explain and use the criteria to measure the quality of my study.

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility assesses, parallel to internal validity in natural sciences, how feasible it seems that the researcher came to the formulated conclusion (Bryman, 2016, pp. 384-386). In other words, I asked myself if the reader would be able to understand my analysis. When my research found factors which seemed to hamper or facilitate the DDR participation of South Sudanese women war veterans, they were mentioned by some of the women themselves, WPS experts as well as

literature. The same applies to my findings concerning acknowledgments of societal contributions by female war veterans in South Sudan. Data collected to explore the participation of women war veterans in South Sudanese peace processes were triangulated with statements made by the two interview groups as well as data from secondary sources. Thus, my analysis and conclusion should make sense for the reader; therefore my thesis fulfils the trustworthiness-criteria of credibility.

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability, similar to external validity, means that the context of the findings should be interchangeable. This does not mean that findings have to be generalisable (Bryman, 2016, pp. 384-386). I studied the case of South Sudanese female war veterans, which mostly refers to the context of the SPLA army. However, some of my findings can be transferred to other contexts, such as women fighters in regional OAGs. Moreover, by applying Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT), certain arguments I made cover aspects related to Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and gendered peacebuilding. Hence, my thesis findings appear to be transferable on the trustworthiness scale.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability replaces the criteria of reliability from natural sciences and checks if it is possible to replicate the research. It requires tracking and logging of stages throughout the study (Bryman, 2016, pp. 384-386). I used a research log throughout the entire research, which did not only help me to keep an overview and organise my work but also made the process transparent. Thus, my thesis checks the dependability criteria when assessing its trustworthiness.

3.4.4 Confirmability

Confirmability requires the researcher to be transparent about possible biases that might have impacted the study. The criteria are similar to objectivity but accept that researchers cannot be fully objective in their work. To fulfil confirmability, all actions throughout the research process should be taken in good faith (Bryman, 2016, pp. 384-386). I applied FPC theory to analyse my findings. Since I identify as a feminist, there is a risk that the discussion supports feminist ideas disproportionately. However, I also criticise some points raised by feminists in an effort to balance my bias out. This being said, I conducted my research in good faith in order to meet the criteria required for good research quality within the qualitative approach.

3.5 Ethical considerations

There are rules, regulations and norms to guarantee that researchers take ethical considerations during the entire study regardless the sensitivity of the research topic. One rule is that ideas are property. Hence, the use of certain concepts or information requires adequate citation. Furthermore, credits make a study more transparent and enable the reader to assess the quality of information and statements (Bryman, 2016). Thus, wherever I included direct or indirect quotes, I gave credit to secondary sources to the best of my knowledge, ability and belief. Information generated from interviews, however, was anonymised and each transcript was assigned a case number. Research ethics require special precautions when it comes to interviews. Bryman (2016, p. 125) defined the following considerations as: "1. Whether there is harm to participants; 2. Whether there is a lack of informed consent; 3. Whether there is an invasion of privacy; 4. Whether deception is involved". In the next sub-chapters, I will explain these aspects and test my study accordingly.

Do no harm – this concept is self-explanatory; researchers should anticipate if their study might threaten their study subjects' well-being and act in a way that undermines this risk (Ibid). For the expert interviews, I was certain to not impact my interviewees negatively, since they are used to being vocal on issues related to WPS. Thus, group B had experience in giving interviews and was aware of potential sensitive topics within their field of expertise and. Concerning subjects from group A, I prevented my study from being harmful by including a confidentiality requirement in the assignment agreement with my field assistant. By signing the form, my field assistant and any potential interpreters obligated themselves to maintain about personal matters with respect to the interviewees which they became aware of because of the assignment. Further considerations which I took are explained below.

Informed consent is defined by Lune and Berg as "knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice, free from any element of fraud, deceit, duress, or similar unfair inducement or manipulation" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 46). I used "implied consent" for my interviews, which applies when the nature of the research is explained at the beginning of the interview and subjects give their consent by participating after having understood the purpose, potential risks and benefits of the study (Ibid). I instructed my field assistant to inform survey participants about the background of the research prior to participating. This requirement is further addressed in the miscellaneous clause of the signed assignment agreement. By agreeing to this clause, the field assistant and potential interpreters obligate themselves to comply with instructions that the contract owner has made. Like my field assistant, I also

explained my research when conducting interviews remotely with experts. I asked subjects if they still want to participate after they have understood the information and audio-recorded the conversation. Hence, I am confident that my thesis meets the requirements for consent.

Another ethical consideration to be made by researchers is to exclude the invasion of interviewees' privacy (Bryman, 2016, p. 125). I respected the privacy of the research subjects by scheduling the expert interviews according to their convenience, after I had eliminated potential risks for the respondents, explained my research and received their consent. For the survey in the field, I can refer again to the briefing I gave to the field assistant and the assignment agreement. Thus, interviews for this thesis were not intrusive.

The final ethical interview consideration is to make sure interviewees have understood the research purpose and how their information will be used, as already mentioned, and that the participation is voluntary (Ibid). I explained thoroughly the nature of my study, thus, I did not deceive interviewees by giving misleading information. The same applies to the field assistant, who used a translator for this purpose.

3.6 Limitations & Reflection

To sum up the chapter about my methodological framework, I will point out limitations of my study. In earlier sections, I already discussed technical limitations emerging from the research design. The most important points made were that some interviews did not provide opportunity for observation, were based on a relatively small sample size and nonprobability sampling which do not allow for generalisations.

Additional limitations which emerged during the process were connected to the theme and time of my research. As mentioned in the problem statement, South Sudanese women rarely received any acknowledgment for their contributions during the armed conflict, which manifests in neglected documentation. Hence, secondary data on this topic is limited which complicated the research. Another restraining factor linked to the thesis topic was the situation in South Sudan, where pockets of conflict remained and peace was still fragile. Conducting field research in the country directly was thus not possible due to safety regulations by the university. Instead, I had planned a research trip to Northern Uganda to engage with the South Sudanese diaspora. The core of this thesis was supposed to be fieldwork in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, where I intended to interview women from South Sudan about their conflict experiences, their activities in communal peacebuilding and their participation in the UN's DDR programme. However, during the preparations for this research trip, the global pandemic Covid-19 broke out and travel

restrictions were put in place. The same rules applied to most foreign researchers and aid workers who were suddenly prevented from traveling to the region, while some of them were sent home.

As a response to the cancelled field work in Northern Uganda, I reorganised the methodology and conducted desk-research instead. I collected over fifty relevant contact details of organisations and individuals and systematically contacted them in order to request expert interviews. This process turned out to be more difficult than expected as locals or internationals who stayed in South Sudan were overstretched by responding to challenges imposed by Covid-19 and understandably could not accommodate interviews. As a result, I did not manage to talk with experts within the SPLA, the South Sudanese government or the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). In the meantime, humanitarians, scholars and activists who worked remotely did not twiddle their thumbs. They faced new challenges with strict lockdowns in place and had to juggle home office next to home-schooling of their children. The increased workload of potential research subjects limited their capacities to find time for interviews. Due to lacking responses, fewer interviews than planned could be conducted in the given timeframe.

Nevertheless, sufficient data could be collected in the end, mainly due to the support of a field assistant on the ground. One of the academics I had contacted for an expert interview connected me with her former research partner in Uganda. I came to an agreement with the field assistant and a contract was set up. The field assistant organised ten interviews with South Sudanese women in the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement who had participated in the DDR programme before conflict in their home country forced them to flee. I prepared the field research in form of an interview guide and briefings with the field assistant as well as several follow-ups. Outsourced research entails certain limitations such as the inability to lead unstructured and very open conversations, to observe the interviewees' reactions or to pose immediate follow-up questions, all of which this work was not exempted from. However, major inaccuracies could be prevented by designing a detailed interview guide which also consisted of open-ended questions where possible, explaining the research objectives to the field assistant in a digital briefing and finally discussing the collected data at a time when the field assistant still remembered details of the interview situations.

IV.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents the theory on which I draw for the analysis of my findings. I chose Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) to generate a critical discourse on the hegemonic narrative of women's experiences in conflict. Thereby, I examine common warfare and peacebuilding practices through the gender lens. FPCT is a hybrid study, inspired by multiple disciplines (Weber, 2006). The most influential disciplines, feminism, conflict resolution[9] and peace studies, emerged in the 1960's to explore alternative ways for social and political analysis (Sharoni, 1994). I have explained conflict resolution and peace studies peripherally since these fields serve as keystones for peacebuilding (see 2.3). Thus, the next paragraph will touch briefly upon feminism in relation to peace studies before this chapter goes over to describe FPCT.

As a feminist theory, FPCT questions norms and by doing so, is grounded in women's epistemology (Weber, 2006). Feminist scholars constructed peaceful utopias by studying how to achieve peace within the fields of politics, power and security (Boulding, 1977; Carroll, 1972; Chenoy, 2005; Manchanda, 2001a). They apply the gender lens when analysing public discourses and criticising militarism, patriarchy and war. Feminism makes the different conflict experiences of people with all genders and their participation in peacebuilding to the core principle of peace studies (Bouta, 2005; El Bushra, 2003), without necessarily linking women unnuanced to peace. Because of its capacity to identify with groups at society's margins and suppressed by patriarchy, feminism is a valuable ideology for peacebuilding (Boulding, 1977).

4.1 Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT)

Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory is a focused approach of feminist theory. It includes historical reports of women in warfare, analysis of gendered upbringing of children, manuscripts by women in African liberation movements as well as critique of western feminism by women from the working class, Black and queer scholars. FPCT discusses how women's experiences are excluded in public discourses (Weber, 2006). The discipline can thus be seen as an effort to bring the unique perspectives of women on conflict and peace into the conflict resolution scholarship and far beyond (Sharoni, 1994; Weber, 2006). Hence, ideas of the field can help to answer two of my research questions; how contributions for combat or peace made by female war veterans have been acknowledged in South Sudan, and which factors hampered or facilitated a meaningful participation of them in the country's peace processes.

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[9] The aim of peacebuilding was to foster local capacities for conflict management and resolution (Galtung, 1976).

4.1.1 Patriarchy & Structural violence

FPCT scholars argue that structural violence is an integral part of the patriarchal system and its different forms such as domestic, gendered-based as well as state and inter-state violence interlinked (Weber, 2006). Socialisation would perpetuate this violence, which would begin no earlier than in children's upbringing. Boys learn how to be competitive in games which reproduce male aggression, while girls are taught to be the compassionate "second sex", argues Brock-Utne (1989). In that way, social learning produces obedient women and dominant men. The notion of having power over someone form systems entailing structural violence such as patriarchy, according to Carroll (1972) and Tickner (1992). Moreover, John (2006) claims that militarism is "woven into the very fabric of maleness", deeply rooted in sexism, and embodied patriarchy. As long as current structures prevail, women continue to be threatened by violence, thus, their conflict experiences will remain out of proportion to those of men, according to FPCT.

Indeed, in countries torn by conflict, women and children are the ones paying the highest price – directly and indirectly. They are disproportionately affected when social expenditures are being cut for the sake of financing weapons (Sivard, 1987-1988). Hudson (2012) speaks of a "feminisation of poverty" in the Global South and deteriorating living conditions for members of female-headed households, created by armed conflicts. If one follows the purchased arms until they are used in a battle, it becomes clear that women are often the first ones to feel the brunt of violence. Soldiers from the opposing warring party sexually abuse the female body to humiliate their enemies (Saigol, 2016). Meredeth Turshen (2001) writes that rape is used as a weapon in war to intimidate women but also for economic purposes to systematically strip them of their labour force, possessions and access to assets such as land. FPCT claims that violence continues from the domestic sphere to the battlefield. The theory aims to shed light on these experiences without victimising women (Weber, 2006).

4.1.2 Binary images & Gender roles

The fact that women are often more vulnerable in conflict scenarios does not mean their only role is that of the passive war victim. On the contrary, the military depends on female combatants and women in supportive (John, 2006). Although female participation in war is common (see 2.2.1), it tends to be excluded in northern perceptions and narratives about conflict. Warfare is continuously a "male concern" and fighting women are viewed as an exception (Barth, 2002; Byrne, 1996; Farr, 2002). Despite the fact that female fighters risk their lives in conflict, honour and bravery tend to be seen as masculine qualities, claims Hudson (2012). John (2006) argues that the roles of women remain unacknowledged for the military has

to maintain its masculine image. The discipline of FPCT traces this phenomenon back to binary images of life-taking masculinity and lifegiving femininity which determine gender roles. This dichotomy is especially popular in wartime (Ferris, 1993). According to Sharon Elaine Hutchinson and Jok (2002), this denial emerged out of cultural views that women are "less complete human beings" and glorify "the raw masculine power of guns".

Moreover, FPCT scholars claim that western actors including feminists and peacebuilding practitioners often reproduce unequal power relations. Liberal feminists from societies in the Global North would tend to portray women from the Global South as inferior and in need of their protection. Women from developing countries would regularly be presented as passive victims coming from a backward community. Scholars within FPCT claim that liberal feminism is in particular blind to gendered power distributions that existed before the violent conflict (Ayiera, 2010; Hudson, 2012). Critics argue that the liberal peacebuilding approach tends to equal "more women" with "more peace" and as a result has forced gender awareness into the sector without truly reforming practices (Hudson, 2012; Whitworth, 2004). FPCT, on the other hand, highlights the multiple roles and images of women in conflict, according to Weber (2006).

