Inclusion, influence and increased durability of peace:

Civil society organizations in peace negotiations

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Abstract
This thesis aims to investigate why inclusion of civil society actors in peace processes leads to more durable peace in some cases while not in others. It argues that the influence, rather than inclusion, of civil society organizations (CSOs) explains this variation. It is hypothesized that when CSOs have influence in peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be durable, as well as when a wide range of CSOs have influence in peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be durable. This is explored through a structured focused comparison between the peace processes leading up to peace agreements in Sierra Leone in 1996, the DRC in 2002, the Ivory Coast in 2003 and Liberia in 2003. The empirical findings lend support to the hypotheses and point in the direction of influence of CSOs in peace processes being of importance for the durability of peace. Certain evidence suggesting legitimacy being the causal mechanism is found. However, the empirical analysis also points towards other factors being potential alternative explanations such as war fatigue and sequencing of the process. The suggestive findings and the potential alternative explanations should be investigated further in order to increase the chances of durable peace.

Keywords: civil society, peace process, influence, inclusion, the DRC, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone.
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRCL</td>
<td>Inter-Religious Council of Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRCSL</td>
<td>Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>LURD</td>
<td>Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARWOPNET</td>
<td>Mano River Women Peace Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLC</td>
<td>Movement for the Liberation of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODEL</td>
<td>Movement for Democracy in Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPCI</td>
<td>Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d’Ivoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NPRC</td>
<td>National Provisional Ruling Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCD</td>
<td>The Congolese Rally for Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUF</td>
<td>Revolutionary United Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCDP</td>
<td>Uppsala Conflict Data Program</td>
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<td>WIPNET</td>
<td>Women in Peacebuilding Network</td>
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Introduction

The question of who should be included in peace negotiations has been discussed among scholars and practitioners for a long time and different arguments have been raised. On the one hand, scholars have argued that negotiations should be kept as efficient as possible and therefore should only include the most necessary actors (for example Cunningham 2006). On the other hand, others have argued that it is necessary to widen the circle of who participates in order for the outcome to become more sustainable (for example Bell and O’Rourke 2007; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Nilsson 2012). Research has shown that the inclusion of civil society actors lead to more sustainable outcome (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Nilsson 2012) which is an important contribution in the debate regarding inclusive versus exclusive peace negotiations. In the first statistical analysis on the topic Nilsson (2012) shows that inclusion of civil society organizations (CSOs) in peace agreements after civil wars lead to increased durability of peace and proposes legitimacy to be the causal mechanism. However it has also been pointed out that inclusion of CSOs lead to peace agreements with higher durability in some cases while not in others (Nilsson 2014). The peace processes in Sierra Leone 1996, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 2002, in the Ivory Coast 2003, in Liberia 2003 all included elements of civil society inclusion and were similar in other aspects, but only two of the cases, Liberia and the DRC, led to more durable peace agreements (Nilsson 2012). The thesis will contribute to the field by concentrating on this unexplained variation and examining the research question of why inclusion of civil society actors in peace processes leads to more durable peace in some cases while not in others?

There are several theoretical arguments that may account for the variation in outcome. When investigating the role of women’s organizations and networks in peace processes Paffenholz find that “it is not the inclusion of women per se, but rather women’s actual influence on peace negotiations that is positively correlated with a higher likelihood of reaching sustainable peace agreements” (Paffenholz 2018, 169–70). In other words, Paffenholz argues that instead of inclusion it is influence that is of importance for the durability of peace. It will be investigated if this is the reason for the unexplained variation concerning why inclusion leads to durability in some cases and not in others. In addition to this, Nilsson argues that “a peace accord that includes actors from different segments of the society should make it easier to build legitimacy for the peace process, which could be of importance for making peace last” (Nilsson 2012, 249). Following her argumentation, I argue that if a wide range of civil society organizations have influence in peace negotiations it should make peace more durable.
This study will therefore examine if peace is more likely to be durable if CSOs have influence in peace negotiations (H1), as well as if peace is more likely to be durable if a wider range of CSOs, in other words more representative of the civil society and society at large, are influential (H2).

In order to examine these hypotheses, I conduct a comparative case study consisting of the four cases, the DRC, Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, all of which contained elements of civil society inclusion. With the help of structured focused comparison, I investigate whether the variation in durability of peace is connected to the influence of civil society actors, to the range of influential civil society actors or both. The empirical data is gathered from different secondary sources such as reports from organizations and academic articles.

The empirical findings lend support to the tested hypotheses. Liberia and the DRC were selected since the peace agreements lasted for over five years and they were therefore seen as having experienced more durable peace. In accordance with what theory predicts, the empirics show that civil society organizations did have strong influence in these cases and that the range of influential actors were moderate to wide. The contrast to the other two cases is stark. Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were selected as cases with low durability of peace and indeed the findings show that no influence of CSOs can be detected. However, the analysis also highlights some alternative explanations, such as war fatigue and sequencing of the peace process while peacekeeping forces might be a contributing factor. These aspects as well as the limitations this study suffers from renders the results suggestive. Even so, the findings point in the direction of influence of CSOs being of importance for the durability of peace agreements and this calls for further research in order to increase the chances of durable peace. In terms of policy recommendations this study suggests that increased influence for CSOs in peace negotiations is beneficial for the chances of durable peace, although caution should be used in terms of CSOs having political roles during the implementation phase. Certain evidence pointing in the direction of legitimacy being part of the causal mechanism has been found, as suggested by Nilsson (2012).

The paper is outlined as follows; section two reviews the contribution of previous literature and the third develops the theoretical framework and hypotheses. The fourth dives into research design and the fifth section investigates the variables of interest for the cases. The following section will analyze the empirical findings and the seventh and final section will conclude the thesis by offering conclusions as well as suggestions for future research.
Previous research
This section will present relevant insights by existing literature. First, civil society will be defined followed by academic findings on CSOs in peace processes being presented. Lastly insights on durability of peace will be presented and the research gap this thesis aims to fill will be identified.

Defining civil society
The basic idea of civil society is that it is separate from the state and its governmental institutions and at the same time separate from the sphere of political parties (Spurk 2010). Another way of putting it is that civil society can be seen as the sphere in-between the individual or household, the market and the nation state (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). Belloni identifies civil society as being “… the set of voluntary organizations and groups not created by the state” (2008, 182). This definition civil society covers a very wide range of different types organizations and entities with varying structure, goals, sizes and formality (Edwards 2012).

It is not always easy to know where the boundaries between what should be seen as the state and what should be seen as civil society are which adds to the complexity of the concept. What the civil society looks like in a country is closely tied to the characteristics of the country and divisions along lines of ethnicity, hierarchy, power and gender can be seen among civil society organizations (Paffenholz et al. 2010, 414). Researchers have acknowledged that civil society organizations may sometimes be very far from civil and can for example be nationalistic and violent rather than inclusive and pro-peace (Orjuela 2003). In addition to being “uncivil”, civil society actors may also have close ties to warring factors or be involved in the conflict in different ways (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008).

Keeping this in mind, this study will follow Nilsson’s understanding and CSOs are thereby understood as voluntary organizations that are separate from both the state and political parties and ranges widely from women’s organizations, trade unions, religious associations and human rights groups to give a few examples (Nilsson 2012).

Furthermore, this study will focus on domestic civil society, international NGOs thereby falls outside of the scope of this thesis. It is possible that the sustainability of peace agreements is affected by international organizations participating in peace processes however, that would most likely be because of reasons such as international support, attention or pressure. What this thesis will concern itself with is instead civil society organizations participating in peace processes as representatives of the people affected by the conflict, as further explained later, and therefore it will be limited to domestic CSOs.
CSOs in peace processes: inclusion versus exclusion

The task of creating an environment for negotiations that is conducive to peace and an agreement is a very hard one. Researchers have disputed what the roles of CSOs should be within such negotiations and if they should be included or not. Arguments have been stressed in favor of exclusion as well as inclusion. On one side, it has been argued that bringing additional parties into negotiations may make the negotiations more complicated with slimmer chances of reaching an agreement (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Cunningham 2011). The addition of civil society actors may also include additional veto players which could prevent a settlement from being reached, as argued by Cunningham (2011). Cunningham continues by claiming that even if civil society actors are included without the power of vetoing they will receive some benefits from the peace deal just from participating, such as government positions for example. This in turn, would mean that the possibilities for concessions that could be offered to the warring parties would be decreased and thereby it would be harder to incentivize warring parties to reach a peace deal. An additional argument has to do with the delicate nature of peace negotiations, a situation where secrecy might be necessary and it therefore not being a good idea to include civil society actors (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Lanz 2011).

The arguments in favor of exclusion often boils down to efficacy and the idea that it is easier to reach a settlement when fewer parties are included in the negotiations. This can be contrasted with legitimacy which is what the other side highlights. Ensuring the legitimacy versus efficiency of a peace process has been described as a potential dilemma, the so called vertical dilemma (Jarstad and Sisk 2008). In regards to legitimacy, scholars have argued that civil society can be seen as bringing legitimacy to the process and an eventual agreement and thereby improve the chances for peace (Barnes 2002; McKeon 2004; Bell and O’Rourke 2007; Belloni 2008; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008; Nilsson 2012). Previous literature has put forward several arguments for why involvement of CSOs in peace processes is expected to have a positive effect on sustainable peace, see table 1 compiled by Zanker (2015).
Table 1: Theoretical reasons why involvement of CSOs in peace processes is expected to have a positive effect on sustainable peace from Zanker (2015, 13).

| Normative reasons: | - Right to participate  
<table>
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<th>- Create social ownership of peace agreements</th>
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| Practical reasons:  | - Influence the conflict parties and hold them accountable  
|                     | - Avoid potential ‘spoilers’ to the talks  
|                     | - There is a ‘public agenda’ included in the content of the agreement  
|                     | - Transforms relationships and re-orients society  
|                     | - Public buy-in increases pressure for implementation |

Firstly there is a normative argument that suggests that the population as a whole has a right to participate in peace negotiations (Barnes 2002; McKeon 2004; Paffenholtz 2014; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). The peace process has to be accepted by those whose lives will be affected by it, specifically the population, and excluding this group from the process might lead to alienation (Barnes 2002; Donais 2009; Bell and O’Rourke 2007). This argument can also be made from a legal standpoint as Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (The United Nations and UN General Assembly 1948) states that there is a universal right to participate in governance whether directly or through representation. Peace agreements oftentimes changes the political structures of a country and therefore researchers have argued that the right to participate is applicable also in this case (Barnes 2002; McKeon 2004).

Typically, the whole population will not be able to participate in peace negotiations (public consolations being the exception) and civil society actors can be seen as representatives for the population. Involvement of CSOs can be seen as creating a stronger ownership of the negotiations as well as the outcome which is argued to have a positive effect on the sustainability of peace (Barnes 2002; Donais 2009; McKeon 2004; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). This ownership creates “a subjective social pressure for implementation” on the decision makers (McKeon 2004, 5).

In addition to the normative reasons, several practical reasons can be found in the literature. Firstly there is an argument that civil society has the possibility of influencing conflict actors to make them more likely to sign an agreement as well as holding them accountable (Belloni 2008; McKeon 2004; Nilsson 2012; Paffenholtz 2014; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). It has also been argued that inclusion of civil society actors can lead to a more durable peace since more actors are included which prevents the emergence of spoilers (Blaydes and de Maio...
Thirdly, when civil society is participating it leads to other things being added to the agreement, a so called “public agenda”, which improves the agreement content-wise (Barnes 2002; Odendaal 2010; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). This is thanks to the specific knowledge and expertise that the civil society has (Paffenholz 2014).

It has also been argued that through participation of the civil society, relationships in the society are transformed leading to the society moving away from violent conflict divisions and towards cooperation which increases the chance of durable peace (Barnes 2002). Lastly, there is an argument that the participation of civil society actors increases the transparency of the process and thereby makes it easier to hold the conflict parties accountable for their promises which may increase the incentives for the parties to comply with the agreement (Nilsson 2012). In other words it is argued that civil society participation leads to a higher chance of implementation of the agreement which positively affects the prospect of durable peace (Bell and O’Rourke 2007; McClintock and Nahimana 2008; McKeon 2004; Nilsson 2012).

