In the Pursuit of Ending Cycles of Violence:

An Exploration into the Critical Role Local Agency plays for Women Peacebuilders

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Abstract

Peacebuilding projects continue to fall short in reaching their full potential. In order to find more effective approaches to ending cycles of violence locally driven peacebuilding projects are become increasingly popular. Despite the growing practical interest towards this approach, very little is known about the conditions around how to ensure local peacebuilders have what they need for this to occur, and in particular for domestic women peacebuilders. Research is showing in order to build durable peace women are a vital group to meaningfully include, however, they continue to be marginalized, left out all together and or given little agency in peacebuilding work. This thesis contributes to this understudied field by exploring how partnership structures between international peacebuilding actors (IPAs) and domestic women peacebuilders (DWPBs) can affect the level of agency a DWPB has to develop and implement projects that will address most with her local conflict and cultural needs. I conduct a case study analysis of two individual DWPBs, in order to test a theoretical argument linking more equitable partnership structure between IPAs and DWPBs with a DWPBs higher level of agency. The empirical finding give support to the hypotheses tested, as the structure of relationships appears to affect the level of agency a DWPB does have when implementing a peacebuilding project. However, the empirical analysis also points towards other factors that potentially can possibly influence a DWPB’s level of agency.
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Acronyms

CBO: Community- Based Organization
CVE: Countering Violent Extremism
DAC: Development Assistance Committee
DMPB: Domestic Male Peacebuilder
DPBO: Domestic Peacebuilder Organization
DWPB: Domestic Women Peacebuilder
ED: Executive Director
INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization
IPA: International Peacebuilding Actor
M&E: Monitoring & Evaluation
RBM: Results Based Management
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RFP: Request for Proposal
UCDP: Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Introduction

Peacebuilding projects continue to fall short from reaching their full potential, and these unsuccessful projects can be explained to some extent by analyzing four key factors. First, peacebuilding projects are still managed by the international peacebuilding actors (IPAs), i.e., outsiders to most peacebuilding contexts. Second, this approach is top-down heavy and lacks incorporating critical localized strategies to peacebuilding. This is occurring in part due to local peacebuilders not having the agency in projects with IPAs because the power imbalances favor the outsider since they continue to hold many peacebuilding resources. Third, these power imbalances and lack of agency are therefore preventing local peacebuilders from driving forward vital work that aligns more closely with addressing local conflict resolution needs. Lastly, in particular, this reality is affecting domestic women peacebuilders (DWPBs) disporportionality, despite research showing the key role they play in ending cycles of violence (Rausch and Luu, 2017; Paffenholz, 2013). In what follows, these concepts are discussed in more detail, including how they will be explored and tested in this thesis.

To begin, research shows in order to build durable peace it cannot be solely top-down or bottom-up. Instead, partnerships need to be structured in a way that equally values and utilizes the skills, expertise, networks and knowledge both parties bring to peacebuilding projects (Autesserre, 2014; Sending, 2009). For example, while international peace projects increase the chances of establishing a durable peace (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Gilligan and Sergenti, 2008; and Goldstein, 2011), research has also highlighted that such projects need local peacebuilders in order to effectively develop, inform, shape and implement the most appropriate peacebuilding efforts (Lipsky, 1980). What is more, for this to occur partnerships need to be equitable between locals and internationals, and also inclusive.

Diving more deeply into this concept, thus far, research on the effects of partnership structures on peacebuilding has focused on the interplay between two main peacebuilding groups, local and global, but has not explored how the global values affect specific local groups, in particular
women (Paffenholz, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2015). Other research has shown that for meaningful inclusion to occur, women peacebuilders must have agency in peacebuilding, and whether this happens depends greatly on the partnership structures between local and global actors involved in the peacebuilding work (Mac Ginty, 2010; Kappler, 2014; Richmond, 2012; and Autesserre, 2014). This thesis will explore the power dynamics that exist within partnerships between these actors and if DWPBs have the ability to shape the outcome of peace projects. In particular, it will look at how the structure of peacebuilding partnerships affect the level of agency a DWPB has to effectively vocalize and implement a localized approach to peacebuilding and in turn better meet the local conflict resolution needs.

To explore and test these concepts in what remains in this thesis is constructed as follows: previous literature & theoretical framework, the research gap, theoretical argument, research question, hypotheses, research design, case study analysis, comparative cases analysis empirical findings of the cases, limitations and biases, alternative explanations and additional observations and my conclusion of the study.
Previous Literature & Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework and its supporting literature that informed this study by first exploring existing work that has focused on how top-down international peacebuilding projects are not effectively building durable peace. Second, it looks at a more localized approach to peacebuilding, which is a key alternative to these top-down peacebuilding projects. For a localized approach to occur, the third part of this section discusses the importance of local actors having agency in local-global peacebuilding partnerships and how one vital group of actors in peacebuilding, the DWPB, does not have the agency needed to end cycles of violence.

Finally, based on this previous theoretical work, I outline a theory to explain how certain peacebuilding partnership structures between IPAs and DWPBs will affect these women’s ability to drive forward key peacebuilding initiatives that can more effectively build lasting peace.

Top-Down Approach to Peacebuilding

There have been various approaches to ending conflict over the past decades, but one particular approach that has dominated the peacebuilding landscape has been the liberal peace or internationalism approach. For much of the 1990s and early 2000s, while rebuilding post-conflict states and ensuring they remained peaceful, state building projects became the main focus of entities interested with the stability of certain countries and regions (Lakhdar, 2007). This approach to peacebuilding was largely committed to exporting and establishing certain institutional frameworks, which translated to democracy, good governance and neoliberalism values (Chandler, 2013; Pugh, 2011). The belief was that installing democratic systems and processes would reduce the chances for outbreak of violence within and between other similarly structured countries (Mac Ginty, 2010b; Campbell & Chandler, 2011; Heathershaw, 2008).
These beliefs translated to building interconnected capitalism and economically interdependent markets (Angells, 1909; Friedman, 2000) and trying to build and establish democracy because of the liberal peace theory that believes democracies do not fight each other (Doyle, 1986; Pugh, 2011). This approach to peacebuilding played a key role in and was the reason for international inventions in places like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

Given the amount of resources the Global North was committing to liberal/democratic peace interventions, the power dynamics between the local peacebuilder and IPA within the components of the peacebuilding project was in favor of the IPA. For example, in order for local Global South communities to access reconstruction resources (often loans and assistance from international financial institutions), states emerging from civil war would have to conform to the structures, demands, cultures, ideals and practices of the international financial systems providing this funding (Brynen, 2000). These hegemonic approaches of liberal peace theory minimized the options for alternative versions of peace security and governance to arise. The peacebuilding structures the liberal peace theory imposed were often seen as the “best” ways to build peace, and that the local solutions were illiberal or illegitimate (Mac Ginty, 2010b).
Background on Liberal Peace

There are a myriad of reasons why the liberal peace approach has dominated the peacebuilding space, including showing positive results in decreasing the chances for the outbreak of war. In a study conducted in 2014, found that there was a relationship between democracy and armed conflict, in that sets of democratic states have a lower risk of interstate conflict than other sets, and also consolidated democracies have less conflict than semi-democracies (Hegre, 2014). Furthermore, in Freedom House’s recent report on, *Democracy Is the Best Defense Against Terrorism*, the report found only two percent of deaths from terrorist attacks in 2013 occurred in countries that were ranked high in being democratic / free in Freedom in the World (Freedom House, 2015). Other research has further highlighted that international peace projects increase the chances of establishing a durable peace due in part to IPAs having the logistical and financial resources necessary and the support from local experts (Doyle and Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Gilligan and Sergenti, 2008; and Goldstein, 2011).