4.1.3 Gender-mainstreaming & Sexism

In recent years, attempts to gender-mainstream military and security have been made to present the institutions in a more diverse, inclusive and gender-equal light. Following the logic of FPCT, this does not make them automatically more democratic, accountable or peaceful (Hudson, 2012; Simić, 2010). Increasing the number of women in the military would neither tackle the root causes of institutionalised sexism and violent masculinity nor would it lead to inclusive and peaceful societies (Benschop & Verloo, 2006; Hudson, 2012). Manchanda (2001b) argues that women who hold higher positions in military and security, would tend to do so for propaganda purposes. Hudson (2012) adds that these women often feel pressured to "out-male" their colleagues in behaviour to earn respect. However, if women begin to question authorities, rules or regulations, they are dismissed (Bastick, 2008; Hudson, 2012). FPCT thus argues that gender mainstreaming intentions would fail as it does not question constructed masculinity and femininity – concepts which determine societal practices and norms.

4.1.4 Neoliberal peacebuilding & The state

Some scholars within the field of FPCT consider militarised masculinity within armies as the keystone for building a nation-state and reassuring national identity (Weber, 2006). Peacebuilding is about state-building, thereby committing itself to the free market and neoliberal governance (see 2.3). Hence, neoliberal peacebuilding would secure a state formed by violent

patriarchal parameters, according to FPCT scholars. Moolakkattu Stephen John (2006) writes that post-colonial feminists accuse the neoliberal state for protecting patriarchy and racism. Consequently, they – as part of FPCT – oppose the notion of securing states. FPCT views the state as an abstraction of patriarchy, thus its security would perpetuate the constant threat to women. Neoliberal peacebuilding cannot create inclusive peace as long as its security object is the patriarchal state (John, 2006).

4.1.5 Nature & Nurture

The neoliberal peacebuilding agenda is dictated by a "realist masculine worldview", according to John (2006). This ideology perpetuates worldwide leading structures built on patriarchal state-centrism and excludes actors with a different understanding. The realist masculine worldview follows an abstract way of thinking, said to be preferred by men in order to separate themselves from their environment (John, 2006). Ruddick (1995) claims that women on the other hand see themselves as linked to others. Furthermore, some feminist scholars and practitioners argue that women are natural peacebuilder because "maternal thinking" makes women prioritise life and growth (Ruddick, 1995).

The discipline of FPCT is divided between supporters of "essentialist female nature" and "construction-based understanding of gender" (Weber, 2006). While essentialists argue that women are natural peacemakers, constructionists say that this image perpetuates gender roles in which women are responsible for reproduction, and in conflict scenarios presented as passive victims. Hudson (2012) states that categorising women into stereotypical roles would deny the fact that they are political agents (Hudson, 2012). It is the system that produces male warriors who threaten female security, that presented women as "natural peacemakers" (John, 2006). Moreover, bringing women with their "natural skillset" to peacebuilding would neither mean they will be included in actual decision-making processes nor that their needs will be met (Hudson, 2012). Thus, contemporary FPCT scholars deconstructed the notion of women as "peaceful mother-figures" (Weber, 2006).

4.1.6 Reappraisal of Peace & Conflict

As already mentioned, the silencing of women's conflict and peace experiences and knowledge is one of FPCT's main concerns (Weber, 2006). Studies by Coulter et al. (2008) suggest that when female fighters do not have a place within the hegemonic African war images, the hardship they face during and after the combat continues to be invisible or misunderstood by the rest of the world. Mackenzie (2012) argues that women soldiers are suddenly called war supporters, peace makers, wives or mothers in order to create an image of "weak femininity". At

the same time, the stereotype of the brave male fighter is promoted to re-establish traditional gender roles. As a result, not enough women take part in important decision-making processes concerning a new formation of their post-war society. Komujuni (December 2013) suggests that this social construction will most likely continue during peacetime in form of unequal representation in influential positions, such as post-war programmes like DDR. John (2006) goes even further by arguing that DDR measures like disarmament or arms control would not be sufficient to eliminate violent militarism in a patriarchal state. Following FPCT's logic, "peace and patriarchy are antithetical", thus, peacebuilding would never be truly gendered nor sustainable for that matter as long as patriarchy stays in place. Feminist peace and conflict theory can therefore be understood as an effort to reappraise peace and conflict.

I will apply concepts of FPCT on my findings in order to answer my research questions. Thereby, I will examine how different factors influencing female participation and representation in a patriarchal conflict-affected society are reflected in my results. This will enable me to assess the extent to which the interviewed female war veterans felt they could participate in combat and peace efforts, their contributions were acknowledged and their roles recognised.

V. THE CASE

This chapter builds on the background-section and serves as preparation for the findings. It zooms in to explore the case of South Sudanese female veterans in the DDR programme, peace processes and beyond.

5.1 Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in South Sudan

The DDR programme in North and Southern Sudan was a measure to downsize, rationalise and standardise military forces in order to form a national army and to securitise the region (Knight, 2008). Its main objective was to build an "environment for human security and provide support to post-peace agreement and social stabilisation [...]" (Haile & Bara, 2013). As a security measure, DDR was stipulated in the CPA (see 2.1.3). CPA placed DDR as a "comprehensive process of national reconciliation and healing [...] as part of the peace and confidence building" (GoS, 2005; Munive, 2014).

A comprehensive, multidimensional and transformative process such as DDR needs appropriate institutions and a functioning civil society for its implementation. For this purpose, the CPA mandated the establishment of new bodies, and put a trial programme in place. The Interim DDR Programme (IDDRP) was entrusted with information-gathering, realising pilot projects (Haile & Bara, 2013) and building capacities within civil society and institutions. One such institution was the National Council for DDR Co-ordination (NCDDRC) – established to formulate policies as well as to coordinate, oversee and review the DDR process. The design, implementation and management of the programme was divided between the North Sudan DDR Commission (NSDDRC) and the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) (Knight, 2008; Munive, 2014). Coordination was important because not only were the main conflict parties SAF and SPLA – which were somewhat representing the "two Sudans" – involved in the DDR process, but also multiple other stakeholders.

The DDR process was supposed to consist of different phases (Lamb, Alusala, Mthembu-Salter, & Gasana, 2012). DDR phase I was planned to take place from 2005 to 2012 (Haile & Bara, 2013; Lamb & Stainer, 2018) while phase II was supposed to be rolled out at a later stage. However, the interim programme and with it a significant part of the first phase were never implemented while the second phase never gained significant momentum (Lamb et al., 2012; STHLM, 2010; Stone, 2011a). Instead, phase I had to be replaced by the multi-year Sudan DDR programme (SDDRP) in 2009 (Munive, 2014). The SDDRP was subsequently rolled out in eight

out of ten Southern states[10] (Haile & Bara, 2013). Even though DDR was implemented with a four year delay – in 2009 instead of 2005 – disarmament and demobilisation happened on the ground during preceding years.

5.1.1 Disarmament and demobilisation in South Sudan

Before the official DDR programme was rolled out, the SPLA forcefully disarmed militias and civilians in several attempts during the CPA-period. Forceful disarmament lead to violations of human rights resulting in over a thousand casualties in the region[11] (Brewer, 2010; Skinner, 2012). Despite having neglected the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) mandate to assist in voluntary disarmament, the SPLA's actions were never openly criticised out of concerns about the fragile peace deal (Lamb & Stainer, 2018; Young, 2007). The official DDR programme did not start until 2009, and then focused on demobilising "non-essentials" within armed groups (Munive, 2014). Members of forces which were not perceived essential were also labelled as "special needs groups" (SNGs) and consisted of so-called Women Associated With Armed Forces (WAAF) (see 5.2.1), female, elderly or disabled ex-combatants as well as children associated with armed forces and child soldiers (Knight, 2008). Both conflict parties had originally agreed to target 180,000 combatants – 90,000 each – in two phases (Breitung, Paes, & Vondervoort, 2016). However, only 12,525 people had been demobilised by late 2011 and subsequently put in reintegration programmes. More than half of those were women (Haile & Bara, 2013; Lamb & Stainer, 2018) and not all candidates were actually eligible for the programme (STHLM, 2010). Moreover, the time gap between demobilisation and reintegration complicated the access, as many of the eligible ex-combatants moved in the meantime. Furthermore, there was no stategical communication in place to inform about services and sensitise communities (Haile & Bara, 2013).

5.1.2 Reintegration in South Sudan

The first reintegration training as part of DDR in southern Sudan took place from June to December 2009. Ex-combatants were invited for a registration day, where their literacy, numeracy and language skills were tested. Their special needs were assessed and they were informed about the toolkits they would receive after graduation. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and partners counselled the participants about their choice of activities and location before they signed an agreement. Within three months, ex-combatants were about to

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[10] The SDDRP was rolled out in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Lakes, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei and Warrap (Haile & Bara, 2013).

[11] In the early CPA-period of 2005 and 2006, the SPLA confiscated about 3,000 firearms, which resulted in deadly clashes in Jonglei leaving more than 1,600 people died (Brewer, 2010; Skinner, 2012; Young, 2007).

start the training. Expanses related to their participation such as transportation expenditures were reimbursed (Munive, 2014). The reintegration activities consisted of different technical trainings such as agriculture and livestock, small business, vocational training and adult education. Life skills training was also part of the programme, like prevention of malaria and sexually transmitted infections, healthy nutrition, child care, hygiene and sanitation as well as peacebuilding and conflict management (Haile & Bara, 2013). The latter is particularly important for this thesis which examines the participation of female DDR absolvents in peace processes.[12] [13]

Overall, DDR's reintegration component generated some employment and facilitated the reintegration of multiple ex-combatants and "SNG"-beneficiaries in South Sudan. Scholars argue that participants found jobs with the state or in the private sector, as drivers or in their own micro-enterprises. The use of ox ploughs – one of the distributed toolkits – increased agricultural harvest and improved livelihoods. Some scholars claim that if ex-combatants were not successful in finding employment in South Sudan, it was due to limited economic possibilities, no access to land or weak capacities of host communities, rather than shortcomings by the DDR programme. As most participants already lived within their communities and ex-combatants were celebrated as liberators, social reintegration on the local level was not a big issue (Haile & Bara, 2013).

5.1.3 General critique of DDR in South Sudan

However, several aspects of the DDR programme in South Sudan are criticised, such as practicalities in the entrance and training process. Consultations held when ex-combatants entered the programme faced a severe lack of capacities, as caseworkers processed up to 100 ex-combatants per day. In addition, the offered training activities are criticised, first, for not facilitating the learning of multiple skill sets, necessary for participants to become economically sustainable and resilient (Haile & Bara, 2013). Second, for neglecting the experiences and capabilities of the participants, which was further highly gendered, according to Munive (2014). To give an example, female trainees could choose to learn tailoring, food processing or driving in one regional DDR programme, although they had already knowledge in making flour and pastes, cutting grass and bamboo, producing charcoal and selling these products at the market. Dyan Mazurana (2004) identified additional skills of female war veterans; in management,

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[12] Of the demobilised people in South Sudan, 87 percent took part in reintegration trainings, 86 percent received kits, 85 percent participated in a first follow up, and 69 percent in a second follow up (Haile & Bara, 2013).
[13] In total, economic reintegration costed USD 1,750 of which Southern Sudan was supposed to pay USD 250 but never did. The costs were financed by the international community (STHLM, 2010).

decision-making, negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution, mobilisation, intelligence and medical work. These activities can be relevant in a post-conflict society (Coulter et al., 2008; Mazurana, 2004). However, already existing skills were not taken into account by DDR. Third, DDR vocational training was not as comprehensive as similar training in peace times. Ex-combatants entered with unrealistic expectations (Munive, 2014) and were disappointed (Haile & Bara, 2013), which could have been avoided with a better communication strategy.

Moreover, DDR is criticised for neglecting economic realities on the ground due to its neoliberal ideology. The DDR concept is based on the idea that economic reintegration should take place within a free market economy, thus promotes entrepreneurship, self-employment and a neoliberal state. Critics claim that it concentrates disproportionately on economic instead of social reintegration and ignores gender-based, ethnic and geographic barriers, often prevalent in low-income, agrarian economies, such as South Sudan. To give one example, the programme planners overlooked that many South Sudanese migrate to bigger cities to find employment. As a result, female DDR trainees faced too much competition from second-hand stalls in Torit and Juba for their new tailoring businesses to be sustainable (Munive, 2014).

Most critics agree that the SPLA lacked political will to implement DDR (Haile & Bara, 2013), because they did not want to disarm their troops (Munive, 2014). The SPLA interpreted the post-CPA period as a ceasefire rather than the beginning of sustainable peace (Rands, 2010) and feared renewed violence and a destabilisation of their armed forces (Johnson, 2014; Young, 2007). Conflict can generate income (Collier, 1999) and a sense of belonging, especially for young men willing to fight, or without financial alternatives (ILO, 2010; Lamb et al., 2012). Jobs can replace a "loss of identity [...] associated with the dissolution of [...] militias and the income lost" (WorldBank, 2012). South Sudan, however, did not have these jobs and the DDR is criticised for not having facilitated their creation (McMullin, 2013). As a result, the SPLA had grown instead of decreased – by 30 per cent from 2009 to 2013 (De Waal, 2014; Lamb & Stainer, 2018).

DDR planners in South Sudan are said to have neglected the essential role national ownership plays in the programme implementation which resulted in mismanagement. Before the independence of South Sudan, the SSDDRC only had a bystander role (Lamb & Stainer, 2018), while leadership and coordination of the DDR programme was centralised in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan (Haile & Bara, 2013). This side-lining created a political climate dominated by tensions and mistrust between DDR officials in Khartoum and Juba as well as a South Sudanese DDR commission without expertise (Breitung et al., 2016).