In addition to these reasons, Nilsson points out that inclusion of civil society actors might affect not only actors within the negotiations but also potential conflict parties that are not part of the negotiations by signaling that the support among the population for continuing the violence has decreased (2012). If support in society seems to have shifted this would likely increase the costs for groups to engage in violence which might make actors also outside the negotiations refrain from violence.

**The durability of peace, what is missing?**

Several large-N studies have been conducted with the aim of explaining durable peace. Factors that have been examined include characteristics of the country or conflict (Doyle and Sambanis 2000a), third party security guarantees (Walter 2002), power sharing agreements (C. A. Hartzell and Hoddie 2014; Jarstad and Nilsson 2008), deployment of peacekeeping forces (Fortna 2008) to mention a few. It has been found that the number of warring parties has an impact on the likelihood of durable peace where more actors lead to a more fragile peace (Doyle and Sambanis 2000a). Higher intensity and longer duration is also associated with lower likelihood of durable peace (Doyle and Sambanis 2000a; Fortna 2008; C. A. Hartzell and Hoddie 2014; Walter 2002).

Scholars have increasingly found interest in researching the involvement of civil society actors in peace processes and peacebuilding and most of these studies are case studies (for example Orjuela 2003; McClintock and Nahimana 2008; Paffenholtz et al. 2010; Brett
When it comes to civil society involvement and durable peace the studies are rare. Bell and O’Rourke conducted a study exploring the involvement of civil society actors in peace agreements by studying provisions in peace agreements but they do not try to investigate whether this affects the prospect of durable peace (2007). Wanis-St. John and Kew (2008) analyzed about 20 peace negotiations and find a positive relationship between civil society inclusion and durable peace. However, they do not test the statistical significance of this and no claim about causality is made. Their analysis is not focused on influence as such and the cases are claimed to be an “introductory sample” but without a clear motivation for how the selection was made. Therefore, the study leaves substantive gaps for future research, some of which this study aims to look closer at.

The first study to statistically examine if civil society involvement in peace accords affects the durability of peace is Nilsson study from 2012. In the extensive statistical study she examines whether inclusive or exclusive peace agreements led to a more durable peace and it was found that inclusion of civil society organizations decreased the risk of peace agreements failing (Nilsson 2012). In the study inclusion is understood to happen when civil society actors are part of drafting the agreement or part of the following peace process, both according to the text of the peace agreement. Her variable is coded as 1 if “at least some” civil society actor is included based on the text of the agreement (Nilsson 2012, 252). Nilsson points out that as far as measuring civil society involvement this is quite a rough measure. She highlights that the number of civil society actors as well as their level of engagement varies between the cases. In addition she also highlights that inclusion of CSOs lead to peace agreements with higher durability in some cases while not in others (Nilsson 2014). This thesis argues that the variation in participation, outcome as well as the crudeness of the measurements is a good starting point for a qualitative study in order to dive deeper into this topic.

Keeping the limitations of the existing studies in mind, this thesis aims to fill a gap in the research by investigating the research question of why inclusion of civil society organizations in peace processes lead to more durable peace in some cases while not in others?

Theoretical framework
The next section moves on to develop the theoretical framework through which the research question will be investigated. The arguments will be presented, leading up to the two hypotheses being formulated.
Argument and causal mechanism

Influence and durability

The argument this thesis puts forward is that the variation in the durability of peace among peace processes where civil society was included can be connected to the level of influence of such organizations. Investigating the role of women’s organizations and networks in peace negotiations Paffenholz points out that “most policy and academic debates tend to focus on women’s presence, rather than their actual impact on, peace processes” (2018, 170). I argue that the same can be said about civil society organizations in general. Paffenholz finds that “it is not the inclusion of women per se, but rather women’s actual influence on peace negotiations that is positively correlated with a higher likelihood of reaching sustainable peace agreements” (Paffenholz 2018, 169–70). In other words, Paffenholz argues and finds evidence that instead of inclusion, it is influence that is of importance for the durability of peace (Paffenholz et al. 2016). However, a clear causal mechanism is not suggested. Paffenholz focuses on women’s organizations and I argue that it is reasonable that the same is true also for other civil society actors, namely that it is the impact of civil society actors rather than the inclusion of such actors that have a positive effect on the durability of peace. The suggested relationship that will be investigated in this thesis is therefore the one between influence of CSOs and durability of peace and it will be investigated whether the level of influence can help explain why inclusion of civil society organizations lead to a more durable peace in some cases while not in others.

Influence of CSOs → Durability

Influence is not an easily defined concept. Paffenholz et al have studied the influence of women’s groups and network in peace processes and in their study influence is defined as “their ability to push for their preferences before, during and after the negotiation process” (2016, 16). Paffenholz et al. understand preferences as being related to (1) putting issues on the agenda for negotiations or implementation, (2) adding to the substance of the agreement, (3) participating in the implementation and (4) demanding for negotiations to start, to recommence or for signing an agreement (2016). It is furthered clarified that preferences can be both positive and negative in its nature, where negative ones could be campaigning for the opposition of negotiations, an agreement or implementation.

In order to exercise influence it is not a necessity to possess a chair at the official negotiation table. Indeed, having a seat at the table does not automatically or necessarily mean influence and not having a seat at the table does not automatically or necessarily mean no possibilities of exercising influence (Paffenholz et al. 2016). The case studies conducted by
Paffenholz et al. reveal that even in some cases where women were represented by a good number of the representatives at the negotiation table the opportunities to influence were limited (2016). Paffenholz has systematized the ways in which she has found it is possible for CSOs to take part in the peace process in what she calls seven modalities of inclusion (2015). These modalities range from mass action to official participation in Track 1 negotiations. Building on the framework made by Paffenholz et al. influence by CSOs is here understood as CSOs’ ability to push for their preferences during the peace negotiation process in terms of putting issues on the agenda, adding substance to the agreement and having planned roles during the implementation. In addition to this, I chose to add the aspect of possible indications from the mediators or negotiating parties that the CSOs were influential in order to capture this possibility as well.

Nilsson suggests that inclusion of civil society actors may increase the legitimacy of the process and thereby increase the likelihood of durable peace. I argue that it is reasonable to expect that if civil society organizations have actual influence over the negotiations this would further increase their possibilities to create more legitimacy for the process which in turn would make increased durability of peace more likely, compared to such actors merely being included. For example, it is plausible to imagine that a civil society actor can build more legitimacy for a peace process when the segment of the society it represents notices that the actor has an impact for example by being able to bring suggestions to the table. In this way can CSOs that are influential in peace negotiations more easily create legitimacy for the process and thereby increase the chance of peace to prevail (see figure 1).

As the table compiled by Zanker (see table 1) shows there has been many proposed causal arguments for why involvement of civil society actors might lead to increased likelihood of durable peace. For example it has been argued that when civil society is participating it leads to other things being added to the agreement, a so called “public agenda”, which improves the agreement content-wise (Barnes 2002; Odendaal 2010; Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). If civil society groups are merely included the chances of them being able to have an impact on the content of the agreement are limited compared to if these actors instead can exercise influence over the process. This content improvement could be argued to be another causal mechanism with which civil society influence increases the chances for peace to prevail. In similar ways could the other explanations in table 1 be expressed as causal mechanisms explaining the relationship between influence and durability.
Influence

Durability

Legitimacy

The suggested relationship forecasts that influence of civil society actors lead increased legitimacy and thereby to a higher likelihood of durable peace, which gives the first hypothesis:

H1: If CSOs have influence in peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be more durable.

Range of influential CSOs and durability

The degree of influence of a single CSO is not the only relevant dimension of civil society participation. Studies have suggested that involvement of actors from diverse segments of the society is advantageous for peace (McKeon 2005; Barnes 2009). Continuing this thought it is reasonable to expect that it makes a difference if there is only one civil society organization that has influence in the peace process or if there are several different organizations representing different segments of the society. Nilsson argues that “a peace accord that includes actors from different segments of the society should make it easier to build legitimacy for the peace process, which could be of importance for making peace last” (Nilsson 2012, 249). Following her argumentation, I argue that if a wide range of civil society organizations have influence in peace negotiations, it is easier to accumulate legitimacy for the process which could make peace more durable.

Researchers have suggested that involvement of actors from diverse segments of the society is advantageous for peace (McKeon 2005; Barnes 2009) but offers no framework for how this could be measured. Developing this variable myself, I define range of influential CSOs as the degree to which the influential civil society actors in the peace process can be seen as representative of the civil society and society as a whole. For example it is possible that religious organizations were included in a peace process and had a high level of influence as measured by the first independent variable above. However, only religious organizations being influential might not necessarily be representing wide spectra of the society. In order to assess this, the influential CSOs need to be compared with the civil society in the country. Similarly, it is possible that even if the civil society is well represented, the society at large might not be, for example if the civil society is limited. The influential CSOs must in other words be
compared to the civil society as well as to the society at large in order to find out if the influential CSOs are representative in the local context.

Moreover, it is important to point out that the strength and vibrancy of the civil society may vary a lot across different countries. It is possible that even though only a small number of civil society actors are included in a process, these might indeed represent a wide spectrum of the civil society if the civil society is not very vibrant to begin with. The sheer number of how many segments need to be influential in order for the civil society or society at large to be represented may vary considerably between countries. It should also be pointed out that the possibilities for civil society to flourish without taking physical or political risks may differ a lot in the different countries because of for example the political situation. Since the CSOs participating in the peace process will be compared to the civil society and society as a whole in the specific country, the effect of these differences on this study are mitigated. It further bears to point out that most of us feel connected to many different segments at the same time, the same person might for example be active in a labor union, a religious organization and a human right organization at the same time.

I argue that if a wide range of CSOs, representative of both the civil society as well as the society at large, have influence in the peace negotiations peace is more likely to be more durable. One possible causal mechanism is what Nilsson presents, that is because of increased chances of building legitimacy for the process which in turn can increases the chances of durability (see figure 2). Similarly to what was argued above for the first hypothesis, the other explanations other explanations raised by previous research for why involvement of CSOs is expected to have a positive effect on durable peace (table 1) could be expressed as the causal mechanisms also for the relationship between range of influential CSOs and durability of peace. For example it could be argued that if a wide range of civil society actors are influential in the peace process this will lead to higher chances for content improvement which in turn will lead to higher chances of peace prevailing.

*Figure 2: Causal diagram for Hypothesis 2*

Range of influential CSOs

\[\rightarrow\] Durability

\[\rightarrow\] Legitimacy
The suggested relationship proposes that influence of a wide range of civil society actors lead to increased legitimacy and thereby to a higher likelihood of a more durable peace, which gives the second hypothesis:

H2: If a wider range of CSOs have influence in peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be more durable.

Research design
This section will present the research design for how the analytical framework will be used for investigating the empirical material. First the method of structured focused comparison will be presented followed by the case selection, operationalization and reflections on the time frame and data collection.

Method
The hypotheses in this study will be tested empirically through a comparative case study design. There are several reasons for this and the first being that the thesis is interested in explaining the variation in the durability of peace after inclusive peace agreements and therefore the design needs to be comparative in order to allow for this to be researched. Moreover, a case study design is chosen, instead of a large-n design, since it is difficult to quantitatively measure the independent variables of influence of CSOs in peace processes as well as the range of influential CSOs since this information does not exist in the shape of data sets yet. In addition, measuring these concepts qualitatively brings increased validity. A case study framework allows for a closer look at the theorized relationship and increased possibilities of looking into alternative explanations. This fits well with the purpose of this study which is to investigate the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

The method that will be used is structured focused comparison and its central idea is to develop questions that are related to the independent and dependent variables (George and Bennett 2005). The questions will be built on theory and designed with the purpose of the study in mind which leads the study to be focused. This focus on relevant variables means that not all aspects of the cases will be investigated but instead emphasis will be on relevant aspects. The method is structured in the sense that the same set of questions will be asked for each case and the information collected will therefore make comparison and cumulation of information in systemic ways possible (George and Bennett 2005). The design of the method will produce findings in the different cases that will then be compared and analyzed. The method is chosen since it allows me to examine if the expected correlation is present. In addition, it is also suitable
for a study on a topic that is relatively new as well as one that will rely on secondary sources which this study is an example of.