However, despite liberal peace being influential and showing to have positive results, these peacebuilding interventions continue to deteriorate and fail to sustainably ending cycles of violence and conflict. For example, the rate of recidivism of civil wars is 90 percent for countries that had experienced civil war during the previous 30 years (Council, 2017), and we are seeing new levels of violence sweeping dozens of countries. In the most recent analysis conducted by Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), over 200,000 people were killed globally in violence in the year 2014 (Waara, 2015). This rate is the highest fatality count in 20 years, and we have not seen this rate since the 1994 Rwandan genocide (Melander, Pettersson, and Themnér, 2016). Furthermore, as a direct result of armed conflict, other trends such as the recent refugee crisis are showing to jeopardize peace. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in their recent annual Global Trends report cited that 65.6 million people were uprooted from their homes by conflict and persecution at the end of 2016, the highest in decades (2017).

As the precious works discuss, the approach to *install democracy at gunpoint* in places like Afghanistan, Middle East, Sub Saharan Africa and other regions of the world is proving
ineffective in ending violence and building durable peace (Mac Ginty, 2012). Therefore, alternative approaches to liberal peace are being explored.

Alternative Models to Liberal Peace

While there are multiple factors to why peacebuilding projects are failing to establish lasting peace, one growing body of literature looks at the dynamics around how domestic and international peacebuilding partnerships within the components of the peacebuilding project are affecting peacebuilding outcomes. Specifically, critiques leveled against international interventions, like liberal peace approaches, center around the belief that these approaches are too “monolithic and hegemonic, and lack the exogenous and indigenous forces” necessary to remain stable (Mac Ginty, 2010b).

There are many cultural, resource and timeline barriers for democratic values to realistically take root in countries living in conflict. Meanwhile, the standard of safety and living for millions of people in and who had to flee these countries are deteriorating rapidly. These residents and refugees do not have the luxury to wait two to three generations for things to improve, nor should they have to. The possibility of a more effective and efficient strategy to peacebuilding must be explored, and in the following section, the liberal peace approach to ending violence is re-examined. In its place, peace researchers are proposing an alternative, more hybridized, locally driven and bottom-up approach to building durable peace.

A Localized Approach to Peacebuilding

As the previous section highlighted, the strictly top-down approach to peacebuilding has not yielded the long-lasting results both international and domestic actors were seeking. Therefore, recent researchers have studied how more power-balanced partnerships between local and domestic peacebuilders can bring about lasting peace. In particular, this section turns to Roger Mac Ginty’s work on hybrid peace and Severine Autesserre’s research on how domestic and international peacebuilders need to equally partner to end cycles of violence (Mac Ginty, 2010,
Both bodies of research highlight the need to integrate a more localized approach to peacebuilding with a liberal peace approach in order to have peacebuilding projects meet the local cultural, conflict and historical needs of the communities affected by violence. The remaining part of this section discusses how to implement this approach.

Hybrid Peace

To begin, according to Mac Ginty, there needs to be a hybridization of bottom-up and top-down approaches which he calls hybrid peace in order to develop more effective approaches to peacebuilding. Hybrid peace is defined as:

\[
\ldots \text{forms [that] mediate between local and international norms, institutions, law, right, needs, and interests. A hybrid form of peace implies that legitimacy and agency rest partly at the local level, meaning both state and society.} \ldots \text{They develop through a tense process of hybrid politics, whereby various local factions and international norms and interests remain opposed until an accommodation is reached that maintains both local and international legitimacy (Richmond, 2012).}
\]

Mac Ginty provides several factors that contribute to a hybrid peace and how they interact with each other (2010a), and there is one in particular that is critical to discuss for the sake of this thesis. This factor relates to how a local actor can influence the extent to which peace can be hybrid and involves the ability of the “actors, networks and structures in host states to resist, ignore, subvert or adapt liberal peace interventions.” For this to occur, Mac Ginty reinforces the role agency and expertise of local actors have to play when working with IPAs. Furthermore, this positions local peacebuilders not as victims, recipients or beneficiaries, but instead as capable and able to self-govern; when local actors have the agency to oppose liberal peace approaches that are top-down heavy, they then have the power and space to build a hybridized peace (Richmond, 2009). Lastly, this factor highlights the ability of local actors to promote alternative forms of peace as a critical factor that must be present in order for hybridized peace to take
place. Next, how a local peacebuilder can gain agency through partnership structures is reviewed.

Equitable Partnership Structuring

Mac Ginty’s work on hybrid peace highlights the importance of merging both the local and liberal peace approaches to peacebuilding. Other social and political science researchers have studied how to apply this concept through local and international peacebuilding partnerships (Lipsky, 1980; Altahir, 2013), and, in particular, there have been efforts around understanding the value and importance of building more equitable peacebuilding partnerships between local actors and IPAs. In Peaceland by Séverine Autesserre, Autesserre focuses on how the power and importance of partnership structures between local and international actors is shaping the outcomes of peacebuilding projects. She argues that partnerships need to be structured in a way that equally values and utilizes the expertise of both the global and the local peacebuilding teams (2014).

To help with conceptualizing what a peacebuilding partnership is, partnerships have been defined using the following: they include parties that share a common aim, and consist of mutually enabling, interdependent interactions with shared intentions between the actors (Fowler, 1997; Cornwall et al., 2000). Furthermore, partnerships are agreements that link actors in joint activities that require both parties’ internal procedures, systems and cultures to execute against a goal (Ashman, 2001).

Therefore, to ensure that the peacebuilding partnerships and approaches that these authors are suggesting can come to fruition, local actors need to have a level of agency in implementing or co-implementing peace programs with IPAs. Otherwise, Mac Ginty’s key factor that was explained as contributing to a more hybridized and localized peace will not occur. In the following part of this section, the concept, value and role local agency play in peacebuilding is explained in greater detail, including how it is defined.
The Role of Local Agency

It has been argued that it is critical for local actors to have agency in order to have more successful peacebuilding outcomes (Donais, 2009; Björkdahl & Höglund, 2013). Agency is:

Has to do with the human capacity to act; a capacity that is not exercised in a vacuum but rather in a social world in which structure shapes the opportunities and resources available in a constant interplay of practices and discourses (Giddens, 1984; see also Cleaver, 2007).