After the South Sudanese independence on 9 July 2011, UNMIS was reorganised into two operations. The new part was named UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). While the remaining Sudanese UNMIS took the lead in disarmament and demobilisation, the UNDP, together with the newly established UNMISS and SSDDRC, managed the reintegration process[14]. However, the mandates of both missions were too broad according to critics (Bellamy, Williams, & Griffin, 2010; UNDPKO, 2009), and the vast number of stakeholders[15] did not cooperate well. On the other hand, however, experts claim that it was the DDR's narrow focus which made it doomed to fail. Strengthening security by collecting arms was prioritised over long-term reconciliation and healing of the nation (Knight, 2008).

Reforms in the management of DDR improved the transparency of the operation but could not prevent a deteriorating regional security (Øystein H. Rolandsen, 2015). Following the results of assessments by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2009-2012) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (2009-2012), DDR did not significantly restore infrastructure, revive the economy or facilitate sustainable peace in the region (Haile & Bara, 2013). The civil war in Darfur was still raging when in December 2013, another violent conflict broke out in South Sudan (Øystein H. Rolandsen, 2015). The third civil war (Johnson, 2014), complications with logistics, "political wrangling over ownership" and insufficient funding hindered DDR phase II from gaining momentum (Lamb & Stainer, 2018).

Despite the fact that the mission in South Sudan was already criticised for being inefficient and irrelevant at times when peace was still kept, its budget increased in the recent past. In 2014, the UNSC assigned more UNMISS troops (UNSC, 2014). Peacekeeping in the "two Sudans" made up a third of all expenditures for global peacekeeping in some years and is by far the most expensive peace intervention of the past decade[16] (Øystein H. Rolandsen, 2015).

South Sudanese are still facing high levels of insecurity, in particular in form of raids in rural areas. For purposes of protection, firearm possession remains widespread (Skinner, 2012). But without disarmament, there is no demobilisation of armed groups. Since mainly female, elderly or ex-combatants with disabilities were demobilised, DDR did not lead to the expected reduction

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[14] Reintegration in South Sudan was funded with USD 50,678,958 (Nichols, 2011) by governments of the UK, Canada, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Japan (Haile & Bara, 2013; Lamb & Stainer, 2018).
[15] Implementing partners were organisations including the International Organisation of Migration (IOM), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (Lamb & Stainer, 2018).
[16] UNMISS and UNMIS operations costed about USD 20 billion between 2004-13 (Øystein H. Rolandsen, 2015).

of armed groups. Moreover, critics claim that so-called WAAF and proxies would have benefited more if DDR had addressed their specific needs separately (Haile & Bara, 2013).

5.2 South Sudanese women in the DDR programme

We know now that DDR in South Sudan did not exclude women as programmes in other countries did, on the contrary, it prioritised them as one of the groups to receive demobilisation benefits first. Thus, the number of participants with special needs was fairly high. At the early stage of the programme, half of all DDR-participants were women. The roll-out was described as gender-sensitive, with female staff assessing the needs of eligible women entering the programme, and with facilities such as separate toilets and childcare services in place. All in all, the package was said to be tailored towards women's needs (Stone, 2011b).

Several commitments pushed through by the UN backed a DDR programme in South Sudan which was open towards women. UNMIS was established through the Resolution 1590 in 2005 to support the formation of DDR "with particular attention to the special needs of women and child combatants, and its implementation through voluntary disarmament and weapons collection and destruction; to focus on children and women combatants" (UNSC, 2005). The CPA committed to a "gender-sensitive DDR" and one of its implementation tools, the IDDRP, was said to be better formulated in terms of gender equality than its predecessors, with the promise to "include equitable involvement of women and men at all levels of the planning and implementation process" (Haile & Bara, 2013). The South Sudanese DDR commission (SSDDRC) also considered gender as important factor in the programme: "The programme considers women's special status in all stages of planning and implementation. It will be gender sensitive and satisfy the special treatment that is demanded for women in planning and implementation" (Komujuni, December 2013). The SSDDRC was the chosen body to be responsible for addressing issues of women veterans (GoSS, 2015).

5.2.1 WAAF – An abstract term with concrete consequences

Women Associated With Armed Forces (WAAF) is one of the categories established by the UN to determine female DDR-candidates in South Sudan. Female non-combatants who had support roles during the war included as "WAAF" in the programme. The first category, however, were ex-combatants, with a SPLA- or SAF-membership certified by a commander. Beneficiaries belonging to the first category received more privileges than WAAF individuals, such as remaining on the payroll for an additional year (Munive, 2013; Nichols, 2011). This categorisation should facilitate a programme more tailored to individual needs and avoid an

inflation of DDR. One challenge, however, was that not all former combatants were officially recruited (Komujuni, December 2013). This made it hard to determine the roles they had played during the conflict – something crucial for the success of their DDR participation (Munive, 2013; Nichols, 2011).

A clear understanding of what being a combatant in South Sudan entails, however, was lacking. Policy documents on DDR between 2005 and 2011 did not define the term (Komujuni, December 2013). According to the definition by the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) guidelines, South Sudanese women would qualify as former combatants, as some of them participated as SPLA-members in military activities (see 2.2.2). To make the confusion complete, many women were in fact enrolled as ex-combatants in the DDR programme – some despite having contributed with activities like carrying and cooking listed as criteria for identifying WAAF. As a result, DDR registered women ex-combatants who never fought and WAAF who did fight, granting them different benefits (Stone, 2011b).

Because South Sudanese women were well aware of the roles they had played, they call themselves soldiers. While the SPLA, and to some degree the international community, denied the contribution of women to the armed groups, women were proud that they had served (Stone, 2011b). The fuzziness of the terms ex-combatant and WAAF, however, created tensions about men's and women's roles and who qualifies for which DDR benefits. Especially women who joined the SPLA voluntarily and wanted to fight did not identify as part of an "SNG", which feeds the stereotype of feminine vulnerability (see 4.1). The WAAF-term was based on the assumption that all wives of SPLA-soldiers were supported by their husband, thus did not need DDR assistance (Komujuni, December 2013). Relationships, however, had changed during the conflict and some men had dismissed their wives in the aftermath. Nevertheless, many women were disqualified due to the false assumption that they had been taken care of by their husbands.

Like the women themselves, the SPLA also disagreed with the terminology WAAF, although they welcomed the side-effect of the term, namely that women were mostly excluded from the army. Moreover, the SPLA denied having ever had WAAF and women combatants at the front. This reaction comes from the connotation of a term which stands for women's experiences in warfare. In the South Sudanese context that means abductions, sexual violence, abuse and forced pregnancies. The SPLA did not want to be connected to these war crimes, hence disapproved the term WAAF denied having women on the frontline (Komujuni, December 2013; Stone, 2011b).

Perhaps the most obvious point against the terminology WAAF is that it refers to women's roles as "non-essential". With that regard, Mackenzie (2012) made a valid statement; "when men act as porters, cleaners, domestic help, or messengers during war, there is little debate about the extent to which they deserve the soldier title… While great effort is made by post-conflict policy makers to name women something other than soldiers, 'men involved with the military in support functions' are defined as soldiers, and not as 'men involved in armed groups or forces,' or as men directly associated with the war;' or as dependants of male or female combatants". While critics admit that it can be difficult to determine the roles individuals played during a long conflict (Komujuni, December 2013), South Sudanese women could have been at least heard out before a constructed category with major consequences is applied on them.

5.2.2 General critique on the South Sudanese DDR programme regarding women

The confusion over who did what during war, together with the general lack of acknowledgment of women's roles in warfare – embedded in the patriarchal kleptocracy of South Sudan and supported by the neoliberal DDR programme – twisted the image of South Sudanese women war veterans, writes Clémence Pinaud (2015). Since the DDR entitlement was dependent on the goodwill of commanders, a door opened up for despotism, as one female soldier explained: "[...] I saw many promotions. Captains, Second Lieutenants. [...] And these women were not with us there [...] they were not soldiers. Now somebody says 'yeah, my wife was there, put her a Captain [red. Promotion to captain].'" Moreover, Katiba Banat recruits were offered jobs in "noble institutions" and "commoners" wives at the Ministry of Wildlife (Pinaud, 2015). The majority of women war veterans, however, did not get on the SPLA-payroll after the ceasefire was signed. They were either (forcefully) demobilised or excluded from the DDR programme.

After the ceasefire was declared, not all women demobilised voluntarily, as the military was a rare opportunity to earn money. Armed factions, however, dismissed their female members and merged with the SPLA in early 2006. It came with little surprise that women – even when deployed to other sectors like police or prison – were displeased about this development (Stone, 2011b). When DDR is in favour of demobilising women first, while it encourages men at the same time to join the army, it reinforces the notion of "militarised masculinity" (see 4.1) which increases the "militarisation of the state [...] to further marginalise and threaten women in the post-war setting" (Komujuni, December 2013; O'Gorman, 2011).

On the other side were women who wanted to demobilise but faced barriers to enter the DDR programme, as they refrained from asking male commanders to be on the preregistration list (Aldehaib, 2010; Friederike Bubenzer & Stern, 2011). Some feared to lose their bride value as

even a suspicion that a woman has endured sexual abuse could bring shame over her entire family. Moreover, many South Sudanese women were in non-combat roles and assumed they would not be eligible for DDR (Stone, 2011b), while those who had joined military activities, were often not considered by chauvinistic commanders (F. Bubenzer & Lacey, 2013; Meredith Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998). All in all, the DDR programme distorted women's engagement during conflict with preregistration lists (Pinaud, 2015) and by targeting women mostly as dependents, victims or women associated with armed groups instead of former soldiers (Mackenzie, 2012).

Having gender clauses in the DDR programme plan did not prevent severe shortcomings with regards to gender equality along the way. According to Pamela Komujuni (December 2013), the UN never assessed gender-based needs among South Sudan's population and as a result, DDR lacked clear guidelines on gender integration. Komujuni found that SSDDRC's clause on gender and equality did not consider discrimination based on gender and sex as an issue of concern. Thus, there are no guidelines in place how to measure gender equality. Moreover, the IDDRP and CPA did not define gender, which translates in most documents with "women". Leaving men out when talking about gender issues is problematic, because "women's gendered roles in conflict and its aftermath are incomplete without [...] gendered roles of the men with whom they share and must rebuild their societies" (Komujuni, December 2013; Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2011).

Many of the challenges South Sudanese women face in connection with the DDR programme have already been mentioned, remaining ones are inadequate funding, lack of information, insecurity at DDR sites, obligations to children or other family members, poor logistics and timing, and the difficulty to trace quiet self-reintegration (Mackenzie, 2012; McKay, 2004; SmallArmsSurvey, 2008; Specht, 2006). In the end, women who were deprived of assisted reintegration, have no other choice than to self-reintegrate with unhealed wounds. Sometimes women live in the same community as their offender but stay silent out of fear of being expelled. Unlike their former male comrades who are now called soldiers, these women will most likely not become active and vocal as new political leaders, argues Komujuni (December 2013): "SC 1235 implementation didn't work [...] It is therefore unlikely that such women can become active players in the political, economic and social reconstruction and development of their communities. This hence defeats the aspirations of DDR programmes." Furthermore, women are usually excluded in the planning or implementing DDR (UNDDR, 2006).

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, findings from secondary sources and interviews with the two groups – female DDR participants from South Sudan and WPS experts – are presented, triangulated and discussed, by drawing on the theoretical framework FPCT.

6.1 DDR participation of women in South Sudan – Benefits and hindrances

In order to identify benefits and hindrances for women who participated in the South Sudanese DDR programme, I addressed issues of concern for female trainees which were described by secondary sources. Thus, interviewees from both groups were asked questions regarding information, registration, camp facilities, training and participants' lives after exiting the programme.

6.1.1 From information to registration

Most DDR graduates interviewed for this thesis, reported they were informed about the programme through the Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). SSDDRC staff asked soldiers at military camps whether they wanted to enrol (1). Other interviewees mentioned meetings within their brigades (7, 8, 10) and radio announcements (7, 10) as ways they heard about DDR. Since all interviewees from group A participated in the programme, the claim that women often lacked access to information about DDR (Mackenzie, 2012; McKay, 2004; SmallArmsSurvey, 2008; Specht, 2006) cannot be validated through this case study.

Academic sources stated that not all women signed up voluntarily for DDR (Komujuni, December 2013; Stone, 2011b). One expert (VII) explained the context of DDR registration: "[...] many people who would have liked to be on the SPLA payroll were instead enrolled into the DDR programme. They were like 'well at least it's something' (VII)." The statements of group A do not support the expert and the literature here in the sense that all but one women war veterans said they were asked if they wanted to join and then did so voluntarily. However, the word "voluntary" in this context would be relative, according to the same expert (VII), as livelihood opportunities were scarce (see 6.2.2).

Scholars mentioned entry barriers for women in the DDR registration, in form of preregistration lists (F. Bubenzer & Lacey, 2013; Komujuni, December 2013; Pinaud, 2015; Stone, 2011b; Meredith Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998). These claims, however, could not be verified by my field interviews.

By assessing literature I found that consultations with ex-combatants entering DDR were criticised (Haile & Bara, 2013). Indeed, only one of the three interviewees (4, 6, 7) who went through a needs and skills assessment was consulted concerning reintegration activities (4). Thus, findings from group A confirm what secondary data suggests, that DDR staff would in some cases consult participants insufficiently regarding the training opportunities.

6.1.2 Facilities

From reviewing literature, I found both claims that DDR in South Sudan was tailored towards women's needs and the opposite. This sub-chapter compares and contrasts them with primary data findings. Secondary data sources describe facilities at the training site as gender-sensitive with services offered such as separate toilets and childcare (Stone, 2011b). However, facilities and services were also criticised by scholars, arguing that security and childcare were not always provided (Komujuni, December 2013).