Case selection
The case selection method used in this thesis is Mill’s method of difference, also known as most-similar method, where a small number of cases are chosen and at the same time holding as many factors as possible constant except for the factor that is assumed to explain the difference in outcome (George and Bennet 2005). This study aims to investigate the unexplained variance in durability which is the outcome of the causal chain and therefore a y-centered most-similar design is suitable (Gerring 2016). In a y-centered most-similar design the starting point is to have unexplained variation in the outcome among cases that otherwise seem similar and comparable, as shown in table 2. Gerring further points out that in most similar design “non-identity is tolerable if the deviation runs counter to the predicted hypothesis” (2016, 133). What is then investigated is whether the difference in outcome can be connected to the putative cause, the independent variables.

Table 2: Y-centered most-similar design based on Gerring (2007, 132).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>X Independent variable</th>
<th>Control variable(s)</th>
<th>Y Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A fundamental and crucial part of every research design is case selection, and it is especially important in qualitative studies where random sampling is impossible due to the limited number of cases (Seawright and Gerring 2008). The researcher deliberately choosing cases opens up for the risk of selection bias and the risk of something in the selection process leading to a systemic error (Collier and Mahoney 1996). This issue and strategies to avoid selection bias have been discussed by many scholars and a commonly suggested strategy to keep systemic errors by case selection as small as possible is to make sure there is an “appropriate frame for comparison” (Collier and Mahoney 1996). This includes taking two aspects into consideration, the first being that the variation on the dependent variable is indeed appropriate for investigating the research question. The second is that the researcher must be
confident about the chances that the casual mechanism linking the variables is the same in the cases that are selected.

This study is interested in explaining the variation of the dependent variable which means that cases which shows more durable peace after a peace agreement as well as cases where this is not the case needs to be included. It should be noted that influence of civil society actors as well as range of civil society actors with influence are not assumed to be the only variables that explain the variation in post-agreement sustainability of peace. However, it is seen as two aspects that positively affects the variation in durability among cases where civil society organizations where included in peace negotiations. The cases therefore also need to be as similar as possible on aspects that can be considered potential alternative explanations. Following the recommendations for avoiding selection biases, it also has to be convincing that it is the same causality that applies in the cases.

Keeping these criteria in mind, the starting point for the case selection is the replication data from Nilsson’s statistical analysis of civil society inclusion in peace agreements after civil war (2012). This is an appropriate starting point since this thesis aims to build on her findings and in addition, this dataset is still the most comprehensive on the topic on civil society inclusion to this authors knowledge. In order to set up a case study with a most similar design her data set is filtered based on certain variables. Firstly, the data is filtered on the basis of whether civil society organizations are coded as being included and only cases in which that is the case are taken into consideration since this thesis aims to explain the variance in peace durability among peace agreements that included civil society. As previously mentioned, Nilsson considers civil society to be included if the peace agreement states that at least one civil society organization has a role in drafting the peace agreement or in the peace process according to the text of the agreement (Nilsson 2012). It should be noted that this therefore is only a basic measure of civil society inclusion and does not include measurements of civil society influence which is what this thesis aims to investigate.

Secondly, the data is filtered to cases where the incompatibility is concerning the government, instead of territory. Nilsson finds that the probability of civil society actors being included increases slightly in conflicts where the incompatibility is government. Controlling for the incompatibility of the conflict is therefore done in order to ensure that the cases are as comparable as possible.

Moreover, it has been argued that civil society is less needed in negotiations with democratic actors (Wanis-St. John and Kew 2008). Following the theoretical argument regarding regime type the next limitation is to restrict the case selection to cases of non-
democracies. Nilsson finds that inclusion of civil society has a larger effect on the likelihood of sustainable peace in non-democracies versus democracies (Nilsson 2012). By keeping this constant, differences in regime type can be disregarded as a potential alternative explanation. In addition, since Nilsson finds that the effect of inclusion of CSOs is larger in non-democracies it is especially interesting to investigate the variance in the durability of peace in these cases.

The fourth step is to control for the number of warring actors since this could make peace more unstable (Doyle and Sambanis 2000a) and potentially also affect the possibilities for CSOs to participate in the process (Nilsson 2012) and the cut-off point is set to a maximum number of 4 warring actors.

The next step is to separate the cases between ones where the outcome was more durable versus where this was not the case. Since Nilsson’s data set stops at 2004 the outcomes of the conflicts are also checked in the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (Harbom, Högbladh, and Wallensteen 2006; Högbladh 2011). This leaves one group of cases where the peace agreement lasted at least five years which consists of DRC and Liberia and then a group where the peace agreement broke down in less than five years which consists of the Ivory Coast, Mexico, and Sierra Leone. In addition to this the case of Congo in 1999 is also left and according to the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset it is coded a lasting peace agreement. However it is pointed out that in 2002 one of the signatories of the agreement left and low-intensity fighting broke out (Harbom, Högbladh, and Wallensteen 2006; Högbladh 2011). The other signatories stayed committed to the agreement. Due to this complicating factor in terms of durability of the agreement this case is excluded. The next step is to exclude one more case, namely one of the ones where the peace agreement broke down in less than five years. Neither Mexico nor Sierra Leone is coded as intense, which differentiates these cases from the others. Keeping this in mind and while trying to keep as much as possible constant Mexico is excluded based on combination of not being coded as an intense conflict and also being the only case outside of Africa.

Keeping all of these factors in mind four cases are chosen: DRC and Liberia as cases where the outcome is more durable and the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone as cases where the outcome is less durable. The cases chosen are summarized in the table below. As visible in table 3, the cases are similar in many important respects. For example they are all comprehensive agreements (Harbom, Högbladh, and Wallensteen 2006; Högbladh 2011) that includes power sharing measures (Jarstad and Nilsson 2008) with similar numbers of warring parties (Nilsson 2012). Moreover, the peace agreements in the four selected cases were signed rather close in time to each other, within eight years, which increases their comparability. In
addition to this peacekeeping operations have been deployed to the four countries (United Nations 2018b).

Table 3: Comparison of the four cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agreement lasting &gt;5 years</th>
<th>Civil society inclusion</th>
<th>Non-democracy</th>
<th>Conflict duration at signing</th>
<th>Intense Warring parties</th>
<th>Comprehensive Power-sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two aspects that are worth pointing out as important differences between the cases is that the conflict in Liberia had been going on for a longer time when the agreement was signed and that Sierra Leone is not considered to be an intense conflict. Scholars have found that the duration of war may have an effect on the duration of peace although the direction of the effect is contested. Either war duration might affect the duration of peace in a negative way since long wars may indicate intractable conflicts, or the opposite direction since long wars might lead to a greater desire for peace (Doyle and Sambanis 2000b; C. Hartzell, Hoddie, and Rothchild 2001). It is plausible that the civil society might be considerably weakened by such a conflict and therefore less likely to be able to exercise influence. Conflict intensity is also a potential confounding variable since conflicts with a higher level of intensity run a higher risk of seeing peace break down after a peace agreement (Doyle and Sambanis 2000a; Fortna 2008), a result that can also be found in Nilsson’s study. It is also plausible to be more difficult for CSO to exercise influence in peace processes related to intense conflicts for several reasons, one of them being that the civil society might be considerably weakened by such a conflict. However, both of these aspects predicts an effect that goes in the opposite direction of the hypothesis, for example that less intense conflicts are more likely to see peace agreements be more durable and therefore I argue that the cases are still comparable. Similarly, conflict duration is often argued to negatively influence the prospect of sustainable peace but since Liberia is a successful case I argue that the deviation is tolerable and the cases are still comparable.
To sum up it can be concluded that the cases are not identical on all aspects but I argue they are similar on enough aspects to be comparable for the purposes of this study. By choosing cases in this way with an appropriate frame of comparison the risks of selection bias have been mitigated.

**Operationalization of the theoretical framework**

**Independent variables**

**Influence**

The next step is to operationalize the variables and I start by operationalizing influence. I will rely on Paffenholz et al. for measuring influence since that is the most developed framework for measuring influence that could be found. In order to measure influence Paffenholz et al. assessed it on a scale consisting of four levels, from “no influence” to “very strong positive influence” (Paffenholz et al. 2016, 17). Weak influence is defined as, in a limited way, trying to push for initiations of negotiations or an agreement, or bring some items to the agenda of the negotiations. Strong influence on the other hand is understood as bringing “several, significant issues” to the agenda or strongly pushing for the initiation of negotiations or for an agreement to be signed (Paffenholz et al. 2016, 17). Building on this framework the aspect of possible indications from the mediators or negotiating parties that the CSOs were influential is added in order to capture this possibility as well. The influence of CSOs will be assessed on a four-step scale ranging from no influence to strong influence, see figure 3. Potential limitations in this measurement can be found. There are limitations in reliability, or in other words whether someone else reanalyzing the data would get the same results (Powner 2015). In this case, there is possible difficulties of distinguishing what level of influence an actor is asserting since that is a rather fluid concept. In order to decrease these potential limitations categories are developed with the goal of being as clear as possible.
Figure 3: Measuring influence of CSOs, based on Paffenholz et al (2016).

For the level of influence to be investigated with the method of structured focused comparison, questions and indicators based on the theoretic foundation of this thesis are developed, see table 4. Potential limitations in the validity of this measurement could emerge depending on how well the data that is available corresponds with the research question and hypothesis (Powner 2015). The indicators that will be used are developed keeping this in mind and in order to decrease these potential limitations they are designed to stringently correspond to the hypothesis and thereby the research question.

Table 4: Questions and indicators for IV 1, influence of CSOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to put issues on the agenda for negotiation?</td>
<td>- CSOs bringing issues to the agenda of the negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to add substance to the agreement?</td>
<td>- CSOs adding substance to the agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to voice demands for negotiations to start, to recommence, to stop or for the agreement to be signed?</td>
<td>- CSOs voicing demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was there planned roles for CSOs participating during the implementation?</td>
<td>- Planned roles for CSOs during the implementation phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there indications from the negotiating parties or the mediator that the CSOs were influential?</td>
<td>- Statements made by mediators or warring parties about the importance of CSOs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Range of influential civil society actors
Similarly to influence above, the range of civil society organizations will be assessed on a four-leveled scale ranging from no range to a wide range where most segments of civil society and society at large are represented. Segments of society are understood to be different parts of the society such as religious communities, LGBTQIA communities or communities of workers to give a few examples. With the help of this framework the range of the civil society actors in the peace processes in the four cases will be assessed. Similarly to above there are potential limitations in reliability of this measurement, namely the question of if someone would re-analyze the data, would they come up with the same result. In order to decrease this limitation, clear categories to guide the data analysis are developed.

*Figure 4: Measuring range of influential CSOs*

Following this, a number of questions are developed to serve as a base for the structured focused comparison between the cases, see table 5. Again similarly to above, there are potential limitations in validity depending on the data available. In order to increase the validity of this measurement a number of indicators connected to the hypothesis are developed.