Furthermore, agency has the ability to transform and change something, which hinges greatly on the concept of autonomy and the capacity to act independently of outside constraints or coercion (Shepherd, 2012). Next, agency involves the capacity for an actor to shape and define multiple components of one’s work. This actor is further able to have the capacity to manoeuvre, challenge and or contest ideas that do or do not resonate with their positions. Lastly agency is an actor’s ability to act with authority and autonomy within their space of operations (Shepard, 2012; Munter et al., 2012; Archer, 1984; Nash, 1999; Willmott, 1999; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007).

Additionally, as Chandler describes in his work, in order to move away from the Western export of liberal peace with top-down frameworks as the modus operandi of peacebuilding, local peacebuilders must have agency in order to play the vital role that is needed of them as local experts and innovators (2013). This concept of agency being needed for cycles of conflict to truly end is also reinforced by Mac Ginty and Richmond in their work on “the local turn” in peacebuilding (2013). Since theories around the importance for local agency in peacebuilding have emerged, there has been a wave of normative theories on what specific local groups should have and need agency. Specifically, for the aim of this study, I turned to the theories that highlight the importance of women gaining agency in the peacebuilding space and discuss the significant benefits of female participation.
Why Local Women Need Agency in Peacebuilding

The inclusion of women in peace work has shown to have positive outcomes on building durable peace (O’Reilly, M., et al., 2015;UN Women, 2012). According to United Nations Development Program (UNDP):

Women can bring new understanding of a conflict, and with it, insights into the causes and possible solutions. Women as survivors of conflict, as witnesses to violence, as mediators to ending persistent disputes, as guardians of their social community mores and providers for their family when a conflict is raging, all have huge contributions towards breaking the vicious cycle of conflict (Behuria, 2014).

With the unanimous passing of UNSCR 1325 in 2000, the international community officially recognized women’s role in peacebuilding. Since the passion of UNSCR 1325, there have been strides towards formally recognizing the powerful role women can play in peacebuilding. For example, in the recent Colombian peace negotiations, women made up one-third of the peace table participants and over 60 percent of the victims and experts. This peace agreement has been touted to be one of the most inclusive peace agreements, and therefore is argued to have a stronger chance for sustainably ending the decades of violence that have plagued Colombia (O’Neill, 2016).

However, while gains have been made since 2000, there is still is a lack of proportional and substantial inclusion of women in peace building. For example, from 1992 to 2011, “only four percent of signatories to peace agreements and less than 10 percent of negotiators at peace tables were women,” and during this time, “women made up only 2.4 percent of chief mediators, 3.7 percent of witnesses, and 9 percent of negotiators . . . and made up just 2.5 percent of signatories to peace agreements” (UN Women, 2012). Furthermore, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC),
only two percent of global peace and security funding targeted gender equality as its primary objective, $439 million out of a total of $10 billion (OECD, 2015).

These numbers highlight that DWPBs are still facing major obstacles in being meaningfully included and respectfully partnered within peacebuilding. The lack of meaningful inclusion of women is evident also within the UN headquarters. Since the passing of the UNSCR 1325 there has been a shift in including women in their work; for example, as of 2012, 48 percent of the staff were women. However, the majority of these women were not able to make it to senior decision making levels. As research is showing, it is not enough to have women in the room, but rather they must also have the capacity to make high-level decisions and the agency to shape peacebuilding work (Mac Ginty, 2010b). As Inclusive Security’s analysis shows, women being included in this manner will more sustainably end cycles of violence, giving durable peace a chance to take root (Rausch and Luu, 2017).

While agency has been identified as important for women to have in peacebuilding work, unfortunately it continues to not occur, as they are still viewed in their cultural and traditional societal roles, e.g., mother and house maker (Shepherd, 2012). Furthermore, women are also generally stereotyped as victims in conflict, and not as active agents (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015). For these reasons, and as previous research has highlighted, women continue to not be meaningfully included and lack agency to implement peace projects that meet the local conflict resolution needs. Below, I detail existing research gaps and how this study will seek to address them.

Research Gap

This study aims to fill the following gaps that currently exist in academic research on the role of local agency in peacebuilding for DWPBs and in particular how partnership structures between IPAs and DWPBs are affecting this reality.
Thus far, the theories have been normative statements and claims, highlighting how dynamics between local peacebuilders and IPAs within the components of the peacebuilding project ought to be, including devaluing the liberal peace approach to peacebuilding and claiming this is the wrong approach. These statements are important and provide the building blocks to exploring more localized approaches to peacebuilding (Bauer, 2007). However, this study will fill a much-needed gap in this line of theoretical work by bringing an exploratory approach by developing analytical frameworks that have not been developed before, and are able to empirically analyze how and where agency can occur for DWPBs based on partnership structures.

Currently, the study of the effects of domestic and international partnership structures have on peacebuilding is undertheorized. While Autesserre has done research in her book *Peaceland* on these power imbalances and their implications on ending cycles of violence, her research still lacks examining these issues through a gendered lens. There have been gender-based analyses that focus on the role of agency, but none have specifically focused on partnerships dynamics between DWPBs and IPAs within the components of peacebuilding projects. Instead, these analyses have focused on transitional justice or specific case studies such as Bosnia Herzegovina, and again in a normative fashion (Björkdahl and Mannergren Selimovic, 2015).

Therefore, this study brings an exploratory approach and seeks to empirically analyze a critical and widespread dynamic in peacebuilding: how local-global partnership structures can affect the level of agency a DWPB can have in her work. To build more durable peace, it is imperative we understand how these dynamics are creating a certain level of local agency. There are currently no theories explaining such variations. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to add to the field of peacebuilding research by empirically studying these concepts in greater depth and providing analytical frameworks to do so. Thus far such frameworks have not been established, and therefore this study is providing the critical research building blocks for future studies. This is by establishing research priorities, developing operational definitions and improving how best to research and measure these concepts. Therefore, this exploratory study will help test these
frameworks, and inform how to build the best research design, data-collection method and selection of subjects.

The theories this section covered and the research gaps that were highlighted inform the next area of this thesis, the study’s theoretical argument.

**Theoretical Argument**

There are multiple lenses through which one can seek an understanding of peacebuilding dynamic on an international stage: on a micro level, you can view it through your a personal lived experience or the lived experience of the actors involved; on a macro level, one can look at the aggregate experience of the actors involved as well as at the organizational level (Wendt, 1999). This thesis, brings to light the micro experiences of the DWPBs. My reasoning for doing so is thus: IPAs, while engaged with Domestic Peacebuilder Organizations (DPBO) at a macro level, they function day to day on a micro level with DWPBs themselves. For example, when an IPA needs to meet with a DWPB’s organization, even if they extend an invitation at the macro level, it is eventually received and acted upon on the micro level. Individuals are the atoms of an organization and when the “compound” is broken down to its simplest parts, all you have left are individuals (Owen, 2015).