Two interviewees described the safety at DDR sites as moderate (8, 10) and one compared it to unsafe war times as "relatively safe" (4). However, one former trainee mentioned that women did not feel safe on toilets, thus, they often shared the toilet to feel less vulnerable (8). Hence, safety was an issue of concern by some interviewees from group A.

"Open defecation was common"

Female veterans said hygiene facilities were in bad conditions (1, 3, 8), with insufficient washrooms for women (10) and insecure water sources (3). Open defecation as a result was common according to one interviewee (1). However, half of the women described the hygiene facilities as moderate (2) simply because infrastructure was available at all (5, 6) with water tanks (4), gender separated facilities (4, 10), and because "men were learning" (7). One third replied that hygiene facilities were good (7, 9, 4). To the question whether healthcare facilities were provided, two replied that facilities were only accessible outside the site (3). One of the interviewees said that there were medical personnel available (2). Another woman, however, stated that these services were not good (1). Findings concerning hygiene and health facilities can be summarised in a way that they did not represent a point of strong critique but issues of concern for some interviewees.

"The crèche isn't how things are done in South Sudan"

Childcare and other reproductive work are listed by secondary sources as reasons why women did not join or left the DDR programme prematurely (Mackenzie, 2012; McKay, 2004; SmallArmsSurvey, 2008; Specht, 2006). Only one women veterans stated that childcare was

available – in the form of babysitters who took care of the children during lectures (6). Two said childcare was offered outside the camp (4, 5). According to one former DDR participant, however, some women dropped out of the programme due to lacking childcare options (1). One expert (VII) said that South Sudanese women would be expected to bear many children, which increases workload and responsibilities. As a result, women might not participate in a programme where they do not see immediate benefits but rather additional work. The expert (VII) further mentioned cultural norms as barriers when it comes to outsourcing childcare: "South Sudanese women would want to leave it [their child] with family members. The crèche isn't how things are done in South Sudan. Again, it was the DDR programme that came up with the idea that [...] it needs childcare facilities, when it doesn't really fit [...] how things are done there (VII)."

Hence, my interviews confirm either an absence of or culturally insensitive options for childcare services. With that regard, FPCT criticizes patriarchal gender attitudes which would hold women as solely responsible for reproduction (Hudson, 2012).

6.1.3 Training

DDR aims to give women new skills to be able to find work and receive a regular salary (Knight, 2008) (see 2.4.4). To find out more about the training, group A was asked how satisfied they were regarding activities they could choose from and other practicalities of the training.

DDR reintegration consisted of theoretical literacy and numeracy as well as practical vocational training. Eight out of the ten women who were interviewed about their DDR experiences had participated in practical and theoretical training. One interviewee said she could not take part in the practical nor complete the theoretical training because she had to attend ante natal care services (1). The female ex-soldiers mentioned that the following activities were offered: food processing (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8), tailoring (5, 7, 8, 9, 10), driving and agricultural skills (6, 7, 8), catering (8), breadmaking (3) or carpentry, mechanics and blacksmithing (7). According to a former regional DDR director, the programme in her region included additional activities such as hotel management, welding, and vegetable production (V & VI).

"Rushed through training activities"

Since South Sudanese women who come from a lower class are often illiterate, scholars argue that DDR participants struggled with obtaining literacy and numeracy skills (Brett, 2002; Stone, 2011b). This is also reflected in findings within group A. Hence, half of the women war veterans were less satisfied with the literacy and numeracy training because they had no prior education

(2, 3), not enough time (5, 10), or because it was not part of the programme at all (1). Moreover, the interviewees who were fairly satisfied with learned skills, reported they could build on knowledge they had from before (4, 6).

Contrary to discontent concerning the theoretical DDR training, eight interviewees within group A described the vocational training as satisfactory. In the DDR example mentioned by the former regional director from group B, all women graduated with certificates and received start up capitals (V & VI). However, one former trainee of group A stated that training equipment was insufficient (4) and another one claimed she did not receive the start-up kit (5). Two interviewees complained they were rushed through activities (9, 10), something reflected in secondary data, where quality of DDR training is said to be not comparable with training in peace time (Munive, 2014).

I argue that DDR should focus more on women's numeracy and literacy training as education seemed to be among the decisive factors for women to become active peacebuilders (see 6.3.2). The programme in its current form, however, rather perpetuates unequal power relations – something FPCT criticises on neoliberal peacebuilding (Ayiera, 2010; Hudson, 2012).

6.1.4 Life after DDR

Scholars criticise that DDR would promote neoliberal entrepreneurship and does not take the local economy enough into account (Munive, 2014). Moreover, FPCT argues that neoliberal peacebuilding overall would not foster peace for women as its security object is the patriarchal state (John, 2006). To examine these arguments, I asked interviewees about the post-DDR activities of participants. The former regional DDR director said that most of the women who completed the programme where she worked, started private businesses afterwards (V & VI). Some of the participants said they were self-employed (1, 3, 4, 10) after exiting the programme. Others reported they were engaged in income-generating activities. One third of the women, however, did not find employment after they had completed the DDR programme (5, 8, 9).

While the argument that DDR fails to adapt to the local business context, cannot be fully verified in my findings, one should take into account that no one from group A is gaining an income in South Sudan as these women ultimately had to flee from their country. Hence, I argue that DDR as peacebuilding tool has failed to create safety for these women.

"I'm doing something for myself"

However, the majority of the war veterans claimed that DDR had changed their lives for the better. For example, one participant is no longer a child soldier (2). Being officially freed from

the army and not having to obey a conscription was also the biggest benefit expressed by other former soldiers (3), next to having learned new skills to earn a living (3, 5, 10). One interviewee explained that by earning an income, she is doing something for herself (1). The programme did not make life much better, argued one participant, who could not find a job afterwards (8). Another interviewee explained that DDR did not change much in her life (9).

The responses within group A reflect findings from literature, namely that DDR beneficiaries want "more of the same" (Munive, 2014). The positive attitude by the interviewees can be explained in the words of one expert: "I would not say people were grateful but they appreciated to get something even though they were aware it was short-term. It was like a redundancy package (VII)."

"DDR was peace-meal"

Although most DDR participants described the impacts of the programme on their lives as positive, experts who contributed to this research are sceptical to the benefits the programme provided for South Sudanese women: "DDR was peace-meal. I didn't meet one person who saw the programme as a springboard for their new non-combatant life. People were more interested in the lunch and the materials than the training, because it didn't amount to much and the economy didn't exist for these people to start up new businesses (VII)."

"Not good daughters"

Other experts (V & VI) stated that many of the female DDR participants in South Sudan they had met, struggled during their reintegration and that the programme did not respond adequately (V & VI). Female participants would often suffer from the traumatic situations they went through while they were on the front. When they came back, some of them would not be welcome within their communities because of cultural values (V & VI). A different expert (III) agreed that due to the prevalent assumption that these women have engaged in sexual activities, they would probably be seen as promiscuous, unreliable, bad daughters or unfit to be wives. These presumptions would challenge their reintegration (III). Responses by group B correspond to secondary data, where it is argued that DDR tends to neglect reintegration of women, thus, their needs are often not met in conflict aftermath (Knight, 2008).

However, not enrolling to DDR because of "stigmatisation" as suggested by secondary data (Stone, 2011b; UNDDR, 2006) (see 5.2.2) cannot be supported with findings from group A. As one woman war veteran said, because of DDR, she is now able to sustain her family and as a

result gained respect (7). Another interviewee also stated that her family members were content about the support (6).

Furthermore, one expert (VII) criticised the DDR programme for focusing too much on stigmatisation and reintegration, as these were not big issues on the ground. The SPLA consisted of communities, and had women and children moving with them. In addition, people who went through DDR were not ashamed. On the contrary, DDR enrolment would "prove" that participants used to be part of the SPLA – the celebrated liberators (VII). Similar to this is the critique that DDR's focus in reintegrating women is too narrow. Scholars claim that women would need a broader recovery framework (Knight, 2008).

FPCT offers one possible explanation for the dominating stigmatisation-narrative in secondary as well as primary data from my expert interviews. FPCT states that liberal feminists would often portray women from the Global South as inferior, passive victims coming from a backward society (Ayiera, 2010; Hudson, 2012). I argue that these attributes feed the stigmatisation narrative.

6.1.5 Women who did not participate in DDR

Some interview questions to former DDR participants and WPS experts aimed to find out why some women did not register for the programme and consequences of the same. One interviewee thinks that some women were just used to not being supported, therefore only rely on themselves and not on services offered through DDR (10). Another possibility why some women stayed away from the programme was that their family or community prohibited them from joining (8). They had to take care of children and other family members instead (1, 10), something also mentioned by secondary data (Mackenzie, 2012; McKay, 2004; SmallArmsSurvey, 2008; Specht, 2006) and already discussed in chapter 6.1.2.

However, according to most war veterans, women mainly did not join DDR because they were hoping to receive a salary from the armed forces. Some of these women were promoted and are on a payroll today (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). One former soldier said the main distinction between her and women who did not enrol in the DDR programme, was that she only received money one time (6).

"DDR programme did more harm"

Scholars argue that the DDR concept deprived women from the opportunity of being on the payroll like many of their male comrades (Munive, 2013; Nichols, 2011). Primary data confirms this. As one expert phrased it: "The programme did more harm to female ex-combatants in

South Sudan, as women who could have been on the payroll were pushed out of the door. It's the complete reverse of what resolution 1325 was meant to address (VII)."

If DDR prevented South Sudanese women from receiving an SPLA-salary and did not create real income-generating alternatives (Haile & Bara, 2013; McMullin, 2013; Munive, 2014) (see 5.1.3) as suggested by primary and secondary data, I argue that the programme failed to establish economic security for women on the ground.

On the other hand, South Sudanese women who were hindered from enrolling in DDR are facing several consequences, according to secondary data (Haile & Bara, 2013; Komujuni, December 2013; Munive, 2014). First, women might have to reintegrate without any support, meaning they silently fit in, which prevents them from sharing their experiences. This can have negative consequences in terms of individual healing, but also for the entire community. It would be less likely for these women to engage in counselling, mediation and other forms of conflict resolution (Komujuni, December 2013). Second, I argue that female veterans who did not take part in the programme might find it more challenging to find employment, especially if they lack prior education or vocational training. Third, the DDR's reintegration package offers a start-up kit containing tools and a small amount of money to begin a peaceful life (Haile & Bara, 2013; Munive, 2014), but women who stay away from the programme often do not receive the very little they are entitled to.

6.2 The situation and status of women soldiers

To explore the living situation for women soldiers during the South Sudanese wars and their status – also in the post-conflict society, I asked female DDR participants and WPS experts about women's motives to join armed forces, their activities on the frontline as well as the acknowledgment female soldiers received.

6.2.1 The situation of women soldiers during the war

The South Sudanese women who supported the SPLA but now live as refugees in Uganda, described their living situations during wartime. All of the interviewees reported that they did not feel safe during the years of war. While most of the women referred more generally to violence caused by the armed conflict as reason for their lack of safety, one of them specifically mentioned mistrust (4). Literature describes lack of trust and suspicion as common features prevalent in societies shaped by violence (Hilhorst & Van-Leeuwen, 2005). One interviewee expressed that it was their own responsibility to stay safe (6) when for example opposing parties attacked the armed group they belonged to (3). I argue that this attitude corresponds to a

specific form of mistrust (see above) – mistrust in authorities – as well as to one of the previous findings; that women were used to not being supported, therefore only depended on themselves and stayed away from the DDR programme (see 6.1.5).

"We carried the bigger burden of war"

The majority of women in South Sudan are responsible for their family household, according to various sources in literature (Komujuni, December 2013; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Stone, 2011b). Therefore they often "carried the bigger burden of the war," one of the interviewed veterans stated (6). Despite the immense workload of also physically demanding tasks, South Sudanese women have traditionally had a secondary household role, according to one expert who works as gender adviser (III). She explains that this changed to some degree during the second civil war, when women started taking on more profound roles as they became the head of the household – sometimes literally overnight. This shift is due to husbands and sons going to war or fleeing from forced recruitment, leaving women to fill the gap. Women would not only start to take on decision-making roles inside the household, they also had to get jobs – often in the informal sector – as the only breadwinner in the family. This development would continue somehow until today because of ongoing family separation and displacement (III) (see 2.2.2).

On the other hand, a lot of women had been relegated to a secondary role because the conflict slowed down and men returned home. Many women would find that extremely challenging, expressed the expert (III). A different expert (IV) confirmed that when men went off to fight, women who stayed behind would often have to do all the agricultural and reproduction work (IV). These arguments correspond with points made by secondary sources (Komujuni, December 2013; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Stone, 2011b) and by FPCT which claims that men would often push women back into their pre-war roles (F. Bubenzer & Lacey, 2013).

Despite the fact that South Sudanese women are expected to bear a lot of children, and divorce is culturally not accepted, marriages broke during wartime. Literature (Brett, 2002; Komujuni, December 2013) suggests that it was quite common in South Sudan that men dismissed their partners after they return from armed conflict. Indeed, four of the interviewees within group A said that relationships were not stable (8, 9) and their partners were not reliable (10) as well as that divorce was common (7). Even though some married couples both went to the front, they would sometimes end up fighting in different brigades and parts of the country (1). One third of the interviewees said they remained in their partnership throughout the war (4, 5, 6). One woman reported she was single and not married. The same veteran is also the only one among

them who does not have children (2). The other former soldiers all have between one and six children.