*Table 5: Questions and indicators for IV 2, range of influential CSOs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are several CSOs influential according to the first independent variable?</td>
<td>- Number/presence or absence of several influential CSOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the civil society?</td>
<td>- Number/presence or absence of different segments being represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Degree to which the influential CSOs can be seen as representatives of civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the society at large?</td>
<td>- Number/presence or absence of major CSO being excluded from the process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vibrancy of the civil society</td>
<td>- Degree to which the influential CSOs can be seen as representatives of the society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Number/presence or absence of major segments of the society being excluded from the process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dependent variable**

The dependent variable for both the hypotheses is durability of peace. To measure this, Nilsson measures the number of years of sustained peace after a peace agreement (Nilsson 2012). The reliability of this measurement is high in terms of measuring if the peace agreement lasted since this is measured through the UCDP peace agreement dataset (Harbom, Högbladh, and Wallensteen 2006; Högbladh 2011). However, this is arguably quite a crude measure of the durability of peace, or in other words low in validity, since it does not take aspects of the quality of peace into consideration. Since this paper aims to build on Nilsson’s paper the same measure will be used but thanks to the qualitative method of this paper the outcome can be elaborated on further than whether or not the peace agreement lasted, and thereby increase the validity. This slightly decreases the reliability since there might be differences in interpretations if the data were to be re-analyzed. Keeping in mind that the elaboration will merely be a comment on the situation in the country during the period of the peace agreement lasting, the decrease in reliability is considered small.

Since the aim is to investigate why inclusive peace processes sometimes lead to more durable peace while it does not in other cases, a limit must be set for when a peace agreement can be said to have lasted for a longer time. This limit will help define the case selection but thanks to the qualitative design of the study the analysis allows me to delve deeper into the duration of peace by examining the situation in the country during this time. In this paper, this limit will be when a peace agreement has lasted at least 5 year. The reason the limit is set to five years is that this is a considerable time, a common cut-off point in peace and conflict research and peace agreements lasting less than five years can arguably not be defined as leading to more durable peace. Lederach for example defines five years to be the difference between “short-range planning” and “decade thinking”(Lederach 1997, 77).
Timeframe and data collection
The timeframe applied to the chosen cases will be the time period of the peace negotiation leading up to the signing of the peace agreements. Depending on the processes in each respective country this time period will be of different length. The reason this thesis will focus on this timeframe is its focus on investigating the negotiation phase of the respective peace processes. This means that the time frames will be the year of 2002 for the case of the DRC, the year of 1996 for Sierra Leone, the end of 2002 and the beginning of 2003 for the Ivory Coast and 2003 for Liberia.

The sources that will be used are secondary sources such as reports from international organizations, local and international NGOs as well as academic articles. In addition, to the extent it is possible some of the local civil society groups may have websites with reports and relevant information. Moreover, news reports will be used to provide knowledge on the peace process and statements made by the mediators, negotiating parties or CSOs regarding the process and the role of civil society groups within it. Whenever possible the information will be confirmed through triangulation. In order for source bias to be avoided, it will be very important to make sure that information is gathered from a wide range of credible and reliable sources.

This research topic would benefit from field work in the shape of interviews being done but because of the limitations of this thesis it will rely on secondary sources including academic work of others having conducted interviews. It is likely that the validity of the data would have been higher had interviews been conducted since I would have been able to develop questions directly relevant to my variables instead of relying on the work of others. However, using already published work and reports as the empirical data does bring another advantage in validity as these peace processes happened some time ago and so some of the work was made closer in time to when the events took place.

Examining the cases
Having presented the research design of the study this next section will present the empirics of the four cases in a chronological order starting with Sierra Leone.

Case 1: The Abidjan Agreement in Sierra Leone
With the backdrop of economic stagnation, bad governance and political marginalization a civil war started in March 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a rebel group led by Foday Sankoh and sponsored by Gaddafi in Libya and Charles Taylor in Liberia, attacked the country (Sesay and Suma 2009). The very brutal war lasted 11 years and continued over several
regime changes. In 1992 the government got overthrown by a military coup and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) got put in its place. The new military government promised to end the war with RUF quickly but in 1995 the violence had gotten worse. This led many to believe that the junta was colluding with the RUF in order to prolong the war and thereby be able to justify why elections were not being held. International and domestic pressure on NPRC to allow elections increased and in March 1996 elections were held and a civilian administration under President Ahmad Kabbah took office (Sesay and Suma 2009).

The peace process between the RUF and the government was initiated by the London-based conflict resolution NGO International Alert and the Organization for African Unity took over the process in the summer of 1996 (Hayner 2007b). The peace process started during the time of the military government and once the civilian government took office the process was handed over to President Kabbah and led to the parties signing the Abidjan accord in November of 1996. However, in less than two months after the agreement was signed the fighting resumed, and in just a few months after that Kabbah was forced into exile by yet another military coup replacing the civilian government with an Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Pham 2004). The conflict continued with many other turn of events until it finally ended in 2002 with the Lomé agreement (Sesay and Suma 2009). The agreement of interest in this study will be the Abidjan agreement.

Before continuing to investigating the variables for this case it is important to note that Kabbah took office through a democratic process. Freedom House notes that the elections that Kabbah won were “the most legitimate since the independence” (Freedom House 2018a). Since Nilsson measures democracy with a lagged variable this did not come up during the case selection. Even though Sierra Leone was strictly speaking a democracy when the agreement was signed it was still a military non-democracy when the negotiations started which speaks in favor of this case still being interesting in this case study. Possibly more importantly, it should be taken into consideration that the period of democratic rule was extremely short and it would therefore be unlikely that the governmental apparatus, society at large as well as the civil society had adapted to operating in a democratic setting. Additionally, it would be expected that the likelihood of a higher level of CSO participation as well as a higher level of durability would be increased in a democracy but this case is contrary to those expectations. This speaks in favor of comparison being possible with the other cases although the agreement was signed during the few months of democratic rule Sierra Leone experienced during this time.
Influence of civil society actors

Most analyses of the road to peace in Sierra Leone have not devoted a lot of attention to civil society initiatives created to work towards a solution of the conflict. Pham points out that “despite their limited success, these local civil society efforts ought not to be undervalued” (Pham 2004, 56). Different civil society organizations were active at different points and worked towards mobilizing the public in favor of peace and a democratic development. Although there were some initial efforts, civil society remained “largely on the fringes of the actual negations as they developed in 1996” (Lord 2000, 42). As noted above the negotiations were initiated by the London-based NGO International Alert and the role of the IA is very contested (see for example Sorbo, Macrae, and Wohlgemuth 1997; Abraham 2001; Adebajo 2002) however this falls outside of the scope of this thesis since it is focused on domestic CSOs.

One initiative that was influential at least in some respect connected to the peace process was the Sierra Leone Women’s Forum. It was started on the initiative of the Sierra Leone Association of University Women which proposed that the women’s groups in the country should meet regularly and this led to the creating on the Sierra Leone Women’s Forum. Organizations included in the Forum organized, among other things, a peace march of women singing and dancing in Freetown in January 1995 (Jusu-Sheriff 2000). This demonstration did however not change the course of the war but was important in the sense that women’s groups had never taken this much of a political stance before (Pham 2004). Civil society in general, and the Forum in particular, did however play an active role in pressuring the military junta to hold the elections which was an important step for the parties in the negotiations to come to an agreement. The issue of elections was discussed at the National Consultative Conference and tribal chiefs, academics, trade unions and women’s groups among others participated. During this conference, the women’s group managed to get their resolution adopted which avoided the upcoming elections to be delayed which had been suggested (Pham 2004). With the election of Kabbah the importance of the women’s groups was reduced and the Forum only had an “extremely limited” role in the drafting of the Abidjan agreement (Pham 2004).

It is important to note that some religious leaders were active in the Abidjan process. These leaders together with others started the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) in 1997, after the signing of the Abidjan agreement. The IRCSL would turn out to be playing a big and important role as the bridge builder between the parties in the next peace process leading up to the Lomé agreement (Pham 2004). Although some of these religious leaders were active already in the Abidjan process no evidence has been found of them being influential already at this point.
The next question is to what extent there were planned roles for CSOs to participate during the implementation. The Abidjan agreement included a framework for civil society to participate in the implementation of the agreement, especially in terms of human rights and humanitarian law related issues (Gberie 2000). This framework was carried over to the Lomé agreement (O’Flaherty 2004).

Weighing this together, it can be concluded that no influence of CSOs in the actual peace process can be detected, although the civil society was active in making the election take place which paved the way for the agreement to be signed and there were some limited roles planned for the CSOs during the implementation (see table 6).

**Table 6: Findings for IV 1 for Sierra Leone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to put issues on the agenda for negotiation?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to add substance to the agreement?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to voice demands for negotiations to start, to recommence, to stop or for the agreement to be signed?</td>
<td>Not for the negotiations, but for the elections which in turn led to the negotiations to continue and reach an agreement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was there planned roles for CSOs participating during the implementation?</td>
<td>To a limited degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there indications from the negotiating parties or the mediator that the CSOs were influential?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Range of influential civil society actors**

The civil society was fairly diverse and active during the time of the peace negotiations (Pham 2004). In other words, it existed CSOs that could have been participating in the process had they gotten the chance. Since no civil society actor was deemed influential in the process leading up to the agreement there was also no range of influential civil society actors (see table 7).
Table 7: Findings for IV 2 for Sierra Leone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are several CSOs influential according to the first independent variable?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the civil society?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the society at large?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Durability of peace**

Since fighting resumed within two months of signing the agreement the durability was extremely low and the society never had time to adjust to peace. The fighting resumed because the RUF leader Sankoh opposed the decision in the peace agreement to allow for 720 UN observers (Abraham 2001).

In conclusion, this case study has shown that this is a case of no durability, no influence of CSOs and thereby also no range of influential CSOs.

**Case 2: The Inter-Congolese Dialogue in the DRC**

The DRC has a long and difficult history of state collapse, oppression and bad governance and the violence escalated in 1996-1997 into what is known as the First Congo War when rebel leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila attacked the military rule with direct military support from Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda (Davis and Hayner 2009; Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017). After having become the president, Kabila stopped the cooperation with his former allies and kicked out their soldiers from the country (Ahere 2012). This resulted in the Rwanda and Uganda losing access to the many natural resources and in order to regain this access they began supporting local armed groups that were fighting against Kabila (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017).

The Second Congo War started in 1998 and the government was supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe and the armed opposition consisted of two armed groups: The Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) supported by Rwanda and Uganda and the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) supported by Uganda as well as splinter organizations (Davis and Hayner 2009). Between 1998-2003 the DRC faced what has been called the most violent conflict since World War II (Koko 2016) or Africa’s first world war (Bainomugisha and Issaka 2004). A military stalemate was reached in 1999 at and a ceasefire and peace agreement was brokered among armed parties in Lusaka in 1999, however this did not stop the fighting. The situation changed in 2001 when President Kabila was assassinated and his son Joseph Kabila took over. The Lusaka agreement stipulated a six week process with armed as well as
unarmed Congolese groups (Davis and Hayner 2009) and after many delays and a failed attempt to start the negotiations in Addis Ababa, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue negotiations took place in Sun City in South Africa in 2002. The process led to the parties signing a “Global and Inclusive Agreement” (2002) which was the foundation for the constitution and the political transition (Davis and Hayner 2009).

Influence of civil society actors

The Inter-Congolese dialogue included the three Lusaka signatories, three additional warring groups, unarmed opposition as well as civil society actors and all delegations were supposed to participate on equal terms (Rogier 2004). A total of 362 delegates participated in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and of them 66 delegates represented the civil society (Koko 2016). Among the civil society actors there were “representatives from churches, development and human rights NGOs, trade unions and various professional associations, including pharmacists, doctors, taxi drivers, lawyers and other business actors” (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017, 5). In general there seems to be a general consensus among scholars that the civil society participation was an important aspect of the peace process but that the process was dominated by the armed actors (Kabemba 2004; Davis and Hayner 2009; Koko 2016 among others). Keeping that in mind, I will now look closer at the questions developed for the structured focused comparison.