More specifically, as J David Singer, who introduced the ‘level of analysis’ in international relations studies, explains: within the three levels of analysis the ‘the key variable is not the system itself, but the way in which that system is perceived, evaluated, and responded to by the decision makers in the several and separate states’ (1960). In other words, Singer believes that the individual level (micro) to be the most important to study in order to understand the organizational level (macro). This is because these systems consist of individuals (Singer, 1960). Therefore, how partnerships between the individuals that comprise the larger peacebuilding systems both domestically and internationally, are structured will greatly affect the quality of the peacebuilding projects that DWPBs are positioned to implement.
To understand these dynamics, I argue I must examine the individuals who comprise these systems, specifically the individuals within peacebuilding organizations in this analysis. Traditionally in peacebuilding projects power skews towards IPAs for the resources heavily reside in their hands. This power imbalance has resulted in top-down approaches to peacebuilding that do not incorporate local peacebuilders’ insights, strategies and expertise. Furthermore, these imbalances are greater for DWPBs because partnerships continue to be gender blind to the vital and powerful role DWPBs play in sustainably ending conflict, and this is occurring despite research showing that when women are meaningfully included the chances for durable peace increase. Therefore, I propose in order to build more effective peacebuilding projects, partnerships between IPAs and DWPBs need to be equitable and meaningfully include DWPBs. If this occurs then DWPBs will have the agency to drive forward peacebuilding approaches that are most relevant in their local context and truly meet the conflict resolution needs of their communities. Figure 1 describes this theory building path.

Lastly, in the analysis section of this thesis the insights from this study will be leveraged to pan back in order to argue from a higher order lens and position. This additional perspective will serve to extrapolate key findings from my micro analysis and put them to work at the more macro level, which relates to how international peacebuilding organizations that are comprised of IPAs, can build more effective peacebuilding partnerships. These findings are detailed in Comparative Case Analysis and Conclusion section.
Peacebuilding partnerships are more equitable between IPAs and DWPBs

And DWPBs are meaningfully included in the peacebuilding project

DWPBs have higher agency to drive forward a more localized peacebuilding projects, which will then better meet the needs of the local cultural and conflict context.

Figure 1. Theory Building Path
Research Question

The section below covers my research questions, variables of interest for this study and my hypotheses. The causal story of my study is illustrated in Figure 2.

**Research Question:** How do partnership structures between DWPBs and IPAs influence the level of agency DWPBs have when implementing a peacebuilding project?

**X:** partnership structures between DWPBs and IPAs

**Y:** level of agency DWPB has when implementing a peacebuilding project

**Causal Mechanism:** DWPB meaningfully included

![Figure 2. Causal Story](image)

Hypotheses

H.1: When a partnership structure is power-based between a DWPB and an IPA, it affects the DWPB’s level of agency, such that when the partnership is structured in this manner the DWPB’s agency is low.
H.2: When a partnership structure is equity-based between a DWPB and an IPA, it affects the DWPB’s level of agency, such that when the partnership is structured in this manner the DWPB’s agency is high.

H0: There is no relationship between the structure of a partnership with a DWPB and her IPA and the level of agency the DWPB has in a peacebuilding project.
Research Design

The following section clarifies the methods I used in order to empirically test whether the kind of partnership structure between DWPBs and IPAs influenced the level of agency DWPBs have when implementing a peacebuilding project.

To begin, my thesis aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the dynamics between IPAs and DWPBs within the components of two types of peacebuilding partnerships affect the level of agency a DWPB has in working to implement a peacebuilding project. This study used ordinal measurements in order to create variable values in ranked categories for both the independent and dependent variables (Powner, 2014). Specifically, this study explored how the project dynamics within the components of both power- and equity-based partnership structures between DWPBs and IPAs (independent variable) allow for a DWPB to have low or high agency in the peacebuilding project (dependent variable), as it relates to whether she was meaningfully included in the project (causal mechanism). The remaining part of this section covers my unit of measurement for this study, how I selected by cases and why and the time frame for the cases.

Unit of Measurement for Cases

The unit of measurement for my cases was at an individual level and this unit was selected in order to understand the intricate nuances of how agency unfolds in peacebuilding partnerships. I confined myself to a subset of two individual peacebuilders, where the presence of agency was important for them to carry out their peacebuilding work (Thémner, 2015). Furthermore, turning to J David Singer’s work on different units of analysis in International Relations research, this study chose individuals as its unit of measurement because by exploring the actions and decisions of the individuals that comprise a larger system, in turn gives insight into the larger systems they are a part of and operating in (1960). Specifically for this study to glean the insights around the relationship between its IV and DV, it needed to look at individual DWPBs.
Case Selection

To achieve the above purpose, I used a comparative case analysis across two cases of DWPBs (Kellstedt and Whitten, 2009). In particular, I used most-similar case study analysis method, where my independent variable varied and the dependent variable was unknown (Gerring, 2006). This method was selected because this study is exploratory and allows for an intensive study of my cases to help elucidate if there is a causal relationship between my independent variable and dependent variable and the factors that established this relationship. Lastly, this allowed me to explore whether a change in my variable $x$ also led to the theoretically expected change in the dependent variable $y$.

Additionally, I selected cases in this manner because selecting cases on the basis of the explanatory variable allows for preventing problems related to the potential selection bias (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994). As my focus was to test my theoretical argument that points towards the importance of a specific condition in the structure of partnership, selecting cases based on the variation in the independent variable appeared to be the best mode in achieving the focus of my study. The most-similar cases design allowed me to select my cases based on the independent variable and also allowed controlling for other potential confounding variables. Therefore, my case selection method biases and ensures the hypothesis can be more directly tested. Table 1 defines my case selection process.

Table 1. Most-Similar Cases Research Design (Gerring, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Explanatory Variable (independent variable being tested)</th>
<th>Outcome (dependent variable being tested)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (Katherine)</td>
<td>Power-Based Partnership Structure</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (Sarah)</td>
<td>Equity-Based Partnership Structure</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the case study method in place, I now detail the specific criteria I used to select my cases.

To observe the dynamics within the components of the peace-building project that I was seeking to understand, I chose two cases that were similar in that both individuals had enough years of peacebuilding experience to put them in a position to work directly with an IPA. This meant they were the primary contact with the IPA and not secondary. To further find the cases that met my criteria, this study included women who had at least 10 years of peacebuilding experience, held a senior leadership role in the peacebuilding project and worked directly with at least three IPAs. Having experience working with multiple IPAs in varying capacities allowed for DWPBs to select out of this pool a partnerships that was most important to them and influenced how they approached their peacebuilding work. Also, I selected cases where DWPBs worked to end intrastate cycles of conflicts between state and/or non-state actors in their local context.

The final criteria I used for selecting my cases looked at the partnership structures between IPAs and DWPBs. Specifically, I chose cases in which one partnership was power-based and one was equity-based, and the outcome regarding the level of agency the DWPB had was unknown. In particular, I chose cases where the DWPB worked with IPAs, for example non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., Mercy Corps, Search for Common Ground), United Nations (UN) agencies (e.g., UNDP, UN Women), Beltway Bandits (e.g., Chemonics) and/or government agencies (e.g., United States Agency for International Development).