My primary data findings are not detailed enough to confirm that South Sudanese men would tend to leave their wives after coming back from the front as something prevalent in my case study. However, my findings suggest that partnerships were not stable and divorces fairly common in conflict-prone South Sudan, despite cultural norms would let one expect otherwise. With that regard, it must be clarified that it is much easier for men to divorce their wives than vice-versa (see 6.3.1).

"I got displaced two to three times a year"

Many South Sudanese families were separated during the war (GoSS, 2015). As such, all ten interviewees of group A experienced family separation during the conflict, and some are still affected by it today. One woman lost contact with her family members completely (4). Furthermore, the majority of the interviewees had experienced displacement during warfare, already prior to becoming a refugee and leaving their home country behind. One woman said she was displaced yearly (8), another one was displaced two to three times a year (7). Widespread family separation, displacement and limited security, illustrate hardship of everyday life in South Sudan during conflict, something that multiple secondary data sources describe (see 2.1.8).

6.2.2 Motives of women to join the armed forces

So why join the war? This question was discussed by several scholars (Brett & Specht, 2004; Coulter et al., 2008; Harsch, 2005; MacMullin & Loughry, 2004; Mckay & Mazurana, 2004; Meredith Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998). To triangulate points made in chapter 2.2.1, I raised this question in interviews with both groups.

"Withdrawing from roles in which they felt they were constantly under threat"

One expert (VIII) I have interviewed had met women soldiers in a military camp of an OAG in South Sudan quite recently before our conversation. The researcher mentioned how "present and vocal" these women were and that they were "clearly recognised as an important part of the movement (VIII)." When the female soldiers explained her why they joined the armed force, "they were saying they were fleeing for safety. It was not just about fighting but also about withdrawing from roles and a context in which they felt they were constantly under threat (VIII)."

"Take on roles in order to survive"

The majority of the veterans interviewed in Bidi Bidi had joined the armed forces (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6), and expressed that they did so out of either political, social or economic reasons. Two interviewees mentioned the group's agenda (5) of political liberation (4, 5) from marginalisation (4) as their main motives to support the armed forces. I argue that this motivation, however, cannot be viewed as being of purely political nature, but also contains a social aspect. For instance, one of the women explained that the community she was living in supported the army out of grievances (4). A different female veteran confirmed this and stated that the influence of her peers played a big role in her decision to join (2). Another common scenario was that women followed their husbands who enrolled in the army, which was the case for one interviewee (1).

Economic reasons for conscription emerged out of the harsh life during wartime in South Sudan. Being part of an armed force was said to be one of very few livelihood opportunities (Stone, 2011b). Indeed, two former soldiers said that women often supported the military simply to satisfy basic needs such as food (2, 3). One expert explained this phenomenon: "People move in and out of conflict. That doesn't mean that they want to fight but sometimes they just don't have any other choice (VII)." While all except one woman in the Bidi Bidi settlement reportedly joined voluntarily, "[...] there wasn't a clear distinction [...], you do it to survive" (VII).

Only one of the ten interviewed veterans admitted she was forced to join the armed group. She said she was involuntarily conscripted to carry food supply to the bases which were located far from her community, and used as a cook at the camp against her will (6). About one third of the interviewees did not join an armed group (7, 8, 10) because they wanted to take care of their children (7, 10). Another woman said she did not enrol because she felt she would waste her time "for no good results (8)."

"Their narrative depends on the time when they tell the story"

However, even if someone had been forced to partake in the SPLA, they would later claim to have joined voluntarily as pointed out by one expert (VII). "Their narrative depends on the time when they tell the story," she explained (VII). By reviewing literature, it became evident that after South Sudan gained independence, everybody wanted to be on the liberator's side, and few dared to admit having been part of the opposition (Haile & Bara, 2013; John, 2006).

Thus, findings from primary and secondary data suggest that South Sudanese women joined the armed conflict due to political and social but mainly economic reasons. While many women

war veterans would say today that they had done so voluntarily, these claims would have to be analysed according to context.

6.2.3 Frontline activities

To compare the multiple tasks South Sudanese women were engaged with during warfare (see 2.2.2) with primary data, I asked female veterans about their personal experiences and WPS experts about their findings concerning women's activities.

"Only the gun is what you carry"

All interviewed veterans said they contributed to warfare. About half of the former soldiers participated in military tactics (2) and interventions such as commanding, spying, gathering intelligence, investigating and reporting (4). One woman was a child soldier and as such used as a bodyguard for high ranking soldiers (2). Two veterans said they were involved in fighting directly where "only the gun is what you carry" (1, 10). Experts, who worked at one DDR site in South Sudan, reported that some of the women they encountered were "strong fighters" (V&VI). Another expert said she was surprised about the great number of women fighters at an OAG military camp she had visited (VIII). Before becoming active in warfare, some of them had been employed by the national army or police. "It was a reminder that women have combatant-roles but also non-combatants roles in the police and on the border [...] roles that are somehow security related" (VIII).

All female war veterans said in the interviews that women would receive the same general military training as their male comrades. As such, most interviewees had received this training (3, 4, 5, 6, 8). Defence (1), intelligence services (2) and logistical supply (8) was in particular part of the training for female soldiers. As a result, many women gathered intelligence (1) and provided reports (2). One expert confirmed that female soldiers had told her they were spies (V&VI).

Interviewees stated that just half of the female soldiers were armed (9) with light bulleted guns (2). Another former SPLA member in Bidi Bidi reported they were armed when they were on the front despite many of their female comrades had supportive roles such as catering with food for their husband or other male fighters (5). The same veteran said she was less involved in family affairs as a part-time soldier (5). Another woman reported that her two children would stay with friends when she was on an assignment (3).

The statements made by two female war veterans about them being less involved in childcare during their conscription is interesting in connection to former findings that DDR did not provide

adequate childcare facilities. It seems culturally accepted that extended family members or friends take care of children in South Sudan, which can be another indicator that DDR did not find the childcare model tailored to realities on the ground, as criticised by one expert (VII) (see 6.1.2).

Furthermore, with exception of the role as bodyguard, all mentioned activities were described by literature (see 2.2.2), thus, my primary data findings can be validated.

6.2.4 The status of women soldiers during the war

The next paragraphs consist of findings regarding the position of women in the armed forces, men's behaviour towards female comrades and the context of women's supportive roles.

"The second fiddle role"

Several scholars argue that if women were in higher positions within the SPLA, then because of personal connections (see 2.2.4). The women at Bidi Bidi said that some were given positions in administration, policy making (7) or leadership (4). These women, however, would usually come from a background where they had received education (4, 7) and therefore belonged to the higher class. Female soldiers obtained military ranks as privates (3), majors (4, 6), or captains (1, 2, 4, 9) according to the interviewees. Two of the soldiers said that most women had a lower rank such as a private (3, 5) because of the superiority of men (3) which lead to mainly male combatants being promoted (1). One expert (VII) added that the few senior women in the SPLA "are more senior in title than in influence." Even the female brigadiers would only play "the second fiddle role" (VII).

This argument can be supported by drawing on FPCT which claims that gender-mainstreaming in security and military apparatus would not make them automatically more democratic, accountable or peaceful (Hudson, 2012; Simić, 2010). Hence, having some women with higher titles in South Sudan's military forces does not mean they are actually involved in decision-making but more likely know an influential man who is (see 6.3.2).

"Men want to be the leaders and dominate at all costs"

Female veterans reported in interviews that most male combatants did not treat their female comrades as equals (5). As suggested by literature (Harsch, 2005; Komujuni, December 2013; Stone, 2011b) and mentioned by one interviewed female veteran (5), women were mostly kept from direct fighting: "The male combatants granted us low participation on the war front with the belief that women have short tempered hearts when they see causalities (5)." With that regard,

feminist peace and conflict studies claim that warfare is continuously perceived as a "male concern", despite women participate in various ways (Barth, 2002; Byrne, 1996; Farr, 2002).

The interviewees accused men at the front of arrogant behaviour towards women (7) and that they thought of themselves as superior (3). The women said this was not limited to the army (8) but "as in other sectors they want to be the leaders and dominate at all costs (4)." FPC theory would explain this phenomenon with social learning which would produce obedient women and dominant men (Brock-Utne, 1989).

When further asked to compare male to female behaviour in the armed forces, interviewees responded that women were more human (3) and respectful, behaved better (5), adhered the rules (6) and were less aggressive (9), rude (4) and dominant (7) than their male comrades. One veteran, however, said that some women became rough in their behaviour by being part of an armed group (1). FPCT claims that if women want to play a role in military forces, they often feel pressured to "out-male" their comrades (Hudson, 2012).

Two war veterans brought the topic of sexual exploitation up (1) and said that mistreatment against women had been common (9). Experts reported that the majority of women in the armed forces and in entire South Sudan had probably been sexually assaulted or worse. One of them called sexual violence in the context of the South Sudanese conflict "endemic on a day to day level" (VII) (see 2.2.2). With that regard, FPCT scholar Meredeth Turshen (2001) writes that rape is systemically used as a weapon in war to intimidate and strip women of their rights.

"Generals would take them as their wives"
Because many female soldiers in South Sudan were prevented from participating in the fighting, they often had other roles in the army than those of fighters. One expert said that South Sudanese women told her they had to cook for soldiers and that generals would take them as their wives (V&VI). Almost all female veterans at Bidi Bidi reported that women supported the SPLA as cooks, carriers and cleaners, every second mentioned nurses in addition, and two added food procession (9) and supply (1). As one interviewee summed it up, they did pretty much everything "what a woman does at home" (9). The so-called "secondary roles" that women played during the South Sudanese conflict were highlighted by multiple scholars (Harsch, 2005; Komujuni, December 2013; Mazurana & Carlson, 2004; Stone, 2011b) (see 2.2.2). However, this discourse which tries to legitimise to some degree that women are denied the soldier title is criticised by FPCT (Mackenzie, 2012).

6.2.5 The status of women veterans after the war

In the next few pages I discuss my findings on reactions women got when coming back from the front, how they were perceived by their communities and the general society today, if they received any acknowledgement for contributions and finally, how DDR plays into these issues.

"We were seen as lost, but after we managed to bear a few children, we're assets"

When women came back from the front, they were confronted with different reactions than men. According to one interviewee, communities are divided over the issue of female participation in warfare (9) and it varies whether women are treated as equals or not (3, 4). If female soldiers are successful, they are valued more, but "communities do not see women who are in the army as important as men" (6). While some interviewees reported that they received respect during their time in the armed forces (1) and were seen as "brave and strong heartened" (1, 2), they perceive being treated as unequal to male combatants today (2). Yet despite female soldiers having shown tremendous effort on the front, many regard women as not real combatants, thinking the armed forces are "for men only" (3). In connection, FPCT scholars argues that the military wants to keep its masculine image, thus, the roles of women stay unacknowledged (John, 2006).

In addition, interviewed female war veterans themselves explain that women who participated in the warfare are seen as "lost forever" (7, 8) at least until they "manage to bear a few children" (8). Women in South Sudan in general are commonly viewed as "the unable sex" according to one interviewee (5). Experts add that when women return to their communities, they are often not welcome because of cultural values (V&VI). These statements correspond with a comment by a different expert, mentioned earlier in the findings; that women associated with warfare are often seen as promiscuous (III). They further resonate with the FPCT argument that while men increase their status' when they become fighters, women's status' decline (Meredith Turshen & Twagiramariya, 1998).

"You're that pot of gold as a woman, their pension fund"

In several publications, South Sudanese women who participated in warfare – be it voluntary or forced – are said to be stigmatised once they return to their communities (Brett, 2002; Komujuni, December 2013; Stone, 2011b). However, one expert (VII) challenged this viewpoint: "I saw that people use this word 'stigmatisation' but I don't really get any sense of anyone for having been shunned – certainly not for having been involved with the SPLA, even not really for having children outside of marriage (VII)." Yet, she added that if a woman had gone off to the bush and had children without getting married, she would have ruined her family's opportunity to gain

bride wealth: "You're that pot of gold as a woman, they see you as their pension fund. But I wouldn't use the word stigmatisation anymore [...] When I wrote about stigmatisation, much of it reflected probably the conversations I had with DDR staff (VII)."

"It depends on your relationship with the army's top leadership"

The majority of the women veterans interviewed for this study said they did not receive any acknowledgment for having supported the SPLA. According to the veterans, there were women who received child support (1), educational scholarships (4, 5, 6), or jobs (7, 4, 8). Some were mentioned positively in praises (7, 9) or asked to participate in community counselling (10). Two women replied that they have seen some form of recognition as they were mentioned publicly (8, 9). Another woman said she was invited to several community meetings due to her war experience (10). However, women who received acknowledgment were usually those from the higher class (2). Thus, recognition "depended on your relationship with the army's top leadership" (5).

Every interviewee said that men's contributions to warfare, on the other hand, were widely recognised. As one woman put it, "men got scholarships for themselves or their children, employment or promotions to leadership positions in offices, commissions or the government" (2). Similar benefits are also mentioned by other interviewees. In addition, some referred to excursions (3, 4), material gifts (4) such as cash rewards (7, 9) and said their male comrades were overall prioritised when it came to employment (8, 10).

One expert (II), an aid worker supporting South Sudanese women, said: "Some of the women did bear a lot of the burden but – and this is very typical for the South Sudanese society – it's really not acknowledged (II)." A different expert (IV) said that the women had learned new skills during the war by taking on what used to be men's work, but that none of this had been recognised. "It was just expected when soldiers came through, that women would feed them and do all the carrying labour. That's a huge amount of work that goes largely unrecognised. After the war, they just didn't see the benefits of independence (IV)." According to the expert (IV), women's labour for the SPLA was essential during the war but what gets attention is "the great strength and honour of the men." The expert (IV) quoted women she had interviewed in South Sudan who told her how they had put themselves at risk: "We did all this work during the war and we aren't getting the recognition for it now (IV)."