The first question relates to if CSOs have been able to put issues on the agenda for negotiations. The clearest example of this comes from the women delegates (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017). This being one of the first peace processes after the UN Security Council had adopted the first resolution on the role of women in peace and security, resolution 1325, the idea of coalition building among women enjoyed support (Paffenholz and Ross 2015). Before the talks started a meeting was organized in Nairobi by Femmes Africa Solidarité and Women as Partners for Peace in Africa (Whitman 2006). A total of 64 women from all delegations, except one of the additional armed groups, participated in the meetings and over the course of the four days the meeting lasted the women started to work together. They agreed upon a declaration, the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, of recommendations regarding the peace process. The Nairobi declaration included calls for ending of the hostilities and withdrawal of all foreign soldiers, 30 percent quota for women in all government institutions as well as ensuring no impunity for criminal acts (The Nairobi Declaration 2002). Several of the gender provisions proposed by the Nairobi Declaration made it into the final agreement (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017, 7). Therefor it can be concluded that the coalition
of women delegates was successful also in adding substance to the agreement. In addition, it has been pointed out that most of the substantial resolutions that were adopted at Sun City were in fact initiatives of civil society groups (Rogier 2004).

However, the most significant contribution of the women delegates was their impact on the process of actually getting the agreement signed in the end (Whitman 2006). During the last evening in Sun City disagreements arose over technical issues and it seemed like the agreement would not be signed after all. At this point the women delegates created a human chain that blocked the doors to the committee room and demanded that the agreement should be signed. The women were successful and the agreement was signed.

Not only was the civil society participating in the peace process, they were also directly active in the management of transnational institutions. In fact, it was decided that civil society would receive the same number of seats as the other parties in the negotiations and in addition chairpersons of all transitional institutions working to further root the democracy as well as the speaker of the senate. Because of the special role the civil society undertook after the agreement it has been argued that they played the role of the ‘de facto political opposition’ (Koko 2016). This has led several scholars to arguing that the way in which the civil society participated in the transitional institutions and the implementation of the peace agreement has led to politicization of the civil society which has led to a weakening of their roles (for example Rogier 2004; Davis and Hayner 2009; Paffenholz and Ross 2015; Koko 2016). Koko argues that the direct involvement of civil society in managing political institutions “contributed to depleting its member organizations, as many of their leaders either were directly recruited by existing political parties and platforms or simply decided to establish their own political organizations and join active politics” (Koko 2016, 135). It can be concluded that there were indeed many plans for the civil society to participate and the way in which they participated politicized the CSOs and made them weaker. Or in other words, civil society did not act as a watchdog but instead as a contender for political power (Kabemba 2004).

It can be established that the coalition of women delegates was indeed very successful and asserted strong influence on the process (see table 8).
Table 8: Findings for IV 1 for the DRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to put issues on the agenda for negotiation?</td>
<td>The coalition of women delegates managed to put issues on the agenda to a large extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to add substance to the agreement?</td>
<td>The coalition of women delegates added substance to the agreement to a large extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to voice demands for negotiations to start, to recommence, to stop or for the agreement to be signed?</td>
<td>The coalition of women was of crucial importance for the agreement to be signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was there planned roles for CSOs participating during the implementation?</td>
<td>Many roles were planned for CSOs, and arguably their roles where more ones of contenders for power rather than those of watchdogs leading to the politicization of the CSOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there indications from the negotiating parties or the mediator that the CSOs were influential?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of influential civil society actors
Firstly, it will be assessed to what extent several CSOs have been influential in the process. It has been pointed out that most of the substantial resolutions that were adopted at Sun City were the initiatives of civil society groups (Rogier 2004). However, precise information about which group brought what has not been possible to locate, the exception being the Nairobi declaration. The women involved with this came from almost all of the different delegations and represented different civil society organizations and since the coalition of women were very influential, different CSOs were in fact influential. Keeping Rogier’s conclusion in mind, it is likely that also other civil society actors were influential in the process but it is difficult to assess the level of influence since concrete evidence has not been found.

Next comes the question of whether the influential CSOs can be seen as representative of the civil society. Diverse civil society representatives where involved in the negotiations in general and among the civil society actors there were “representatives from churches, development and human rights NGOs, trade unions and various professional associations, including pharmacists, doctors, taxi drivers, lawyers and other business actors” (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017, 5). Connected to was what argued above, apart
from the coalition of women, it is likely that also other groups were influential but not enough evidence has been found to draw the conclusion that they were.

The civil society in the DRC has been described as flourishing and scholars have argued that it arose as the ‘voice of reason’ during the conflict, arguing against the violence and for negotiations to solve the conflict (Koko 2016). It also bears to point out that CSOs in the country often are politicized and experiencing power struggles, built along ethnic lines as well as very dependent on foreign funding. The most distinguishable types of civil society organizations in the DRC are groups focusing on human rights, advocacy groups, labor unions, religious organizations, professional associations as well as student, youth and women’s organizations (Koko 2016). Out of these, all types of organizations were represented in some ways by representatives at the negotiations. Exact information about which civil society organization the women in the coalition represented has not been found, however it has been pointed out that the civil society delegation as a whole consisted of 25% women and they represented many different CSOs (Whitman 2006). When assessing if the participating groups can be seen as representative of the civil society the selection criteria for the process as a whole has to be kept in mind, no easy task in a country with a very diverse civil society consisting of many actors. The selection process for selecting civil society representatives have met some criticisms for a few different reasons. Firstly, the representatives where supposed to be chosen through elections in the different regions overseen by the Office of the Facilitator. Due to security concerns the representatives of the facilitator were unable to travel to certain areas of the country which affected the process (International Crisis Group 2001b). Secondly, it has been argued that the design regarding the election and the process around it reinforced consisting power dynamics and excluded other groups such as women (Whitman 2006). Even the office of the facilitator pointed to the under-representation as a problem after the selection procedure (International Crisis Group 2001b). Keeping these aspects in mind, it can be concluded that the influential CSOs did represent the civil society to a moderate degree on specific topics.

When it comes to the last question, to what extent the influential CSOs can be seen as representatives of the society at large, the coalition of women must be seen as very representative since it included women from all delegations except one of the participating rebel groups (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017). That the women came from both the government, the main rebel groups, and most of the additional rebel groups as well as several civil society groups and the coalition managed to agree on so much is interesting also in terms
The coalition must be considered very representative of the society at large, again remembering that the topics where they asserted their influence were limited.

In accordance with the operationalization of the variable, the range of the influential CSOs is assessed to be moderate in this case and the findings are summarized in table 9.

Table 9: Findings for IV 2 for the DRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are several CSOs influential according to the first independent variable?</td>
<td>Yes, several CSOs were influential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the civil society?</td>
<td>The influential CSOs did represent the civil society to a moderate degree on specific topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the society at large?</td>
<td>The influential CSOs did represent the society to a high degree on specific topics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Durability of peace**

The DRC was chosen as a case where the peace agreement has led to durable peace. Formally the agreement meets the requirements of holding for at least 5 years, according to UCDP’s peace agreement dataset (Harbom, Högladh, and Wallensteen 2006; Högladh 2011). However, as discussed above this is a very crude measure of durability and since this is a qualitative study there’s the possibility of diving deeper into the nature of this peace. Initially it might seem a little odd to highlight the DRC as a positive example of a peace agreement considering how conflict ridden the country has been, indeed also after the peace process and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. The provisions of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue were even implemented to a large degree but scholars have argued the process should be considered far from a clear-cut success (Inclusive Peace & Transition Initiative 2017). The peace process did end the Second Congo War but it was not successful in eliminating all the violence, especially not in the eastern regions of the country which by some is considered as the third chapter of the conflict (Ahere 2012).

Cunningham points out that the conflict offered extreme barriers to peace such as having contained the highest number of combatants of any war fought in the last sixty years, it was one of the poorest countries in the world before the outbreak and the state capacity of the third largest country in Africa is very low (Cunningham 2011). On top of this it is an extremely ethnically divided society, plenty of lootable resources such as diamonds and cobalt and the
ability of the state to suppress rebels is extremely low. It is in the backdrop of this the peace process in the DRC should be understood.

The DRC can by no means be described as peaceful presently. The fighting continued after the Lusaka Accord had been signed but once the violence stopped a couple of years later it ended mostly along the line of what the accord stipulated leading Cunningham (2011) to argue that the agreement was indeed a success. He further argues ”without overstating the prospect for long-term peace in Africa’s third largest country, however, the lack of violence targeted against the government from 2003 into early 2008, the withdrawal of foreign forces, the formation of a power-sharing government, and the peaceful nature of presidential elections in 2006 should all be seen as remarkable successes given the scale of the conflict and the numbers of barriers to peace it presented” (Cunningham 2011, 240). Keeping this in mind, the fact that the peace agreement holds is important and in terms of durability of peace it can be concluded that the agreement did in fact last a longer time but did not successfully eliminate all violence in the country.

From investigating this case we have learnt that the process in DRC can be seen as a case of strong influence of CSOs, the range of influential CSOs being moderate and the agreement was durable in the sense that it ended the war but did not successfully eliminate the violence.

Case 3: The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in the Ivory Coast
The Ivory Coast was once a stable and well-off country in the unstable West African region, but a failed coup attempt in September 2002 brought the country to a state of civil war. The fighting lasted a relatively short time and the number of causalities was much lower than in the other conflicts in the region, however the war led to the country being split in two with a risk of a humanitarian disaster (Gberie and Addo 2015). It has been argued that the war in the Ivory Coast differs from other conflicts in the region that were powered by bad governance and the quest for powers such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone, since the Ivorian conflict was driven by the concrete grievances over citizenship (Bah 2010). President Bedie, who took over after the long-term leader Houphouët-Boigny, introduced the concept of Ivoirité which sought to differentiate between “Indigenous Ivoirians” and “Ivoirians of immigrant ancestry”. This idea combined the anti-foreigner and anti-northerner sentiments that existed in the country and the goal of this divisive politics was to marginalize northerners. The idea of Ivoirité was institutionalized through policies which disqualified many northerners from among other things the right to citizenship and the right to seek presidency.
The Ivoirians from the north continued to be increasingly marginalized and victimized also under the presidency of Gbagbo and in 2002 rebel forces of the Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI) led by Soro failed to capture the capital but managed to take control of the north (Mitchell 2012). ECOWAS and France took leading roles in hosting peace talks and such were held in collaboration with the AU and the UN and in addition to the government and the main rebel group, two smaller rebel groups as well as seven political parties participated (Langer 2010). In January of 2003 all negotiation parties signed the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement (Addo 2005).

Influence of civil society actors

The work of the researcher Gbongue, who have conducted focus groups in the Ivory Coast, show that the peace negotiations heavily focused on the political actors and the degree of participation of other segments of the society remains very low (Gbonge 2015). The peace negotiation was opaque and the inhabitants were simply presented with the agreement (Gbonge 2015). The report from a conference on the situation in the Ivory Coast hosted by the U.S. Institute of Peace reveals that representatives of CSOs that participated in the conference considered themselves excluded from the peace process and were frustrated by this (Campbell and Fusheini 2006).

CSOs have in other words not been able to put any issues on the agenda, added any substance to the agreement nor has evidence been found of CSOs asserting influence by voicing demands for negotiations to start or for the agreement to be signed. In addition to this no planned roles for the civil society to participate during the implementation has been found. There are planned roles for the International Francophone Organization, an organization for French speaking countries, but this is not domestic organization and therefore it falls outside of the scope of this thesis. As logically follows from this no indications from mediators or negotiating parties that CSOs were influential have been found. No indications that CSOs were influential in this peace process have been found (see table 10).
Table 10: Findings for IV 1 for the Ivory Coast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to put issues on the agenda for negotiation?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to add substance to the agreement?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to voice demands for negotiations to start, to recommence, to stop or for the agreement to be signed?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was there planned roles for CSOs participating during the implementation?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there indications from the negotiating parties or the mediator that the CSOs were influential?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Range of influential civil society actors

Firstly, a note on the civil society in the country. The Ivorian civil society has been described as fragmented and with a low level of coordination between different groups (The World Bank 2008). The report from a conference on the situation in the Ivory Coast hosted by the U.S. Institute of Peace reveals that most of the Ivorian CSOs are weakly institutionalized and many of them are linked to political parties (Campbell and Fusheini 2006). However there were CSOs that wanted to participate in the process had they gotten the chance as shown by Gbonge (2015).