To ensure my cases possessed these characteristics, I used purposive sampling and selected two women who were alumnae of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice’s Women PeaceMakers Program. I chose from this cohort of women because the criteria for them to be accepted into the program aligned with my case selection criteria, as it related to 10 or more years of peacebuilding experience and having held a role in working with multiple IPAs. Additionally, within this pool of 64 women, I selected a group of women who had the substantive experience working directly with three to five IPAs, as the main point of contact domestically. I was able to identify 15 women who met these case selection criteria and were...
also willing to be interviewed. Of these 15 that I interviewed two cases emerged where the DWPBs’ experiences with IPAs further aligned with the relationship between the independent and dependent variable this study was exploring.

In particular, these two cases of interest were selected given their strong variation in their partnership structure. This interesting variation in their partnership structure with IPAs captured two different circumstances, one where Katherine had a power-based partnership and Sarah had an equity-based partnership, and the outcome of the agency was unknown. Furthermore, of the 15 DWPBs I interviewed, two were treated as primary actors, and the remaining 13 were treated as secondary actors in the peacebuilding process. For these 13 DWPBs, their “secondary” status manifested in four key ways: (1) Domestic Male Peacebuilders (DMPB) were the primary actors in all the 13 partnership dynamics and project operations with IPAs, (2) DMPBs treated the DWPBs as assistants and support staff, often requiring them to manage schedules, bring coffee, take notes and set up rooms for meetings, (3) DMPBs did not see DWPBs as capable partners in the strategic side of peacebuilding work, and (4) DMPBs did not foster an environment of development for DWPBs, therefore, stunting their growth as peacebuilders which locked them out of future leadership opportunities.

Given that these 13 other DWPBs did not work directly with the IPAs, they did not allow for examining the relationship between the IV and the DV. Nonetheless, through this interview and selection process, there were key findings that glean insights around the gendered experience DWPBs face when seeking to end cycles of violence. These findings are discussed in the Analysis section of this thesis. Lastly, it is important to highlight at this time that the original names of these women have been changed to protect their identities. Below highlights why this study chose to examine power- and equity-based partnership structures.

**Why Power-Based & Equity-Based Partnership Structures**

As highlighted in the Theoretical Argument section of this thesis, many peacebuilding partnerships are still structured to be top-down, which for this study means partnership structures
defined as power-based. While power-based partnerships are a common approach to working with domestic peacebuilders, there have also been efforts to create more equity-based partnership, which include: Charter for Change, Doing Development Differently, Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights and Innovative Peace Fund. These approaches to peacebuilding partnerships are beginning to be adopted by more organizations but are still not mainstreamed. Therefore, this study aims to have relevance to the wider peacebuilding audience. It is vital to understand ways in which agency is or is not being established through these two predominant peacebuilding partnership structures and whether these structures are aiding or inhibiting agency from occurring for DWPB in peacebuilding projects.

Why High & Low Agency
As previous theories highlighted, domestic peacebuilders having agency in their peacebuilding partnership with IPAs is critical for developing context-specific peacebuilding strategies, which lead to aligning more with the peacebuilding needs of that community and in turn build more durable peace (Autesserre, 2014; Altahir, 2013; Björkdahl & Johanna, 2015; Kappler, 2014; Mac Ginty, 2015; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). Furthermore, given the great value in DWPBs having agency, it is important to understand how it can occur in a peacebuilding project that is being implemented.

Time Frame for Cases
I further chose cases where DWPB were doing work with IPAs post the United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). This study looked at cases after the establishment of the UNSCR 1325, which occurred in October 2000, because this resolution set an international precedent for the importance and value of including DWPB in peacebuilding. Through this resolution, a clear intention for the meaningful inclusion and value of women in peacebuilding was internationally ratified at this point in time, and a baseline to work from with research was set. The establishment of the UNSCR 1325 further internationally recognized the unique and valuable insights, experiences and backgrounds women bring to peacebuilding. Therefore, if
IPAs’ peacebuilding projects did not include women in the work, a clear statement was made against substantially including women in peacebuilding. Before 2000, there were no such clear international standards set; therefore, whether or not a peacebuilding project substantially included women through ensuring they had agency was not a clear demonstration around gender discrimination or reinforcing a certain power dynamic.
Gathering the Empirics & Operationalization of the Theoretical Framework

In order to test the theoretical argument and the hypotheses in this study, a set of observable indicators were established for the independent variable, dependent variable and the causal mechanism. The section below maps out how the variables of interest were operationalized for the study, but first it is discussed how the empirics were gathered.

In-depth Interviews

The empirical material for this study came from primary sources, where in-depth interviews were conducted over Skype and Whatsapp calls with the DWPBs. This medium to interview was chosen given my research’s limitations of being unable to travel to interview these women due to time, resources and safety constraints. My two in-depth interviews were separately held with Katherine and Sarah. All interviews were semi-structured and captured data on the following three components needed to explore in order to test the hypotheses: 1.) how was the peacebuilding partnership established and defined; 2.) was the DWPB meaningfully included; and 3.) what was their level of agency in the project?

In the next part of this section, I further break down how each of these areas were operationalized for this study. Starting with my independent variable, then the causal mechanism and finally the dependent variable.

Operationalization

In order to empirically explore and test my research question, I operationalized particular terms outlined in the theory section of this thesis and developed indicators for each one. Doing so enabled them to be observable for my study. This section provides the indicators for both my independent variable (partnership structures between DWPBs and IPA), dependent variable (level of agency DWPB has when implementing peacebuilding interventions) and causal mechanism (DWPB meaningfully included).
Type of Partnership Structures (Independent Variable)

In order to assess what kind of partnership structures existed in my two cases, I developed an analytical framework that measured partnership structures within peacebuilding projects. I identified the components an IPA and DWPB would have to navigate in order to establish a peacebuilding partnership. Therefore, based on the components that existed under these relationships, I aggregated the indicators under three dominant categories that represented how an IPA and DWPB would become a project partner. These specifically focused on how most peacebuilding partnerships come to fruition and is it through power- or equity-based approaches?

However, before diving into the specifics of these types of partnerships I again want to highlight how partnerships are being defined in this study, partnerships are: where parties share a common aim, a mutual understanding, and have interdependent interactions with shared intentions (Fowler, 1997; Cornwall et al., 2000). Furthermore, partnerships are agreements that link actors in joint activities that require both parties’ internal procedures, systems and cultures to execute against a goal (Ashman, 2001). With this definition of partnership again in place, I will now dive into how it is explored in this study.

To observe the partnership structure, I evaluated how power- or equity-based dynamics within the components of the peacebuilding project could be formed through a prevalent partnership peacebuilding practice, the grant selection process. Based on how the grant process unfolded between these two actors defined who had the power when entering the partnership. I chose this process because it is one of the common ways in which an IPA and DWPB form a peacebuilding partnership. While there are other more informal approaches, such as verbal agreements, I wanted this study to examine one of the more prevalent and formal partnerships that exists. In the remaining part of this section, equity-based and power-based structures are defined, including the indicators used to observe them both.
Equity-Based Structures

For equity-based partnerships, these structures encompassed characteristics in which the project allowed for both the DWPB and the IPA to have equal involvement in the three categories of the formation of a peacebuilding partnership. For each of these categories, I looked for determining factors that signaled the IPA and DWPB formed a partnership in a manner that was equitable. These factors included whether the partnership was formed through a trust-based funding structure; whether the IPA was willing to work with the DWPB’s capacity and accesses to resources to complete a grant application (e.g., allow for more time between application opens and when the application is due, does not require intense reporting that would take more than three to four people to pull together and a long institutional history); and whether the IPA was open to changing funding priorities to better meet the local conflict resolution needs, as long as they still aligned with the grant’s main thematic focus and end goal. The indicators used for equity-based partnership structures are mapped out in Table 2.