My findings within primary data confirm what multiple scholars have described as a lack of acknowledgment for women's contributions to warfare in South Sudan (see 2.2.2). Moreover, it

reflects the argument by FPCT that despite female fighters are often involved in the conflict, honour and bravery would be perceived as masculine qualities (Hudson, 2012).

"They want to be called soldiers"

According to both groups interviewed for this study, the design of the DDR programme does not foster an acknowledgment of women's labour during the war. On the contrary, it perpetuates the lack of it. With that regard, the DDR-terminology WAAF had been criticised as one of its main pitfalls (see 5.2.1). According to one expert (VII) who did extensive research on the topic, South Sudanese women themselves did not want to be called WAAF: "They were like 'we're part of the SPLA, we're not WAAF.' [...] They absolutely want to be called soldiers [...] the least you can do is to give them the dignity of acknowledging their roles as South Sudanese liberators. But it was an indignity to take even that away from them (VII)."

The same expert (VII) criticised programme designers who invented the terminology for not discussing it with the South Sudanese. She recalls one incident at a sewing training workshop: "[...] there were six people sitting – three of them women, three of them men. And the woman running the workshop said 'These are the WAAF', and I asked: 'All of them?' and she said: 'Yes, all of them are the WAAF (VII).'" This response, explained the expert (VII), was just one example where it became evident that nobody knew what the term meant. "It's dehumanising and it has lost any sense of what it was intended to mean. But the UN was determined to stick with this category (VII)."

A different expert (VIII) confirmed that South Sudanese women often claim to be soldiers. She recalls how one of them talked about her active role in fighting (VIII). With that regard, FPCT scholar Mackenzie (2012) dismantles the gendered usage of the soldier title. She criticises that there is little debate whether men in supportive roles have deserved the title while women are systematically called something else. When female soldiers are called supporters, peacemakers or wives instead of soldiers, the image of "weak femininity" is created.

6.3 Women soldiers in peace processes – Challenges and opportunities

It became evident when interviewing the female veterans in Bidi Bidi and several experts on gender, conflict and peacebuilding, that women's roles in the South Sudanese conflict are manifold and change depending on individual situations and events during the war. Different stages from being in a secondary household role to fighting in the armed forces to becoming a SGBV survivor and a local peacemaker are fluent and can overlap. Thus, scholars within the field of FPCT highlight the multiple roles and images of women in conflict (Weber, 2006).

Moreover, local peace efforts by women were mentioned in several pieces of literature (see 2.2.3).

The interviewees who went through some of the stages mentioned above and observed other women in distinct roles were asked questions about female peacemakers and their roles in the society. They also reported about their own contributions to peace in their communities, DDR's relation towards these issues as well as the degree to which they received acknowledgment for their efforts.

According to one expert (II), South Sudanese women are more visible in peacebuilding on the community than national level. While the formalised peace process is dominated by men, women organise themselves in local peace processes across the country, confirmed a second expert (IV). She explained that there is a cultural history around women having the ability to negotiate (IV), something also mentioned by secondary data (Adeogun & Muthuki, April 2018; Hilhorst & Van-Leeuwen, 2005; Mai, 1 December 2015).

All interviewees from group A stated that they knew women who contributed to local peacebuilding in South Sudan, or that they had heard about women active on the national level. The majority mentioned that women were political activists who supported for example the referendum for independence (1, 5) and the general elections in 2020 (1, 3) and thereby often tried to make fellow women aware of their individual political roles (8). One part of their political activism was thus to raise awareness (1, 3, 4, 5) and mobilise (1, 2, 3, 4, 6) in communities. According to the former soldiers, many South Sudanese women mediate disputes within their communities (1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10) and solve family misunderstandings (9) in order to reach "development and unity among communities" (6). Next to being peace activists (10), some women held positions as local court leaders (1) or managed civil society organisations (7). According to almost all interviewees from group A, female peacebuilders in South Sudan would hold consultations with other women to ensure that their efforts resonate with the ideas of others.

One expert (I) who works with international peacebuilding, said that the NGO she works for had facilitated local level consultations. The outcomes were shared with mediators and the conflict parties. She further explained that collective mobilisation was conducted at the national and sub-national level (I). Many women's organisations in South Sudan would operate on grassroot level. They would assist women by giving them training, providing education and promoting

women's and girls' rights, added a different expert (II). Literature refers to this form of peacebuilding as Track Three (Lederach, 1997; Paffenholz & Spurk, October 2006) (see 2.3.2).

My findings within primary data exemplify arguments from secondary data that women often engage themselves for peace in mid-level leadership and grassroot organisations where they are invisible to a broader audience (Reimann, August 2008). Furthermore, my interviews confirm that women in South Sudan often understand the context of security well because they are among those who are the most affected (Mai, 1 December 2015). However, FPCT warns from labelling women as "natural peacemakers" because it would follow the same gendered principles that portray women as responsible for reproduction, passive victims, and men as "male warrior". Thus, stereotypes would harm women in the long-term (Hudson, 2012; John, 2006).

6.3.1 Female soldiers as peace brokers

All the interviewees from group A who are former soldiers stated that they knew female ex-combatants who contributed to peace efforts. As such, one woman mentioned the example of a female local court leader who used to be in an armed force (1). Another interviewee spoke about former women fighters who campaigned for peaceful elections (2). Most information on the CPA was actually delivered by women combatants, according to one of the veterans (6) as well as sources from secondary data (Mai, 1 December 2015).

Not only did all South Sudanese war veterans who live now as refugees in Uganda know female peacemakers, more than one third of them participated in local peacebuilding efforts themselves (1, 2, 6, 10). One interviewee said she used to be a leader among the women in her community (10), while another one translated messages concerning peace processes and helped to settle land disputes (1). One woman was active in conflict resolution regarding fights over cattle (2). Another interviewee said she organised women to participate in peace circles[17] (6). A third interviewee reportedly mobilised women for meetings and attended trainings to improve her skills in peacebuilding (10).

Half of the veterans in Bidi Bidi replied that they did not contribute to peacebuilding (3, 4, 5, 8, 9) as they believe they lacked necessary skills (3, 4, 5) or simply did not get the opportunity to participate in peacebuilding efforts (5). While four of the veterans did not consider to partake in

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[17] A peace circle is a restorative justice model that emphasizes on healing and learning within a group by talking through the issues in order to solve them (StudentPeaceAlliance.org, 2020).

peace-making in the first place (3, 4, 5, 8), two others thought about contributing (7, 9) but one of them claimed that promises concerning her participation were broken (9).

"Peace brings in development"

The war veterans in Bidi Bidi who were also involved in peace efforts did not mention particular actors who mobilised them for peacebuilding. They became active because "peace brings in development" (1) and "the community becomes a better place for all" (6). Another interviewee stressed the importance of a peaceful co-existence among communities (2) and one veteran said she believed "war was for peace" (10).

"From peacemakers to fighters"

Another interviewee said that most of these women "got inspired for peace by war" (7). Going from fighting to peace-making is not an uncommon path in countries with protracted conflict such as South Sudan, according to one expert (VII): "It usually is the people that are involved in the conflict that take part in the peace talk. You're not gonna achieve peace if you don't bring the fighting parties to the table. Also, conflict is so much woven into daily life in South Sudan, so that many people go from peacemakers to fighters to peacemakers to fighters (VII)."

"We shouldn't only see women as peacemaker"

A few women with military background are in higher positions connected to more recent peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan (see 2.2.4). One expert (VIII) focuses in her research on leaders of traditional courts – roles which are usually of military nature. Although women chiefs are still rare, women can potentially gain chief status, according to the expert (VIII). The scholar (VIII) provided an example of a woman chief who wanted to challenge the bride price. She set the price at a level which would benefit women who wanted a divorce[18]. This female chief had previously been a soldier in the SPLA, later in the SPLA-IO, but then lived at a protection of civilians (POC) site. Her election as chief was perceived as an opportunity for changing the persistence of discrimination against women (VIII). However, the woman chief was implicated in a fight at the POC-site, her position was questioned and she was ultimately forced out of the camp. The message which can be drawn from this case, the expert argued, was that female chiefs can foster positive development, but that "we shouldn't only see women as peacemaker" (VIII).

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[18] According to one expert, courts are local peacebuilding mechanisms, as they function to manage conflict. Courts also define gender roles to some degree in South Sudan, because they maintain the political economy around the bride wealth. If a woman wants to divorce her husband, she needs to repay the bride wealth, measured in cattle. A common reason for divorce is SGBV, but poor women cannot separate from their violent husbands (VIII).

Other examples of women that took strong leadership roles and were active in conflict and peacebuilding, are female prophets within Nuer communities. These religious leaders – some of them female – would command armed groups of young men. As such, they would have a central role in intercommunal fighting, according to one expert (III), and could participate in both – violence and the regulation of such (VIII). In some cases, prophets were building peace between communities by stopping revenge cycle killings (III).

Both examples, women chiefs and prophets, are discussed in literature (Sharon E. Hutchinson & Pendle, 2015; Ibreck & Pendle, 2017). Furthermore, FPCT can be applied on these cases, as contemporary FPC theorists argue that many women collaborate with violent men, such as female soldiers in armed conflict, thus FPCT also attempts to deconstruct the image of women as "peaceful mother-figures" (Hudson, 2012; Weber, 2006).

6.3.2 Exclusive peace processes

However, female leaders in peacebuilding from a Nuer background, like the prophets (see above), were mostly limited to the local and communal level, stated one expert (III). The same goes for women who organise their communities for peace, among which many are non-Dinka (IV). The national peace process, on the other hand, would be disproportionately dominated by Dinka, despite a much higher number of tribes were strongly involved in the conflict (III). "I'd say there's a huge problem with inclusion generally (III)". It would be somehow an intersection of patriarchy and ethnic cultural norms, states a different expert (IV), where non-ruling ethnic groups are left out. This context is also the basis for the latest conflict which emerged in 2013, according to one WPS scholar (II). Her recipe for peace? "Until African leaders generally stop being selfish, there can be no peace. Once selfishness is removed, all other groups, that is both minority and majority, will be included in peacebuilding in South Sudan (II)."

There are many factors which exclude women from positions of decision-making within peace processes. Poor women are particularly marginalised due to constraints such as girls' early marriages, male dominance, lacking funds as well as discriminating traditions and beliefs, according to one expert (II). Another reason for exclusion, she argues, is the victimisation of women rather than seeing them as stakeholders that have a right to be involved in making decisions (II). And last but not least, women would be excluded from peace processes because of the high level of illiteracy among them and as a result, the lack of necessary skills (II). Another peacebuilding expert (I) stated that the more political a process becomes, the more difficult it is for women to act. What is more is that protection concerns as a result of curtailed civic space keep women – and some men – away from entering the peace-making arena, states

the same expert (I). Another expert (III) provides an example from her local peacebuilding work in one region prone to intercommunal violence. The peace talks there would be held on Sundays, when women are not supposed to leave their homes, an unwritten rule often enforced with domestic violence (III). This corresponds to FPCT's understanding of violence, which is based on an interlinkage of different forms of violence. Thus, societal, domestic, gender-, state- and inter-state-based violence would be part of a continuum of violence from the domestic sphere all the way to the battlefield (Weber, 2006).

"It's always the same men talking"

The line of exclusion in the South Sudanese society is drawn along ethnicity, age and sex, according to my primary and secondary data findings (see 2.2.3). If there were young people or women present, "it's very tokenistic", reported one expert (III). "It's always the same men talking about issues and deciding when to send people out to fight (III)". FPCT identifies a transition of a gendered exclusion from war to conflict aftermath, where they manifest in form of lacking opportunities for women to take on decision-making roles (Komujuni, December 2013).

"Don't want to rock the boat"

However, we know from chapter 2.2.4 that some women war veterans manged to break the glass ceiling and entered the formal peace arena in South Sudan. Therefore, the final paragraphs of this sub-chapter explore the circumstances how these women became leaders in the national peace process.

Two interviewed veterans had mentioned that education (4) and skills (5) are decisive when it comes to female soldiers becoming active in peace efforts or not. The reality in South Sudan, however, is that almost exclusively women from the ruling class are the higher educated ones. Thus, one expert (IV) said it was a common track by elite women to start by organising their own communities and afterwards go into politics. Although these women can potentially serve as role models and empower other women, the capacity for real transformative change might be constrained if only elite women take up positions in decision-making. "A lot of them are the wives of politicians who were already in place. They also don't want to rock the boat (IV)."

One of the most well-known women politicians is Angelina Tenney who was appointed as minister of defence in March 2020 (Malak, 2020). "Tenney holds very much a leadership position in a political and armed movement. She has been on the frontline but had other roles than active combat per se (I)," explained one expert (I). However, Tenney is also the wife of vice president Riek Machar, hence it is questioned how much influence Machar has on Tenney in a

patriarchal society like South Sudan. A second expert gives another example for a women in a leading position; Rebecca Nyandeng Garang (III), one of the current vice-presidents, who also signed the last peace agreement (Francis, 2019). However, Garang is also the wife of the former first vice president of Sudan and famous rebel leader, John Garang (Wax, 2005) (see 2.2.4).