Moving on to measuring the independent variable of range of influential civil society actors it can be concluded that since no civil society actor was deemed influential in the process leading up to the agreement there was also no range of influential civil society actors (see table 11).

Table 11: Findings for IV 2 for the Ivory Coast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are several CSOs influential according to the first independent variable?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the civil society?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the society at large?</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Durability of peace

The Linas-Marcoussis Agreement was signed in January of 2003 however it did not last very long. In 2004 the parties still referred to the agreement but neither side believed that it would be implemented which led to the parties resuming violence (Harbom, Högbladh, and
Several internationally mediated peace agreements followed with very limited success. In 2007 the Ouagadougou agreement was reached and it was negotiated without the involvement of international organizations (Bah 2010). It was thanks to this agreement that elections were able to be held be held in 2010 (sadly leading a new crisis) (Sidibé 2013). To sum up, the durability of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement was very low since it only lasted for a year or so and was never implemented.

To summarize it can be concluded that the peace process leading up to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement contained no influential CSOs and therefore also no range of influential CSOs and the durability of the peace was very lows.

Case 4: The Accra Agreement in Liberia
Liberia has experienced several cycles of violence. The first Liberian conflict started in 1989 when Charles Taylor and his National Patriotic Front of Liberia crossed into Liberia with the goal of overthrowing General Doe who had come to power through a coup and had developed a brutal military dictatorship (Nilsson 2009). This cycle of violence was resolved with the Abuja peace agreement in 1996 and Taylor won the presidency in 1997. In 1998 Taylor declared that he was no longer committed to the peace agreement that had been reached and the regime showed more and more authoritarian tendencies. In the beginning of year 2000 former opponents of Taylor formed a new rebel movement called Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and decided to take up arms in order to remove him from power. The conflict was also affected by the regional conflicts and because Taylor had launched an invasion in Guinea as well as supported a coup in the Ivory Coast, these two countries supported the rebels (Pham 2006). In the beginning of 2003 a splinter group from LURD created a new rebel movement appeared called Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). In the beginning of 2003 Taylor faced a two-front war as well as international sanctions and in August the rebels controlled most of the country.

The peace process started in 2003 with negotiations between the warring parties facilitated by ECOWAS and the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (Zanker 2015). In June talks mediated by General Abubakar, the former head of state in Nigeria, were planned to start in Ghana. Just as Taylor arrived, however, it was made public that the UN-backed Special Court in Sierra Leone announced an indictment against Taylor because of his involvement in the war in Sierra Leone (Hayner 2007a). Taylor fled back to Liberia and the peace talks continued without him. In the end of June the parties signed a ceasefire agreement but the fighting continued in the Liberian capital. After serious military setbacks Taylor finally agreed to hand
over power to his Vice-President and in August the parties signed the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement which brought the conflict to an end.

Influence of civil society actors

The peace process in Liberia included different actors at different time. Firstly, there were independent civil society led initiatives aimed at finding possible ways to a sustainable peace agreement (Hayner 2007a). An initiative by civil society and political leaders called the Liberia Leadership Forum started in 2002 and organized a peace conference in 2003 which ECOWAS mediated. Another initiative was the peace talks with the different actors mediated by the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia (IRCL) and these initiatives started the negotiations.

Once the talks in Accra started the negotiations concerning the ceasefire were held with the three warring parties but in the negotiations leading up to the peace agreements other segments participated as well. CSOs were involved in the negotiations in three different ways: as official delegates, unofficial observers and activists on the fringes of the negotiations. In addition to the three warring parties, political parties as well as civil society groups participated and played important roles (Nilsson 2009). Eighteen political parties participated in the talks, although many were recently created by Taylor in order to dilute the process (Hayner 2007a). Some organizations such as Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET), the Inter-Religious Council for Liberia (IRCL) and the Liberian Bar Association (Nilsson 2009) and members of the Liberian diaspora participated as official delegates (Zanker 2015). These organizations were invited thanks to their role in earlier conflict resolutions initiatives (Nilsson 2009). However, ECOWAS had provided Taylor with a list of civil society organizations to choose from and thus influencing the selection in a very problematic way.

In addition to the CSOs officially participating in the mediation, several others travelled there to lobby the delegates, a trip that often meant risking their life since travelling by road meant passing through rebel territory (Zanker 2015). One such group was the women’s organization, Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET). WIPNET were seen as independent and at one point they were even invited to directly participate in the formal negotiations as observers but turned this invitation down in order to be able to continue to campaigning in other ways (Paffenholz et al. 2016). MARWOPNET who were participating as official observers were accused of being partial. During the process, however the two groups cooperated and researchers have argued that the women observers in Liberia were surprisingly influential and the reason for this is that they worked closely with the women’s organizations
that were active outside of the negotiations (Paffenholz et al. 2016) and Liberia is seen as a best practice case when it comes to participation of women (Saiget 2016).

Civil society actors managed to secure position in the interim government and assembly and it was thanks to them articles about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights as well as the Ministry of Gender were included in the agreements (Zanker 2015). In addition to this, it was on the initiative of the civil society delegates that it was decided that the interim leader was to be called chairperson and not president and were not to go to one of the warring parties but instead to a neutral person suggested by the political parties and the civil society delegates. They proposed three persons from which the warring parties got to choose. Reportedly their influence on other aspects of the negotiations was likely more limited (Nilsson 2009). Even so, it can be concluded that the CSOs managed to add substance to the agreement.

Supported by the UN Liberian women organized a one-day Consultative and Strategic Planning meeting that took place on the 15th of August, a few days before the agreement was signed (Zanker 2015). Numerous women’s organizations participated in the talks and together they agreed and signed the Golden Tulip Declaration. The declaration called for lobbying of all parties at the Peace Talks in Accra for 50% representation of women in the Transitional Leadership, women leaders who were observers at the Accra Peace Talks to be made delegates and be given voting rights including places on the Vetting Committee among other issues (Golden Tulip Declaration 2003). The Golden Tulip Declaration does not include a lot of clear demands on specific issues to be included in the peace agreement but states some goals of the women in terms of being included. It has been analyzed that this is because the women’s primary goal was not inclusion per se but an end to the war (Zanker 2015). Weighing all of this together it can be concluded that the CSOs managed to put issues on the agenda as well as adding substance to the agreement and thereby answering the first and second question posed. However, it seems as though the focus of the CSOs was first and foremost to make the war stop rather than to get specific demands included in the agreement.

The third question relates to what extent CSOs have been able to voice demands for the negotiations to stop or start or for the agreement to be signed. In this case there were different examples of actions being taken by CSOs to influence the process in such ways. The peace process started with talks facilitated by the IRCL, and the IRCL played a crucial role in getting the negotiations started. WIPNET spent several months leading up the negotiations protesting the war by sitting in an open field and praying in Monrovia (Zanker 2014). The group got a meeting with Taylor as well as LURD and urged them to participate in peace talks. During
the peace negotiations WIPNET protested outside of the venue and managed to also mobilized women from a Liberian refugee camp nearby. Every day between 150-200 women arrived at the venue to call for the end of the conflict and tried to convince the delegates as they were leaving or entering the venue. At one point when the fighting in Liberia escalated and a woman found out that a relative had been killed in Monrovia the women used the drastic strategy of blocking the exists where the talks were held and refused to let the participates out, even for restroom breaks, for several hours before some progress was made (Hayner 2007a). The security forces got involved at which point the women threatened to undress which was a powerful move since it is considered a curse for a son to see their mother naked (Zanker 2015). In other words, there are many examples of CSOs being able to voice demands for the negotiations to start and for the agreement to be signed and it can be concluded that they have been able to do so to a large degree.

The fourth question is to what extent there were planned roles for the civil society in the implementation of the agreement. There were many planned roles for civil society in the implementation phase of the agreement. The transitional government was to be led by a chairperson and a vice-chairperson and these positions were only to be held by non-warring political parties or civil society actors (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2005). Moreover, the composition of the national assembly was to include members of the civil society. Leadership over the ministries were divided between the government, LURD, MODEL and the civil society. Six ministries were to be led by representatives from the civil society and these were the ones for national security, education, gender and development, information, rural development and youth and sports. In addition to this the leadership over publically owned corporations were divided as well and the majority was to be led by civil society representatives such as the Liberia Mining Corporation, Liberia National Oil Company and National Housing Authority among others (Pham 2006). For the civil society to take on these roles was controversial. Pham argues that there is a certain logic to agencies such as the National Human Rights Commission as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to be headed by a representative from the civil society and this is also the case for nationwide aid agencies such as the National Food Assistance Agency. However, the reason for why banks, oil companies or lotteries or government ministries, Pham argues, is not as clear. Pham continues to point out that the leaders of civil society organizations taking over leadership positions at such agencies during the transitional government decreases the possibility of the CSO to credibly remain non-political and decreased the chances of civil society to credibly monitor the implementation of the peace agreement (Pham 2006). It can be concluded that there were indeed many roles
planned for the civil society during the implementation and the nature of these have led some to argue that it decreased the CSO’s ability to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement.

The last question is whether there are indications from warring factors or mediators that the CSOs were influential. In the report made by Nilsson based partly on interviews, she highlights that many delegates participating in the talks emphasized the importance of the civil society and political parties in the negotiations (Nilsson 2009). Furthermore, in the results of the interviews conducted by Zanker it was highlighted that the mediator was encouraging of the civil society delegates putting pressure on the warring parties (Zanker 2015). The mediator commented: “I found an ally in women” and explained that the women had urged the different delegates to negotiate (Saiget 2016). In the report from the interim chairperson to the African Union the Central Organ of the AU wishes to “express its appreciation for the role played by the civil society organizations of Liberia, including the Inter-Religious Council and the Mano River Women Peace Network, both before and during the negotiations, and encourage them to contribute to the scrupulous implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement” (Central Organ African Union 2003, 8). There are in other words several indications from the negotiating parties and mediator about the importance of the CSOs in the process. In sum, CSOs is assessed to have asserted strong influence in the process (see table 12).

Table 12: Findings for IV 1 for Liberia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to put issues on the agenda for</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negotiation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to add substance to the agreement?</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent have the CSOs been able to voice demands for negotiations</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to start, to recommence, to stop or for the agreement to be signed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent was there planned roles for CSOs participating during the</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there indications from the negotiating parties or the mediator that the</td>
<td>Yes, several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs were influential?</td>
<td>indications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Range of influential civil society actors

The first question that will be answered related to the range of influential CSOs is if several CSOs were influential according to the first independent variable. As outlined above the CSOs that were participating as official delegates where influential in pushing for inclusion of issues such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Ministry for Gender among other things. In addition to this, groups like the IRCL were influential in managing to bring about the early peace talks with the warring parties. The women’s organization WIPNET was influential when pushing for the negotiations to start, continue and for the agreement to be signed, partly thanks to the fact that they were cooperating with MAROWPET, the women’s organization that was officially included. In other words, it can be established that several CSOs are influential according to the first independent variable.

The second question asks to what extent the influential CSOs can be seen as representing the civil society. In order to investigate this question an overview of the civil society in Liberia is needed. Zanker identifies that the civil society in the country consisting five different types of organizations namely political, religious, emergency relief and peacebuilding, women and diaspora organizations (Zanker 2015). All of these types were represented even among the official CSO delegations and probably even better when taking the organizations that were participating unofficially into consideration as well. When considering if the CSOs were representative of the civil society it is important to remember that the CSOs where chosen by ECOWAS presenting Taylor with a list and him picking the organizations who would get invited. This is of course very problematic since it means that the groups that were the most critical to Taylor were not invited. Even though the selection process was seriously biased and problematic the fact that many organizations travelled to the venue to take part in the negotiations as unofficial participants and were influential, such as WIPNET, counteracted the flawed selection procedure. Following what has been outlined above it can also be established that the influential CSOs were representative of the civil society.