Power-Based Structures

For power-based partnerships, these structures encompassed characteristics in which projects did not allow for the DWPB to have equal involvement in the three categories of the peacebuilding partnership formation process. For each of these categories, I looked for determining factors that signaled the IPA formed a partnership in a manner that forced a DWPB to meet the demands of the IPA, even if this put a strain on the relationship and threatened the DWPB’s peacebuilding work. Specifically, this study used the following categories to define whether a partnership was power-based: results based management structure (RBM); IPA set rigid grant application guidelines (e.g., short timelines between when the application is open and due date, application realistically would take a team of three to four-plus people with expertise in grant writing to complete); and IPA set priorities of the peacebuilding project in the grant proposal and was not willing to change despite local conflict resolution needs expressed by the DWPB.
For this study, RBM is a technique commonly used by donors and the international peacebuilding sector to assess programme effectiveness (Faugli, 2013). RMB has been argued to not be an effective way of managing and reporting most international and community based organization’s performance, because it assumes that social changes can be predicted, controlled and reduced log frame thinking. These log frames do not allow for flexibility or adapting programs to the needs on the ground in conflict zones, which are never static given the environment of such a context. Lastly, RBM is criticized for the lack of beneficiary accountability, premises of linear strategies and too much time spending on reporting (Faugli, 2013).

The indicators used for power-based partnership are mapped out in Table 2.
Table 2. Kind of Partnership Structures (Indicators)

Type of Peacebuilding Partnership Structures

Equity-based

- Trust-based funding structure
- IPA is willing to work with the DWPB’s capacity and accesses to resources to complete a grant application (e.g., more time between application opening and due date, does not require intense reporting that would take more than three to four-plus people to pull together and a long institutional history of reports)
- IPA is open to changing funding priorities to better meet the local conflict resolution needs, as long as they still align with the grant’s main thematic focus and end goal

Power-based

- RMB management structure
- IPA sets rigid grant application guidelines (e.g., short timelines between application opening and due date, ones that would realistically take a team of three to four plus people with expertise in grant writing to complete)
- IPA sets priorities of the peacebuilding project in the grant proposal and is not willing to change despite local conflict resolution needs expressed by the DWPB

DWPB Meaningfully Included (Causal Mechanism)

To understand whether the DWPB was meaningfully included in the peacebuilding project, I examined what position the DWPB held in the project. The indicator I used for the causal mechanism included if the she held a senior leadership role in the peacebuilding project. Specifically, this study defined “meaningfully included” based on if the senior leadership role had the ability to manage, influence, guide or direct employees and oversee activities such as driving forward organizational goals, strategic planning development and overall decision-making.
making (Herman, 1994). Finally, using this indicator was important because it operationalized my causal mechanism and allowed for it to be observed in this study.

**Level of Agency (Dependent Variable)**

While my independent variable focused on the structuring of the peacebuilding partnership, my dependent variable was the level of agency that existed within the two different types of partnership structures as the implementation of the peacebuilding project evolved. In order to observe the level of agency DWPBs had in their partnerships with IPAs, I developed an analytical framework that measured high or low agency within a peacebuilding project.

But before delving into these levels of agency, it is important to revisit this study’s definition of agency, which is: “agency has to do with the human capacity to act; a capacity that is not exercised in a vacuum but rather in a social world in which structure shapes the opportunities and resources available in a constant interplay of practices and discourses” (Giddens, 1984; see also Cleaver, 2007). Furthermore, agency means an actor has the ability to transform and change something, which hinges greatly on the concept of autonomy and the capacity to act independently of outside constraints or coercion (Shepherd, 2012). Agency is the capacity for an actor to shape and define multiple components of one’s work. This actor is further able to have the capacity to manoeuvre, challenge and or contest ideas that do or do not resonate with their positions. Lastly agency is an actor’s ability to act with authority and autonomy within their space of operations (Shepard, 2012; Munter et al., 2012; Archer, 1984; Nash, 1999; Willmott, 1999; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). With this definition of agency in place, below defines two levels of agency and how they were observed in this study.

**High Level of Agency**

Once the partnership was formed and the peacebuilding project had commenced, for high agency to exist my analytical framework captured three key areas. First, DWPBs were given capacity to make decisions for the project based on the specific cultural, conflict and community context’s
needs. Second, they were positioned as a local expert, where their knowledge and experience were equally integrated into a project as was the IPA’s. Third, they were able to propose alternative approaches to what the IPA was suggesting without experiencing consequences. The indicators used for high level of agency are mapped out in Table 3.

Low Level of Agency

Once the partnership was formed and the peacebuilding project had commenced, for low agency to exist the DWPB’s position throughout the project was the inverse of high agency. In particular, my analytical framework captured three key areas in which a DWPB would have low agency. First, they were not treated as a local expert; instead, the IPA viewed themselves as the expert during the project. Second, the IPA extracted information, networks and other resources from DWPB to meet their peacebuilding needs. They would then use this information as their own and position themselves as the expert on a particular area, and not the DWPB. Third, as the project unfolded, the DWPB were unable to shift the project’s agenda, focus and resources in a manner to meet changing demands on the ground. The indicators used for low level of agency are mapped out in Table 3. I now move to the next section of this thesis, which merged the empirics gathered with analysis.
Table 3. Level of Agency (Indicators)

Level of Agency in the Peacebuilding Partnership

High Agency

- Project design is completed by DWPB or equally-together with IPA
- Project daily management is conducted by DWPB
- Project goals are set by DWPB or together with IPA
- Communication between IPA and DWPB is open and frequent; DWPB has the ability to contact IPA and they respond
- Project length goes beyond one to two-year cycles and is set by DWPB or together with IPA
- Access to resources for implementing the project are available for DWPB, and DWPB has the main control of them
- Flexibility to adapt project based on local needs by DWPB
- Monitoring & evaluation of the project is done on both sides, where DWPB evaluates IPA and IPA evaluates the DWPB

Low Agency

- Project design is done mainly if not all by IPA
- Project daily management is mainly conducted by IPA
- Project goals are set by IPA
- Communication between IPA and DWPB is infrequent, and IPA does not promptly/rarely responds to DWPB
- Project length goes only one to two-year cycles, and is determined by IPA
- Access to resources for implementing the project are controlled by IPA, and DWPB has little ability to use them without their approval
- Project is inflexible and rigid, in that when changes on the ground occur, the project does not also change to reflect new needs
- Monitoring & evaluation is only done by IPA monitoring & evaluation team, and only evaluates DWPB
Finally, it is important to note that this study defines meaningfully included based on whether a DWPB holds a leadership role or not. In contrast, the level of agency is only established when DWPB meets at least four out of the seven functional indicators of agency in a peacebuilding project.