An "elite-prone quota"

One peacebuilding expert (I) confirmed that actual decision-making power is still quite limited for women in South Sudan but claimed that efforts have been made as the last peace negotiations had at least female signatories (I) (IGAD, 12 September 2018). Moreover, she mentioned the women's quota as another positive development (I) (see 2.2.3) which made the seat for the female vice-president Garang.

However, according to the same peacebuilding practitioner (I), "the quota is only really a starting point. It makes a difference in terms of visibility and platform but doesn't translate into actual decision-making and an inclusive process in itself (I)." An additional critique is that the quota in South Sudan does not address intersectionality and therefore is "elite-prone as politics are altogether (I)". As a result, a general quota cannot be inclusive towards marginalised women. FPCT criticises in this context that the liberal peacebuilding approach tends to equate "more women" with "more peace" without truly reforming pre-existing practices (Hudson, 2012; Whitworth, 2004).

6.3.3 DDR and 'womenisation' of peace

One influential factor among female DDR participants towards their involvement in peacebuilding could be incentives by the programme itself. By examining this aspect, I came to the conclusion that DDR was not as empowering as developers had intended it to be (Peacekeeping, 2020) (see 2.4), which I will elaborate in this sub-chapter.

Half of respondents in group A answered negatively on the question whether the programme motivated them to partake in peacebuilding (4, 5, 8, 9). Two women said that it would depend on factors such as the type of peacebuilding (1), and again individual knowledge and skills of women enrolled in DDR (3). Taking the interviewees' replies into account, there does not seem to be a strong correlation between DDR participation and individual peacebuilding efforts. FPCT would possibly trace the lacking DDR incentive for women to engage in peace efforts back to the aim of peacebuilding: protecting the patriarchal, neoliberal state (John, 2006) (see 4.1.4).

"The most important failure of the DDR programme"

One aspect that could play a role in the failure of the programme when it comes to motivate women for peace-making is that there were no women or women's organisations involved in senior positions of planning and implementing DDR in South Sudan. The expert (V&VI) who was a regional programme director herself admits that no women organisations were consulted throughout the process of DDR design and rollout.

The SSDDRC was supposed to represent interests of women veterans in the peace negotiations (V&VI). But one scholar (VII) went so far as to call the set-up of the commission as the "most important failure of the programme" (VII). The main problem, according to the expert, was that SSDDRC was a government and not an SPLA-body (VII). A lot of the people who were in leading positions were men from the Southern Sudanese diaspora because they knew how to best manage relationships to ensure "the vast sums of money that the international community was willing to blow into this programme [...] They don't really know much about life in the bush, although they'll say they will (VII)." As a result, the SPLA had very little regard for the programme. "The main problem was that neither were real ex-combatants instrumental in the DDR design nor did the South Sudanese involved have the ability to stand up against the international community and say that their programme didn't reflect their reality (VII)." According to the expert, there was a female gender adviser in the commission, but besides her, not many women were involved in the SSDDRC (VII).

Other experts (V&VI) confirmed that women combatants have very limited opportunities to bring their perspectives into formal peace negotiations as the commissions which are headed by men would not bother consulting women (V&VI). FPCT scholars suggest that social constructions such as "weak femininity" (Mackenzie, 2012) which are highly popular during the time of armed conflict (Ferris, 1993) would continue in the aftermath in form of lacking representation for women in post-war programmes like the DDR (Komujuni, December 2013).

6.3.4 Lacking acknowledgment for women's peace efforts

Similar to the findings presented in 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 concerning the status of women soldiers and war veterans in conflict and its aftermath, which identified a lack of recognition of their battle-related contributions, examines this sub-chapter whether their specific efforts towards peace were acknowledged (see 2.2.3).

"They wouldn't say 'thank you'"

Since the SSDDRC as a commission which consisted neither of women nor of soldiers represented female war veterans in the peace process, there is no wonder that their voices were not heard. As one interviewee put it, "women look at peace in different dimension (10)." And one expert (III) explained these dimensions: "Women had a stronghold in forcing men to talk when it came to intercommunal violence, in supporting peace efforts, in trying to raise their children to not seek up combats (III)." This was crucial according to one female veteran, because "peace brings people together and is an important element of development (2)." By committing themselves to peacebuilding, these women would sometimes also put their own safety at risk, as one interviewee pointed out that peacemakers were often mistaken for being collaborators (6). Despite tremendous efforts made by women, conflict parties would often not see them; "they wouldn't say 'thank you, we're now living in harmony because of what you've done'", said one female veteran (1). Thus, women are mostly excluded from peacebuilding in South Sudan, but if they contribute, their efforts for peace are not acknowledged at all. According to one expert (III), "there is so little space for women to speak and to have a voice and a real contribution. The involvement of women is token at best in South Sudan (III)." The women involved on the local level, however, really want to "own their role as peacemakers (III)".

"We have peace now, but what does it bring to us?"

A different expert (VIII), who documents local peace processes, points to a perpetuating problem caused by lacking recognition of female peacebuilding: "Some of these peace processes are very local and not well documented [...] largely chiefs and other local authorities who are predominantly male. But then there are local NGOs involved that have brought women into peacebuilding (VIII)." Hence, there is the possibility that many more women are involved in local peace work, but that we do not know about them because their engagement is not documented, as it is not recognised. This invisibility is frustrating for South Sudanese women who still have to ask themselves "we have peace now, but what does it bring to us (IV)?"

To conclude the final section of my findings, I can draw on secondary data sources which describe how peacebuilding activities of women are largely unrecognised (UN, 2017), because they often take place on the grassroot level, while men participate in formal peace negotiations which receive more attention (Reimann, August 2008) (see 2.3.5). My primary data findings confirm that this is also the case when it comes to peace efforts by South Sudanese women war veterans. FPCT set out to counteract the neglect of women's work by shedding light on women's conflict and peacebuilding experiences (Weber, 2006).

VII. CONCLUSION

This thesis had the objective to reveal challenges and opportunities women war veterans face within their roles in combat and peacebuilding in South Sudan, and how the DDR programme plays into these challenges and opportunities. Therefore, I assessed the DDR participation of South Sudanese women, their activities in conflict and peace processes as well as the recognition of the latter. I outlined these processes focusing on the roles of women soldiers and female war veterans in them. Moreover, I interviewed women war veterans from South Sudan which granted insight into their direct experiences and was crucial for answering my research questions. WPS expert interviews helped me to interpret the statements from former women soldiers. For further analysis, my thesis drew on the Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory (FPCT) as framework, through which I gained a critical understanding of the public discourses around South Sudanese female war veterans. In this final section, I reflect on key findings, discuss them in relation to 20 years of Resolution 1325, and suggest angles for further research.

My first set of findings address factors that hampered or facilitated benefits intended by the DDR programme for female war veterans in South Sudan. Results show that women war veterans perceived partaking in DDR as their own choice. It became clear, however, that this choice was relative, mainly due to lacking alternatives in an economy devastated by decades of war. Another study outcome was that lacking security at DDR sites was an issue of concern for female participants. I found that female trainees felt in particular insecure in toilet facilities. I argued that not feeling safe can hamper the reintegration of women who experienced violence, hence, is counterproductive to DDR's incentives. In addition, my research found that stigmatisation, a term often used in connection to women in armed groups, is a controversial issue among scholars. Women war veterans themselves, on the other hand, were mainly proud that they had served the army and graduated from the DDR programme. Thus, I conclude based on my findings that stigmatisation did not represent a barrier to join the programme or impacted female trainees in my case study negatively after their participation. Furthermore, my thesis revealed that female DDR participants were dissatisfied with the numeracy and literacy training they received in the programme, mainly due to a lack of prior education. This finding seems crucial as my research identified knowledge and skills as decisive factors for women to become active in peacebuilding. I thus believe that by not focusing more on women war veterans' education, the DDR training contributed to the perpetuation of unequal power relations and a loss of capacities. Moreover, I looked into childcare services offered by the DDR

programme. I found either an absence of their provision or culturally insensitive options. My findings suggest that this made some female participants drop out or refrain from enrolment. Hence, provision of childcare facilities according to local customs is a crucial component for a successful DDR participation. While the design of DDR in South Sudan was well intended, it did not take realities on the ground sufficiently into account which prevented some women war veterans from a successful DDR graduation. What I found to be the main factor for female war veterans to refrain from the programme, however, was that they would not be entitled to be on the SPLA payroll if they demobilised. Thus, I argue that DDR failed in its goal to establish economic security for former women soldiers, as the programme prohibited them from receiving a stable salary. Finally, one should take into account that none of the women war veterans interviewed for this thesis reintegrated successfully into a peaceful life in South Sudan as they had to flee from their country. Hence, I argue that DDR as a peacebuilding tool did not create safety for these women.

The second part of my results explored the situation and status of women soldiers during and after the armed conflict. This provided insights into their activities in combat, their motives to join armed forces, and how these contributions were acknowledged. My findings suggest that a significant number of South Sudanese women were active in military operations, despite the fact that their contributions are still debated in the public discourse. According to my findings, female soldiers were mainly engaged in intelligence, security and reproductive tasks. Motives for these women to join the armed groups were of political, social or economic nature. Most women, however, joined forces in order to survive, according to my findings. They received military training and were armed. Nevertheless, women soldiers were not deployed to direct fighting due to binary gender images. Furthermore, my findings concede that the WAAF-terminology implemented by the DDR programme was in the long-term harmful for female war veterans. Referring to former women soldiers as associates legitimised the SPLA to demobilise women first which deprived them from the opportunity to receive a regular income and advanced DDR benefits as well as denying having women at the front. Hence, I argue that using the category WAAF hampered the acknowledgment of women's work, and giving them due credit for their efforts. Moreover, my thesis found that the few women war veterans in higher positions did not receive the same respect as their male colleagues. I agree that gender-mainstreaming efforts such as implementing a women's quota did not lead to real inclusion or empowerment due to what I call militarised patriarchal structures and elite-prone politics in South Sudan.

In section three of my findings, I identified factors that hampered or facilitated the participation of women war veterans in South Sudanese peace processes. The activities women war veterans listed as having engaged in ranged from raising awareness for peace, mobilising other women, to mediating communal conflicts. Despite my results suggesting it was common for women war veterans to also foster peace in their communities, I argue that labelling women as natural peacemakers might be harmful for them in the long run, as it might deny their agency in combat. My study came to the conclusion that despite women war veterans made tremendous efforts for peace in their communities, they remained invisible because official negotiations dominated by men tended to receive more attention. Thus, my findings suggest that most local efforts are not documented, and therefore unacknowledged. This lack of recognition can prevent the empowerment of the peers of female peacemakers to also become vocal for peace. I looked at more aspects that have discouraging effects on women war veterans in terms of promoting and maintaining peace. Some of them believed they would lack necessary skills and education. Although I state that the unique experience of female war veterans alone can serve as a capacity for peacebuilding. These capacities, however, were not taken into account by DDR. Thus, I argue that DDR failed its aim to encourage former combatants to become active peace process participants in my case study. My results confirm that the South Sudanese national peace process was overall exclusive – not just in terms of gender but also ethnicity and age. Women from the lower classes such as some of the women war veterans were excluded due to victimisation, lack of skills or simply logistics. This exclusion continued after the war in decision-making areas. Thus, I found that women did not have a say in the design and implementation of the DDR in South Sudan.

Furthermore, I summarise the relevance of my findings with regards to the anniversary of the Resolution 1325 on WPS. UNSCR 1325 was ground-breaking as the first resolution that shed light on former women soldiers. Its implementation, however, made only slow progress. Based on my findings, I argue that special needs by female war veterans were not considered sufficiently in the South Sudanese DDR programme. Women's achievements in combat and local peace efforts were not acknowledged. Moreover, the UNSCR 1325 promotion of equal participation by male and female ex-soldiers in peace processes – in particular in decision-making roles – did not resonate with my case study. I conclude by arguing that UNSCR 1325 incentives are likely to fail as long as the patriarchal structures and hierarchical order in South Sudan and the neoliberal approach in international peacebuilding operations are not addressed.

7.1 Suggestion for further research

Another path towards a successful implementation of Resolution 1325 is to generate more knowledge in the field of WPS. During my study, I have identified several related research gaps. If these are filled with empirical knowledge, we can understand better deep-rooted issues which hamper efforts to credit women war veterans for their accomplishments, to form inclusive and sustainable peace processes and to prevent conflict. I found that further research is needed to illuminate gendered images prevalent in the conflict-prone society of South Sudan. My findings suggest that women worked as spies and bodyguards, but more studies are needed to understand the roles of women in intelligence and security. Another topic which received little attention is men in supportive roles. It would be valuable to investigate their status in the military and beyond. Moreover, I found knowledge gaps within the field of peacebuilding in South Sudan. Local efforts towards peace are not well documented. As such, the role of women chiefs and female prophets is mostly neglected by academia. One possible research angle could be the impact of women chiefs on SGBV prevention based on the assumption that due to cultural norms female survivors would be more open to another woman about sexual abuse. Another study could focus on the influence of female prophets on cattle raids. Furthermore, radio as a peacebuilding tool could be explored through a gender lens. Through this medium, women war veterans received CPA and DDR information. In addition, female journalists have an influential role in the reconstruction of the country. Peacebuilding research on a metalevel could reflect how neoliberal peacebuilding can establish security for marginalised groups within a society when its security object is the patriarchal nation state.