The last question is to what extent the influential CSOs were representative of the society at large. Zanker has interviewed people and conducted focus groups on this topic as part of her doctoral thesis and she finds that some critique has been voiced regarding the CSOs that participated (Zanker 2015). For example it has been pointed out that the youth of Liberia was not represented. In addition, critique has been voiced regarding that some of the participating CSOs are seen as capital-focused and elite instead of focusing on the whole country or local issues in addition to the national ones. Other actors such as WIPNET and IRCL represented people of diverse socio-economic background and was active in different parts of the country.
(Zanker 2013). Keeping all of the above in mind it is concluded that the influential CSOs were representative of the society to a large extent while remembering that some critique was voiced (see table 13). All in all, the range of influential CSOs is assessed to be wide, in accordance with the operationalization of the variable.

Table 13: Findings for IV 2 for Liberia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are several CSOs influential according to the first independent variable?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the civil society?</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent are the influential CSOs representative of the society at large?</td>
<td>To a large extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Durability of peace

Liberia has been at peace since the comprehensive peace agreement was signed in 2003 (Hayner 2007a). The transitional government held the power for two years and then the planned elections took place which were historic as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was brought to power as the first woman being head of state in Africa (Hayner 2007a) and another election has taken place since (BBC News 2017). Freedom house states that Liberia has enjoyed peace and stability since the civil war ended during which the country “has made considerable progress towards rebuilding government capacity, reestablishing the rule of law, and ensuring the political rights and civil liberties of citizens” (Freedom House 2018b). This leads to the conclusion that the durability of the peace in Liberia is high and that the situation is stable and peaceful.

To sum up, Liberia is a case of strong influence of CSOs, a wide range of influential CSOs and where peace is durable.

Analysis

The next section will focus on comparative analysis and firstly, the findings will be compared between the cases followed by alternative explanations and additional observations being discussed. Lastly, implications and limitations of the research design will be considered.

Between case comparison

Implications for the hypotheses

The theoretic predictions were that if CSOs have influence in peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be durable (H1) as well as if a wider range of CSOs are influential, peace is more likely
to be durable (H2). Liberia and the DRC were selected since these cases were considered durable in accordance with the operationalization of the variable since the peace agreements lasted for more than five years. Since merely measuring the duration of a peace agreement is a rather crude measurement an elaboration was included. In line with what the theory predicts the empirics show that CSOs did have strong influence in these cases and that the range of influential actors were moderate to wide. The contrast to the other two cases is stark as is shown in table 14. Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were selected as cases with low durability of peace and indeed the findings show that although there were elements of CSO inclusion in the peace process, they had no influence. The findings from the conducted case studies suggest that the results are in line with what the theoretic framework predicted in terms of the two hypotheses.

Table 14: Summarizing key findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case studies</th>
<th>IV 1 Influence of CSOs</th>
<th>IV 2 Range of influential CSOs</th>
<th>DV Durability of peace</th>
<th>Support for HI</th>
<th>Support for H2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>No influence</td>
<td>No range</td>
<td>No durability, the agreement last only two months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Strong influence</td>
<td>Moderate range</td>
<td>Durable in that the agreement ended the war but it did not successfully eliminate the violence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>No influence</td>
<td>No range</td>
<td>Very low durability, the fighting continued after approximately a year</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Strong influence</td>
<td>Wide range</td>
<td>High durability, the country has been at peace since the signing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results seem to be in line with the argument that this thesis puts forward which is that the variation in the durability of peace among peace process where civil society was included can be connected to the level of influence of such actors. In her extensive quantitative study Nilsson finds support for inclusion of CSOs being connected to more durable peace agreement (Nilsson 2012). The results of this study hints instead to the importance of zooming in on the influence of the participating actors. Put differently and following Paffenholz’s argument regarding the inclusion of women’s organizations in peace process (2018) the results point in the direction of it not being inclusion of CSOs, per se, that correlates with durability but rather the influence of such actors.
Continuing by investigating the second independent variable, namely the range of influential CSOs a similar pattern can be found. In addition to CSOs being influential in the peace processes in the DRC and Liberia, the empirical findings show that a moderate and a wide range of CSOs were influential. This can be compared to the processes in the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone where no influence of CSOs could be detected and therefore also no range of influential CSOs. These results seem to be in line with the argument that if a wide range of CSOs have influence in the peace negotiations, peace is more likely to be durable which is in accordance with arguments put forward by McKeon (2005), Barnes (2009) as well as Nilsson (2012).

One interesting aspect of these results concerns the two cases with a more durable outcome. The case of Liberia shows strong influence of CSOs, wide range of influential CSOs and a very durable outcome. The DRC also shows strong influence of CSOs but a moderate range of influential CSOs as well as restricted durability, as the agreement did not successfully eliminate the violence. This variation is interesting and raises questions about whether a wider range of influential CSOs could have contributed to peace becoming more durable in the DRC.

Importantly it should be pointed out that the results are consistent with both the hypotheses but the results render it hard to establish if each matter or if one is more important. Since none of the cases shows a high level of influence of CSOs and a small range of influential CSOs for example, this has not been possible to investigate in this study. The hypotheses are closely interlinked and go very much hand in hand and point in the direction of the influence of CSOs and a wide range of influential CSOs being of importance. However, future research should investigate further to establish if it is the combination of both these aspect that is connected to durable peace or if one is more important.

This study is not enough to prove causation between the independent variables and the dependent variable, it does however suggest correlation and this is, I argue, an interesting finding that future research can build on to investigate the relationship, as well as causal mechanisms, further.

Implications for the causal mechanism

As shown in table 1 based on Zanker (2015), there are several reasons found in the literature for why involvement of CSOs is expected to have a positive effect on sustainable peace. Certain indications of legitimacy being at least a part of the causal mechanism that explains the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable has been found, as has been suggested by Nilsson (2012). One example of such indications is Koko arguing that
the participation of civil society actors as well as political parties in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in the DRC provided legitimacy to the process and that this is consistent with argument of legitimacy being an important factor for durable peace to be possible (Koko 2016). Another example is that Zanker finds that civil society actors did manage to enhance the legitimacy of the negotiation process in Liberia in some ways, and at the same time failed to do so in other ways (Zanker 2013, 15). These are signs that legitimacy may very well be part of the causal mechanism at play here.

Another suggestion for a possible causal mechanism highlighted by scholars is the idea of a public agenda and content improvement of the peace agreement itself when CSOs are participating. One part of the indicator for influence in this study was to measure if CSOs have been able to add substance to the agreement. In the two cases where peace was more sustainable, Liberia and the DRC, the CSOs were indeed able to add substance to the agreement and in the two other ones, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, the CSOs were not able to add substance to the agreement. In other words, correlation is found between when CSOs have been able to add substance to the agreement and more durable peace. This study thereby finds indications that content improvement might be connected to durability. However, it seems like the causal mechanisms at play here also encompasses wider aspects than content improvement. For example it has been found that CSOs can be participating as well as asserting influence in different roles such as being a convener and mediator of peace talks such as the IRCL in Liberia, or as pressure activists outside of the official negotiations such as WIPNET in Liberia or official observers as several CSOs were in Liberia or as official delegates as in the DRC. The possibilities for CSOs to affect the content of the agreement from these different roles are arguably of varying size, however according to the understanding of influence in this thesis the CSOs can still be influential. To encompass this, a wider causal mechanism is needed and a plausible alternative is legitimacy. Future research could investigate this possibility closer in studies focused on examining the mechanism.

**Broadening the analysis**
The analysis above demonstrates that the empirical findings lend support to the hypothesis and implies that legitimacy might be part of the causal mechanism. However, the empirics also raises questions about alternative explanations as well as additional observations that deserve further attention which is what the next sections will focus on.
Alternative explanations

The empirical findings bring up possible alternative explanations and one such aspect that could affect the independent variables as well as the dependent variable is when in the larger peace process the peace accords were agreed upon. Liberia for example had experienced over a dozen of peace accords in approximately the same number of years before the comprehensive peace agreement studied in this thesis was agreed upon (Hayner 2007a). It is plausible that the all actors more genuinely wanted peace at this point since the conflict and also negotiations had been going on for a long time. Similarly to Liberia, the conflicts in the DRC had been ongoing for a long time and although the number of peace agreements that were reached were considerably lower than in Liberia it is plausible that the actors were influenced by war fatigue since a military stalemate had characterized the situation on the ground since 1999 (Davis and Hayner 2009).

The example of the DRC 2002 and Liberia 2003 can be contrasted with Sierra Leone where the peace agreement studied in this thesis was the first one reached in the conflict (Sesay and Suma 2009) and it has been argued that “the RUF has blatantly used negotiations for the purpose of rearming” (International Crisis Group 2001a, ii). This early peace agreement was, as the empirical section showed us, not durable nor did CSOs have influence. In the Ivory Coast a ceasefire agreement was reached in January in 2003 followed by the more comprehensive Linas-Marcoussis Agreement later the same month studied in this thesis (Gberie and Addo 2015). The fighting only went on for a short period of time and given that this agreement was signed so early in the conflict the parties most likely lacked war fatigue.

War fatigue is a possible alternative explanation since it could influence how the peace process is designed and which actors get to participate which has an impact on civil society actors’ ability to be influential in the process. At the same time, it is plausible that war fatigue leads to more sustainable peace agreements since it is in the different actors’ interest that the peace deal holds. It is possible the chance of agreements with CSO influence as well as sustainable agreements to be made increases the longer negotiation process has been going on and if earlier attempts were made. Maybe it was war fatigue in Liberia and the DRC that led to an inclusive process where CSOs could assert influence and at the same time led to the agreement being more durable since it was in the actors’ interest? Meanwhile the actors in the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone lacked war fatigue, a sign of which is that the negotiation phase in Sierra Leone was used by the rebels to rearm. This lack of war fatigue possibly influenced the design of the process in which the CSOs ended up not being able to assert influence as well as the very short durability of the agreements. The possibility of war fatigue actually being able
to explain the findings cannot be ignored. However, if could also be possible that war fatigue simply is the motivation for inclusive peace processes where CSOs have influence and that such processes still have an effect on the durability of peace. Furthermore it is possible that this is an alternative explanation in the cases studied here but not in other cases. These questions will be left for future research to investigate.

Another interesting aspect of the empirical findings is that both the process in the DRC as well as Liberia followed the same pattern: a first step of a cease fire agreement being negotiated solely among warring parties and thereafter inclusive processes being held dealing with political and economic questions such as questions of power sharing, constitutional changes and elections. In the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone however this was not the case and in these cases the same process tried to deal with all questions. A possible alternative explanation is therefore that the process design of first having cease fire negotiations among warring parties followed by an inclusive process is a successful recipe for peace negotiations and that this aspect affects the independent as well as the dependent variables. Cunningham argues that part of the reason the conflict in the DRC was resolved was the design of the process and how it took the complicated multi-party dynamics into consideration (Cunningham 2011, 241). This sequencing is close to what Darby and Mac Ginty (2008) argues should be prioritized, namely first ending the violence, followed by a political or constitutional agreement preferably with a certain level of popular consultation, and after that post-agreement peacebuilding. However, I want to point out the potential of it in fact being the possibilities of civil society being influential that makes this sequencing so successful.