Case Study Analysis

In what follows, two cases are analyzed and then a comparative analysis of these cases is conducted. To begin, this section covers how the empirics were gathered. Second, for each case I examined the indicators that defined what type of partnership structure existed between the DWPB and IPA, one that is power-based and one that is equity-based. Third, I examined whether meaningful inclusion of the DWPB occurred in the project. Fourth, the level of agency the DWPB had and the agency’s origins based on the partnership structuring is analyzed. Finally, based on the outcomes for each case analysis, a comparative analysis is conducted in order to explore how the differing partnership structures lead to either high or low agency for each case.

Gathering the Empirics

To ensure the key dynamics between DWPB and IPA’s peacebuilding partnerships pertinent to this study could be observed, three approaches to gathering empirics were used.

First, given the DWPB’s vast peacebuilding experience (over 10 years), they had worked with a number of IPAs throughout their career. Inevitably, the type of partnership between each IPA and DWPB would vary based on a myriad of reasons, for example, the scale of bureaucracy the IPA’s organization would have, immovable rules and regulations the IPA had for working with DWPB, the individual within the IPA who was leading the project and the time period in which the project took place. Therefore, in order to understand the critical components this study was exploring, the interviewees were asked to discuss a peacebuilding project partnership with an IPA that was most significant to them. By imposing these limitations to the interviewee, it
enabled the study to explore more of the vital, significant and most important aspects for a DWPB when navigating working with an IPA.

Second, to ensure the DWPBs felt safe to share their experience working with IPAs, how the partnerships unfolded and the effect it had on their ability to do their work, their anonymity has been kept, including any identifying information (e.g., country they worked in, conflict they were working to resolve, specific information about their IPA). Anonymity was critical to the study because the DWPB needed to feel safe to share critiques of their partnerships without jeopardizing any future opportunities with the same or other IPAs. It is common in the peacebuilding sector for domestic peacebuilders to have multiple rounds of support and/or funding from the same IPA. Furthermore, when a domestic peacebuilder is applying for funding through a traditional request for application process, references from previous IPAs are usually required. Therefore, this study did not want to jeopardize renewal or new funding opportunities for these DWPB by providing information that would damage how an IPA viewed the DWPB, their work and/or partnership. This being the case, in addition to names being anonymized, certain details are also kept anonymous that could be identifying (e.g., organizations that the DWPB worked at or for, specifics about the IPAs, locations and countries they work in and exact title she held in the project).

Third and final, two DWPBs, here referred to as Katherine and Sarah, were selected according to four criteria: they had at least 10 years of peacebuilding experience, held an official role in partnership with the IPA, worked with at least three IPAs, and have/are working directly to end cycles of violence of intrastate conflict between state and/or non-state actors in her local context. Furthermore, one DWPB experienced power-based and the other experienced equity-based partnership structures when working with a single IPA; however, their level of agency was unknown.
Analysis of the Empirics

After transcribing the data from my in-depth interviews, I encoded the data by giving a partnership structure and agency a ranked score to each case. I encoded this data based on the indicators I developed for both the independent variable (partnership structures between DWPBs and IPAs), dependent variable (level of agency DWPB has when implementing a peacebuilding project) and the causal mechanism (DWPB meaningfully included).

Based on the variables this study was observing, the interview questions covered eight themes that commonly exist in peacebuilding project, which included project design, daily management, goals, communication between IPA and DWPB, project length, access to resources, flexibility to adapt project and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In the following sections, a thematic analysis for two cases was conducted in which one was power and the other equity based. Then I conclude with a comparative analysis of both cases to see which case(s) had high or low agency based on their partnership structure, and what were the driving factors for the dependent variable.

Analysis of Power-Based Partnership Structure Case

“They would bypass me and my organization . . . they’d use our networks to access the region, and once they made contact then they would no longer work with us. The [IPA] wanted to have control of the region and used us to enter.” — Katherine

Background on the Case

The first DWPB, named Katherine for this study, worked in peacebuilding for over 20 years and later in her career helped found her own organization that focused on women’s security in a country that was plagued with small arm proliferation, gang violence and a huge influx of refugees. This spike in population and violence was compounded by a country with a high unemployment rate and large use of drugs. Despite this reality Katherine overcame many obstacles in her environment, helped found her own organization and was also an elected political official on both a community and city level. After holding these elected office positions,
she continued to climb the ranks and hold top leadership positions in the organizations she worked in. Throughout her over 20 years of peacebuilding experience, she has negotiated community-level peace agreements, often brokering ceasefires between gang leaders and working to strengthen civil society to ensure the violence did not reemerge in her local context.
Partnerships Structure (Independent Variable)

To observe what type of partner structure existed in Katherine’s case, this study used the three indicators that were discussed in the previous section, which included the following: did RBM exist, IPA set rigid grant application guidelines and also set the priorities of the peacebuilding project in the grant proposal that the IPA as not willing to change. For Katherine, after applying this framework to her case and measured what type of partnership she had with the IPA, a UN agency, it was apparent her partnership was a power-based partnership structure.

The IPA in the partnership had established a power dynamic that tilted in their favor and positioned the DWPB as subservient using a RBM management approach, where the IPA assumed almost full control over outcomes and fixed relationship between inputs and outputs. The IPA set rigid and tight constraints around the submission of the funding application, which given the large amount of information it required, Katherine barely qualified and had to omit a great deal of pertinent information because she did not have a team large enough to pull all of the information together for this funding partnership opportunity. Finally, from the onset of the partnership the IPA was clear in what outputs needed to be without a great deal of local input. For these reasons, Katherine's partnership with her IPA was power-based.

The remaining part of this analysis examines how this partnership structure unfolded for Katherine across the eight project areas that are being used to examine what level of agency existed, including meaningful inclusion. Table 4.2 gives an overview of this analysis.

Role Held During Peacebuilding Project (Causal Mechanism)

Katherine held a senior leadership role in the project, meaning she had the ability to manage, influence, guide or direct employees. Katherine further oversaw activities such as driving forward organizational goals, strategic planning development and overall decision making (Herman, 1994).
Level of Agency in Peacebuilding Project (Dependent Variable)

**Project Design and Management**

*Design* — To begin, Katherine identified the tensions that started to arise with the IPA from the onset of their partnership. When it came to the design of the project, Katherine explained that it was difficult for the IPA to be willing to adjust their thematic focuses to other more localized thematic focuses. She said:

> Within the UN system they mostly focused on thematic areas and would readily have their agenda in mind. It was always a struggle to get the local point of view into what was being done; it was a struggle to convince them to take into consideration us. Not that they have an aversion, but they are set in their ways. We had to speak out constantly.

For example, the UN agency was focused on advancing Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) work in the region; however, what was really needed was work around ending the high levels of gang violence. Katherine struggled to convince them that the strategies needed to address this critical peacebuilding work were different from CVE strategies.