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IX. APPENDICES

Annex 1: Interviewees

Interviewees from group A

Interviewee 1	Housewife, 58 years, 6 children, widow, former fighter with SPLA, DDR: one year, breadmaking training
Interviewee 2	Housewife, 25 years, no children, single, former child soldier with SPLA - bodyguard, DDR: 9 months, community awareness raising training
Interviewee 3	Business women, 5 children, married, 51 years, "participated at war fronts for SPLA" formerly, DDR: nine months, breadmaking & hotel operation training
Interviewee 4	Housewife, 40, 3 children, married, former intelligence services for SPLA, DDR: 6 months, needs assessment training
Interviewee 5	Housewife, 45 years, 2 children, separated, "participated at war front for SPLA" formerly, DDR: nine months, needs assessment and registration training
Interviewee 6	Housewife, 49 years, 3 children, divorced, DDR: 1 year 3 months, community sensitisation training
Interviewee 7	Trader, 51 years, children, married, DDR: 6 months, business skills training
Interviewee 8	Hair dresser, 51 years, 5 children, DDR: 8 months, salon training
Interviewee 9	Petty trader, 45 years, 5 children, 6 months, tailoring training
Interviewee 10	Peasant, 44 years, 6 children, married, formerly made army attires during the war time, DDR: 7 months, tailoring training

Interviewees from group B

Interviewee I	Head of women in peacemaking section of independent European organisation who uses unofficial dialogue and mediation to solve and prevent conflict, section assists conflict-affected women to discuss and agree on themes important to them and bring them into peace processes, provided support for female MPs in South Sudan. lived and worked in country from 2013-15, focused on the South Sudanese conflict again in 2017-18 but remotely
Interviewee II	Post-doctoral researcher in Gender Studies, centres on intersection of politics, gender and peacebuilding, in particular roles of women's organisations in peacebuilding, focus on South Sudan, Nigeria, South Africa
Interviewee III	Protection and gender specialist for international NGO operating in South Sudan, runs small-scale projects on local peacebuilding, former GBV project manager in DR Congo

Interviewee IV	Scholar, centres on feminist political and economic geographies and methodologies, focus on Africa and African diaspora, particular interest in gendered development and nation-building after Sudanese CPA in 2005
Interviewee V	Executive director of national non-profit organisation in South Sudan to support livelihoods of marginalised groups through vocational and practical trainings in life skills including engaging communities on conflict analysis, prevention, dialogue, conflict sensitive approaches in trainings and education programmes, connecting stakeholders, interviewee interacted with female ex-combatants who are her organisations beneficiaries or family members
Interviewee VI	Former Regional DDR Director in South Sudan
Interviewee VII	Conflict advisor for governmental department for international development in one of Troika countries, more than 13 years experience in conflict and peacebuilding with centre on women, peace and security, including DDR, 10 years work in FCAS
Interviewee VIII	Scholar, focus on politics of human rights, justice and civil society in context of conflict, mainly in Africa, interest in international peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian response, centres rights, justice and peace of marginalised groups, investigated in everyday experiences of justice within South Sudanese conflict

Annex 2: Interview guides

Interview guide for group A

May 2020

Table of contents

INTERVIEW GUIDE

South Sudanese Women In The DDR Programme –

A Survey In Refugee Settlements Bidi Bidi, Uganda

Sara Noémie Plassnig

1

2

84

1. COMPLETE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FIELD

1.1 Background Data (to be filled in for each interview):

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEW

Location: …………………………………………………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………………………………………………

Time & Duration: …………………………………………………………………………

Name & Position of Interviewer: ……………………………………………………

Name of Translator: ……………………………………………………………………

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEE

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………………

Age: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Current residence: …………………………………………………………………………

Region of Origin: ……………………………………………………………………………

Occupation: …………………………………………………………………………………

INFORMATION ABOUT THE DDR PARTICIPATION

Location of DDR facility: …………………………………………………………………

Timeframe of DDR programme: ………………………………………………………

DDR registration date: ……………………………………………………………………

DDR graduation date: ……………………………………………………………………

Reintegration activity: ……………………………………………………………………

Implementing partner (organisations on the ground): …………………………………

3

1.2 Interview Questions:

PART A

1) a) How did you hear about the Demobilisation, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) programme? Please elaborate: ………………………………………………………

b) How did transportation, registration and entrance take place?

I.	Public transportation	
II.	Received reimbursement for transportation	☐
III.	Received consulting concerning reintegration activities	☐
IV.	Received needs & skills assessment	☐
V.	Others – Please elaborate:…………………………………………………
VI.	Additional Notes – Please elaborate: :………………………………………

2) How were facilities at the demobilisation camp? Please elaborate every factor:

I.	Describe safety: ………………………………………………………………
II.	Describe hygiene facilities: …………………………………………………
III.	Availability childcare facilities	☐
IV.	Additional notes:………………………………………………………………

3 a) Between which reintegration activities in the DDR programme could you choose?

I.	Tailoring	☐
II.	Food processing	☐
III.	Driving	☐
IV.	Others – Please elaborate:…………………………………………………
V.	Additional Notes – Please elaborate: ………………………………………

b) How did the training take place? Please elaborate every factor:

I.	Approximate amount of people per group: ……………………………………
II.	Amount of trainers per group: ………………………………………………
III.	Hours per day: …………………………………………………………………
IV.	Gender segregation	☐

4

V.	Practical	☐
VI.	Theoretical	☐
VII.	Additional notes: ……………………………………………………………

c) How satisfied were you with the DDR training? Please elaborate every factor:

I.	Literacy: ………………………………………………………………………
II.	Numeracy: ……………………………………………………………………
III.	Vocational: ……………………………………………………………………
VIII.	Additional Notes: ……………………………………………………………

4 a) How has your life evolved after exiting the DDR programme? Please elaborate every factor:

I.	Employment: …………………………………………………………………
II.	Activities: ……………………………………………………………………
III.	Roles in & outside of household: …………………………………………
IV.	Displacement: ………………………………………………………………
V.	Family separation: …………………………………………………………
VI.	Amount of children: …………………………………………………………
VII.	Marriages, partnerships: …………………………………………………
VIII.	Additional notes: …………………………………………………………

b) Did DDR change anything for you? If so, what? If not, why not? How did your family and community react to your DDR participation?…………………………………………..
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

5) a) Do you know any women who had a supportive role for an armed group during the war but didn't take part in the DDR process? If so, why didn't they take part?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

b) How have the lives of women who had supportive roles for an armed group but didn't participate in DDR evolved? ……………………………………………………………

5

PART B

6) How was your situation during wartime in South Sudan? Please elaborate every factor:

I.	Family separation: …………………………………………………………
II.	Safety: …………………………………………………………………………
III.	Accommodation: ……………………………………………………………
IV.	Activities: ……………………………………………………………………
V.	Roles in & outside of household: …………………………………………
VI.	Displacement: ………………………………………………………………
VII.	Marriages, Partnerships: …………………………………………………
VIII.	Amount of children: ………………………………………………………
IX.	Additional notes:……………………………………………………………

7 a) Were you ever asked to join an armed group by taking up a supportive role? If so, which armed group? ………………………………………………………………………

b) Why did you (not) join this armed group? ……………………………………………

c) If you joined: How did the recruitment take place? Did you join this armed group voluntarily or involuntarily? ………………………………………………………………

8 a) How did you experience the behaviour of male combatants towards you and other women?…………………………………………………………………………………………

b) Which armed group did these men belong to?………………………………………

c) Do you know of any (other) women combatants? If so, what were their ranks?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

d) If so, which armed group did these women combatants belong to?…………………………

e) If so, which activities did women ex-combatants pursue in the various armed group?
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

f) Were female combatants armed or unarmed? …………………………………………

g) Which training did women combatants receive?………………………………………

6

h) How did you notice their behaviour compared to the behaviour of male combatants?

....

i) How were women combatants seen by their communities, how are they seen today?

....

9 a) Do you know of any (other) women in supportive roles for armed groups? If so,

b) What were their roles and activities?

I.	Cooks	☐
II.	Carriers	☐
III.	Nurses	☐
IV.	Cleaners	☐
V.	Others – Please elaborate:	
VI.	Additional notes:..	

c) Which armed groups did have women in supportive roles?...................................

10 a) Did you receive any acknowledgment for your contribution to an armed group? If so, which?...

b) Which acknowledgment did other women who were in supportive roles for armed groups receive, if any? ....

c) Which acknowledgment did men receive for their contribution to warfare?

....

PART C

11) Do you know of any women who contributed to peacebuilding in South Sudan on the local or national level (mediating disputes in the community / political activism / consultations with other women – etc)? If so:

12 a) What roles do women who engage in peacebuilding in South Sudan have? Please elaborate: ....

b) Which activities do they pursue?

I.	Mediating disputes in the community	☐
II.	Political activism	☐
III.	Consultations with other women	☐
IV.	Others – Please elaborate:	
V.	Additional notes:..	

c) Among the women who contributed with peace efforts, were any of them female ex-combatants or had taken up supportive roles for an armed group during the war? Please elaborate:..

13 a) Did women who engage in peacebuilding (mediating disputes in the community / political activism / consultations with other women – etc) participate in DDR?

....

b) Did the DDR programme give incentives to take part in any peace processes?

....

14 a) Have you participated in peace-building efforts on the local or national level? (Mediating disputes in your community / political activism / consultations with other women – etc?) If not: why not? Please elaborate: ....

....

b) Have you considered participating? ....

15 a) If you participated in peace-building efforts: What made you participate in peace-building efforts on the local or national level (mediating disputes in your community / political activism / consultations with other women – etc)? Please elaborate:

....

b) What was your role in peace-building? ....

c) Which activities did you pursue that did or could have led to a peaceful outcome?

....

d) What did you (not) like about it? Was your effort for peace acknowledged in any way? Please elaborate: ....

....

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Obj A: To examine the participation of women in Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in South Sudan – the programme's benefits and hindrances:

RQ I: Which factors within each of the three pillars disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration facilitated a full benefit for previous war affiliated women? Which factors hampered it? What are reasons and consequences?

Obj B: To assess the situation and status of women ex-combatants and women associated with armed forces (WAAF) and other women in supportive roles for an armed group during and after warfare in the South Sudanese society and in diaspora:

RQ II: How have contributions made by former female fighters, WAAF and other women in supportive roles for an armed group during war been acknowledged?

Obj C: To examine the participation of South Sudanese women previously associated with warfare in peace processes, to identify challenges and opportunities for them in contemporary and future peacebuilding and to elaborate possible entry points for them as well as the societal benefit of inclusive peacebuilding in South Sudan:

RQ III: Which factors contribute to a meaningful participation of former combatants, WAAF and other women in supportive roles for an armed group in peace processes? Which factors hamper their participation? What are reasons and consequences?

RQ IV: How can obstacles for South Sudanese former female fighters, women in supportive roles for an armed group and WAAF to become engaged with peacebuilding activities be reduced?

How can factors which contribute to their meaningful participation in peace processes be multiplied? Why does it matter that more former female fighters, women in supportive roles for an armed group and WAAF take an active role in peacebuilding?

Interview guide for group B

Questionnaire – Expert Interviews

Gender and Peacebuilding in South Sudan – Women Veterans in DDR and Peace Processes

PART A

1) Do you know any female veteran who participated in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme in South Sudan? If so, how is her life today?
2) Were war-affiliated women demobilised, disarmed and/or reintegrated in a different way than war-affiliated men in South Sudan? If so, how and why? What are possible consequences?
3) Do former women soldiers face any particular challenges when it comes to reintegration? If so, what are those? How and by whom are these challenges addressed?
4) Do you know of any South Sudanese women who participated in DDR and in formal or informal peace processes? If so, in which ways? Who are they? How were they included?
5) Can a different DDR approach influence participation in peacebuilding, towards including more women, especially more female veterans? If so, how would that approach look like? If not, why not?
6) Do you know if any South Sudanese female leaders or women's organisations have been involved in planning and implementing the DDR programme? If so, which ones and how were they involved?
7) Do you know of any associations of female veterans? If so, which ones? Are they supported and consulted by eg. SSDDRC, UNDP, UNMISS?
8) Overall, which part of DDR in South Sudan was successful, which not? Why (not)? *(esp. for inclusion & acknowledgment)*

PART B

9) Which role played the DDR process for the status of women veterans in the post-conflict society of South Sudan?
10) Do you know any female veteran in South Sudan? If so, what was her role during wartime?
11) How were/are roles women played in war perceived in the South Sudanese society?
12) Were contributions of women to warfare documented and acknowledged by officials? If so, how and by whom? If not, why not?

PART C

13) South Sudan has implemented a quota to include more women in decision-making processes. How is this implemented? What are the areas in which women are included? Does it lead to an inclusive peace process? *(*Inclusive in a sense that marginalised women will also be invited.)* If not why not?
14) Who are the actors and agencies entrusted with including women in peace processes? (Eg: South Sudan government? International organisations? UN agencies? NGOs? Local level administrations? Others?) Please elaborate.
15) Which other attempts than the quota have been made that can lead to higher female participation in South Sudanese peace processes? Are there any incentives to include former women soldiers?
16) Do female veterans participate somehow in formal or informal peace processes in South Sudan? If so, how? If not, why not?
17) What is it that holds women in general and former women soldiers in particular back from entering the field of peacebuilding in South Sudan?
18) Do female veterans face additional challenges when it comes to participating in peace processes? If so, what are those?
19) On a scale of inclusiveness, where would you locate the peace process in South Sudan?
20) Why is inclusive peacebuilding relevant for South Sudan?
21) How can peacebuilding in South Sudan be designed to facilitate participation of people with diverse backgrounds?
22) How can it be more inclusive towards marginalised women, particularly female veterans?
23) Were interests of women veterans represented in any of the peace negotiations? Are their issues addressed in the South Sudanese society? If so, how and by whom? If not, why not?
    *) What did I forget to ask and whom should I contact next?