An objection a reader of this thesis might have is whether the results are not actually explained by different involvement of peacekeeping forces. This aspect does indeed deserve to be dived deeper into. In the DRC the Lusaka agreement called for an international peacekeeping mission that started to be deployed in 1999 and the peacekeeping operation was ongoing also during the investigated time period of the peace negotiations as well as afterwards and the mandate has been revised but UN peacekeepers are still on the ground (United Nations 2018a). It is plausible that the peacekeeping forces being deployed in the DRC both during the negotiation phase as well as during the implementation phase helps to explain why the peace agreement ended up lasting considering the harsh conditions in the country. In the case of Liberia no international peacekeeping mission was deployed during the negotiations but ECOWAS and the UN established a peacekeeping force the same month the peace agreement was signed (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2005). Researchers have argued that the large UN peacekeeping mission has been critical for providing security and keeping the peace process on
track (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2005, 403). In Sierra Leone no international peacekeeping mission was deployed during the peace process and the agreement collapsed because the rebel leader Sankoh refused to let UN peacekeepers be deployed as had been agreed upon (Hayner 2007b). The case of the Ivory Coast shows more ambiguous effects since the conflict got international attention and peacekeeping forces were quickly deployed (Gberie and Addo 2015), but still the agreement ended up failing very quickly.

There are some signs that the peace agreements in the DRC and Liberia ended up being more durable because of the deployed peacekeeping operations have been found, which is in accordance with the argument put forward by Fortna (2008). Some evidence that the lack of a deployed peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone led to the agreement failing have also been found. The findings for the Ivory Coast do however not lend support to this argument. I leave it up to future research to dive into closer investigating how deployed peacekeeping forces might affect the design of the peace process and thereby the independent variables, as well as variances in what kind of missions were deployed and the timing of the deployment.

To summarize it has been found that war fatigue and sequencing of the process might be alternative explanations while peacekeeping forces might be a contributing factor.

Additional observations
The in-depth analysis of the four cases also yield some additional observations that can contribute to future theory development. The first additional observation concerns the role of CSOs during the implementation phase. Scholars having investigated both the case of the DRC as well as Liberia have voiced concerns about CSOs having political roles during the implementation (see for example Pham 2006; Koko 2016). In this study, the extent to which there were planned roles for CSOs to participate during the implementation was part of the measurement of influence. The findings show that CSOs having more or bigger roles during the implementation is not necessarily positive, instead nuancing is needed when evaluating which kinds of roles the CSOs are undertaking during the implementation. In the DRC as well as in Liberia, civil society actors were tapped to lead governmental agencies or bodies. In some cases this kind of leadership might make sense for example when considering Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. However, when it comes to other agencies the logic behind why it should be run by a civil society actor might not be as clear, as argued by Pham (2006). The difficulties with CSOs taking on leadership positions in the transitional period are several: first and foremost, it is hard for that CSO and representative to continue to claim impartiality. Secondly, it decreases the chances of the civil society of execute the role of independently
checking the actions taken by the transitional government. Thirdly it is also possible that the reputation of the CSO or CSOs in general is tarnished by the actions of the civil society representatives if there are less successful aspects of the transitional period. This could lead to a loss in confidence and hurt the CSOs for a long time (Pham 2006).

There being planned roles for CSOs during the implementation phase is therefore not at all necessarily a positive thing, instead it depends on what the nature of the roles are. The importance of the possibilities for the CSOs to remain independent and be able to investigate and put pressure on the transitional government as well as governments to come should not be underestimated in terms of durability of peace. One possibility is that certain roles for CSO during peace agreement implementation might be good for peace in the short term, however in the long term an unintended consequence may be less independent civil society which is arguably bad for democracy and for durability of peace in the long term. This should be kept in mind when measuring planned roles during the implementation phase as part of measuring influence and nuanced is necessary.

Another additional observation that has already been mentioned quickly but deserves to be expanded upon is the many ways in which CSO were found to participate and be influential in the negotiations. For example it has been found that CSOs in such different roles as being a convener and mediator of peace talks such as the IRCL in Liberia, or as pressure activists outside of the official negotiations such as WIPNET in Liberia or official observers as several CSOs were in Liberia or as official delegates as in the DRC. The possibilities for the CSOs to affect the content of the agreement from these different roles are of different size. If influence in peace negotiations would only be measured by if CSOs manage to add substance to the agreement for example this would mean that the research would overlook cases where CSOs instead of acting like a party in the mediation with official delegates or observers are a convening actor that mediates between the parties. Arguably such an actor has the potential of being influential although it might not be in the way of adding substance to the agreement. It is important to take the different roles into consideration when talking about the influence of CSOs in peace negotiations in order to not miss actors being influential in different ways.

**Limitations and biases in the study**

In the next section limitations and biases in the study will be discussed. These include limitations in the case selection, in the empirics as well as theoretical limitations.
Limitations and biases in the research design

The central limitations in terms of the research design are related to the generalizability and representative of the case selection. Four cases were studied in this thesis and since this is a limited case selection, questions about generalizability as well as representativeness can always be raised. For example it should be taken into consideration that all cases are situated in Africa and three of them are even placed in the same region, and more specifically in a conflict-ridden region where the conflicts affect each other. This raises question about how generalizable these cases are and how well the findings travel to other cases. However, it should be remembered that the cases were selected, not primarily on the basis of their geographical location, but on the basis of a most similar design and therefore the same value on control variables in order to decrease selection bias. Even though the case selection was conducted in this way, more studies are needed in order to investigate these questions in other cases and see how well the results in this study might travel.

Another question related to the case selection is the fact that Liberia has been argued to be a case of best practices regarding the participation of women in the peace process (Saiget 2016). Taking this into consideration it is possible that this case is an outlier and not necessarily representative of larger pool of cases it is supposed to represent, namely cases with civil society inclusion and a durable peace agreement. However, Liberia can also be seen as a crucial case where support for the theory is expected and if not found, this would have led to the theory being doubted. As the analysis showed, Liberia does in fact lend support to the theory. Again, it is important to remember how the case selection was conducted in a way that selection bias was mitigated. Moreover, it is helpful that four cases were studied in this thesis instead of a smaller number. If only two cases had been studied and Liberia was one of them the impact of Liberia being a potential outlier would have been a lot larger. The empirical findings in this study point out that also the DRC, as another case of civil society inclusion and a more sustainable peace agreement, lends support to the hypotheses which strengthens the study. However, that Liberia is often highlighted as a very positive example of civils society participation speaks in favor of future research investigating other cases to see if the results hold.

Another limitation in the case selection has to do with peacekeeping operations. In the case selection I simply establish that peacekeeping operations have been active in all the conflicts at some point, however, a suggestion for future research is to base the case selection also on consideration such as if a peacekeeping operation was deployed during the negotiation phase or the implementation phase respectively so that these aspects can be controlled for.
Empirical limitations

The empirical limitations of this study are connected to source credibility as well as differences in available sources for the different cases. Starting with the credibility of sources this deserves attention for several reasons. This thesis relies on secondary data which urges questions to be asked such as what is the purpose of the reports and studies that have been utilized? Has there been reasons to over- or underestimate the role of the civil society actors in the peace processes? I have had to settle for secondary sources of others having conducted interviews without having the power of controlling the interview setting and phrasing of questions etc. Preferable strategies for collecting data on the influence of CSOs and range of influential CSOs such as conducting interviews or collecting surveys was not possible due to the time and scope limitations of this thesis. Keeping these questions in mind I do perceive the material credible since it is composed of reports written by recognized international or national NGOs or peer-reviewed academic papers written by researchers.

Another important aspect to evaluate in regards to the sources is the data availability. There was plenty of empirical material available for both the DRC and Liberia, while the data was scarcer or Sierra Leone to a certain degree and especially for the Ivory Coast. This imbalance between the available empirical material risks influencing the results by for example overstating the importance of the actions by the CSOs in Liberia since there is more information about this. Is the Ivory Coast really a case of no influence of CSOs or is it possible that no indication of influence has been found since the case is simply understudied and there is therefore no information available? As an author I have strived to mitigate these imbalances, by for example using several sources and several types of sources, however the imbalances are still there. This calls for future research being conducted that includes the collection of comparable empirical knowledge of the cases that are being studied.

Yet another limitation connected the empirics is the fact certain aspects of peace processes are surrounded by a lot of secrecy. Peace processes are not usually characterized by transparency and openness which increases the difficulty of studying them. It is plausible that information about CSOs playing a role in convening and mediation talks between warring actors might be kept secret for some time in order for the process to continue. In addition to this, which delegation advocates for what during a peace process is also not necessarily readily available information. An aspect of this study that helps mitigate these limitations is that all the investigated cases took place quite a long time ago already and the delicacy of talking about the
situations has probably decreased considerably over time and so there is more information that is available at this point.

**Theoretical limitations**
A theoretical limitation is found in the way durability is measured. The case selection was based on comparing two cases of more durable peace agreements with two less durable, civil society being included in the peace process somehow. The cut off point for when a peace agreement was considered more durable was set to having lasted at least five years. This cut-off time can always be critiqued, for example it could be argued that even if a peace agreement holds for five years but that the fighting then continues between the parties it might not be seen as durable. Another possibility is that a peace agreement holds but is never implemented or other ways of a conflict moving into a cold peace. Keeping this in mind it shows that the way durability is measured is of importance and a more fine-grained measure of durability would be a good next step for future studies.

**Conclusion**
Research has shown that inclusion of civil society actors in peace agreements lead to increased durability of peace (Nilsson 2012). However it has also been pointed out that inclusion of CSOs lead to peace agreements with higher durability in some cases while not in others (Nilsson 2014). Based on the theoretical perspective of Paffenholz (2018), this thesis argues that it is influence, rather than merely inclusion, that can help explain this variation. It is hypothesized that (H1) if civil society organizations have influence in peace negotiations peace is more likely to be durable and (H2) if a wider range of civil society organizations have influence in peace negotiations peace is more likely to be durable. This study analyzed four case studies using the method of structured focused comparison in a most similar case setting. The four peace processes that were investigated were the ones leading up to the Abidjan Agreement in Sierra Leone in 1996, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in the DRC in 2002, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement in the Ivory Coast in 2003 and the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Liberia in 2003.

The empirical findings suggest that the results are in line with what the two hypotheses predicted. Liberia and the DRC were selected since these cases were considered durable and in accordance with what the theory predicts, the empirics show that CSOs did have strong influence in these cases and that the range of influential actors were moderate to wide. The contrast to the other two cases is stark. Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were selected as cases with low durability of peace and indeed the findings show that no influence of CSOs can
be detected. Importantly it should be pointed out that the results are consistent with both the hypothesis but the results render it hard to establish if each matter or if one is more important. Certain evidence pointing in the direction of legitimacy being part of the causal mechanism has been found, as suggested by Nilsson (2012).

However, as broadening the analysis shows, war fatigue is a potential alternative explanation. Another alternative explanation can be found in the sequencing of the process, namely first reaching a cease fire agreement among warring parties and then conducting an inclusive process dealing with economic and political issues. Deployment of peacekeeping missions are not found to be able to explain all the cases studied in this thesis but might be a contributing factor.

Additional observations found in the empirics include possible problems with CSOs having political roles in the implementation phase and how this should be considered with caution. Moreover, it was found that there are many ways in which CSOs were found to participate and be influence in peace negotiations and it is important to take the different roles into consideration in order to not miss actors being influential in certain ways.

Finally it should be pointed out that this study has suffered from several limitations especially in terms of aspects of the case selection and data availability. The presence of limitations and alternative explanations renders the results suggestive. Even so, the findings point in the direction of influence being of importance and could help explain why inclusion of civil society actors lead to higher durability in some cases while not in others. In terms of policy recommendations this study suggests that increased influence for CSOs in peace negotiations is beneficial for the chances of durable peace, although caution should be used in terms of CSOs having political roles during the implementation phase. Future research investigating this relationship is recommended as well as investigating the alternative explanations found in this study. The design of this study made it impossible to investigate if it is the combinations of the two independent variables that is connected to more durable peace or if one of them is more important which should be investigated further. Future research could also benefit from investigating the causal mechanism further and dive deeper into the claim that this thesis finds certain evidence for, namely that legitimacy is at least part of the causal explanation. These aspects should be investigated closer as findings on this topic could help peace processes lead to more durable peace agreements.
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