*Daily Management* — Katherine and her team performed the majority of the daily management of the project. They also worked with the IPA, UN agency, to build greater networks and legitimacy to in the region. This supported their work in pioneering new strategies, and furthering important initiatives they were working to make successful.

[Ranked Low Agency] For the above reasons, in this area of analysis Katherine’s agency was low because the IPA held the power and resources to decide and influence what peacebuilding design was being implemented. This occurred despite what the local conflict needs were and how Katherine advocated for these to be addressed.

[Ranked High Agency] Finally, given the daily management and control Katherine had of the project, this area ranked as being high level of agency.
Project Goals
While the UN agency had the best intentions of ending cycles of violence in the region, their approach did not align with the local needs. Therefore, DWPBs like Katherine had to adopt a more CVE approach to their work in order to receive support. This resulted in “mission creep” and the goals of the project being defined more by the UN agency versus what was needed to end cycles of violence.

 Ranked Low Agency] Since the goal setting was more top-down versus driven by local needs, or a collaboration of defining the needs, this was an area where the DWPB had low agency in the project.

Communication Between the IPA & DWPB
As it related to communication, the tendency was for the IPA to mainly reach out when they wanted entry points into the local communities and connections to possible people to partner with, and they were rarely available when Katherine and her team needed them. As Katherine expressed:

[We] always insisted on it [communication]. We would ask for it because it wasn’t just given. We made sure [the IPA was] part of everything in local context, but we were not part of everything, such as meetings. [IPA] had funding to come down, but we [local peacebuilders] did not have that option. Conversations versus just meetings were more effective. For some reason [IPA] found this very strange.

 [Ranked Low Agency] Given communication was was not equitable or easily accessible by the DWPB, and that it was instead more extractive in nature from the IPA’s side, this area was ranked low agency.
Project Length
Katherine expressed the importance and value of setting project timelines that took into account the realities of peacebuilding. In this case, that means time horizons are longer in nature than one to two-year project cycles, but instead take into account that ending cycles of violence takes longer than most peacebuilding project timelines. While Katherine and her team would have preferred the project’s timeline aligned with the needs of the local conflict context, the UN agency still set the projects to operate in shorter time periods.

[Ranked Low Agency] Since the IPA did not listen to the needs of the local context, as expressed by the DWPB, this area was ranked low agency.

Access to Resources for Implementing the Project
As it related to who had access to the necessary resources necessary to implement the peacebuilding project, which ranged from equipment, expert knowledge and networks, Katherine felt they had all three of these components. However, there were times that she would turn to the IPA to gain access to the international peacebuilding space, outside of her region. Furthermore, the IPA was also the one that had a critical resource, funding, which Katherine and her team were dependent on to implement the work.

[Ranked High Agency] This being said, Katherine had the majority of the resources and expertise on the ground to actually execute the critical work at hand, and therefore ranked as having high agency in this area of the partnership.

Flexibility to Adapt Project Based on Local Needs
As Katherine expressed, active conflict zones that consist of state and non-state actors are environments that are not static in nature. Each day and week can look different and require various peacebuilding strategies in order to work towards ending the violence. For these reasons, Katherine’s work required adaptable and flexible project plans. While this was the case, the IPA did not allow for maneuvering or changes in the original project plan. Making changes was even more difficult given the short project timelines of one to two years, specifically Katherine “had
to fight a lot be heard, get the strategies they needed. Many things they had to grind their teeth and accept . . . Not much room for maneuvering especially given the time period. The [IPA] would have wanted to have things done at a faster pace, but we tried to emphasize that things take time around. The time factor had to be flexible, but the [IPA was] not ok with this.”

[Ranked Low Agency] The DWPB’s insights into the local conflict contexts’ needs were not taken into account or integrated into the project. Furthermore, the local expertise was trumped by the IPA’s project plans. For these reasons this area ranked low in agency.

Monitoring & Evaluation
The M&E part of the project was conducted by an outside source and reviewed the DWPB’s work. Furthermore, the DWPB submitted reports to the IPA on the outcomes of their work. However, Katherine expressed that the M&E was one sided, in that the local team did not have the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the IPA’s work and efforts in the peacebuilding project.

[Ranked Low Agency] As the above highlighted, this approach is a traditional structuring in peacebuilding projects, and the one sidedness of the M&E process prevents the local input and feedback from occurring. Katherine expressed the importance of having two-way M&E evaluations, in that the IPA evaluates the DWPB’s work and the DWPB has the opportunity to evaluate the IPA’s work in the project. Katherine felt this approach would improve peacebuilding projects, but in her case it did not occur.

Next, I applied the same analysis framework to the case of Sarah to explore how her partnership structure affected the level agency she had in her peacebuilding work. This part of the analysis now examines a case where the DWPB had an equity-based partnership structure with an IPA.
Analysis of Equity-Based Partnership Structure Case

“We worked jointly to design the project. When we [local team] were putting together our proposal there was a consultation with the [IPA] and they put together the strategy initiative that was critical for the local context. We had the space to highlight our local issues and worked jointly with the representative from the [IPA]. They came and asked questions, they listened and learned.” — Sarah

Background on the Case

The second DWPB, named Sarah for this study, has worked in peacebuilding since the 1980’s. She grew up in an environment where armed non-state actors and the government were in constant conflict between each other. She saw many ceasefire and peace agreement attempts, but still her country is plagued with cycles of violence that affect all levels of society. Given these realities, the military became the main form of government and rule for many years. For a long period of her life, she believed that armed conflict was the way to build peace. However, over times she became active in the nonviolent movement. Through this model she became inspired by and deeply committed to peacebuilding. Over the years, she has worked with over 10 IPAs ranging from INGOs, UN agencies, government IPAs and family foundations. Sarah is committed to bringing all warring parties together, ranging from military to rebel groups to civil society organizations, to ensure comprehensive peacebuilding can occur in her local context.

Partnerships Structure (Independent Variable)

Sarah’s partnership with her IPA was equity-based, which was observed through the original project requirements that Sarah and her team were expected to meet in order to receive funding and support from the IPA. While the funding partnership was based on a RBM management approach, the other two measures of whether the partnership structure was power- or equity-based, aligned with equity-based. This was because, the IPA set a timeline between the
funding application opening and to its due date, that was realistic for Sarah and her small team to complete the grant application, two months versus some grant applications require a quick turn around of two to three weeks, which only a large team could do. Also the requirements of the application, regarding providing documents and previous reporting aligned with what a smaller community-based organization (CBO) could provide. Finally, the IPA worked with Sarah and her team to co-develop the priorities of the project in order to better meet the local conflict resolution needs.

Now with the partnership structure defined for Sarah’s case, the remaining part of the analysis of her case study examines how the equity-based partnership with her IPA, a European-based International Non Governmental Organization (INGO), effected what level of agency Sarah had during the peacebuilding project, also if she was meaningfully included.

Role Held During Peacebuilding Project (Causal Mechanism)
Sarah held a senior leadership role in the project, meaning she had the ability to manage, influence, guide or direct employees. Sarah further oversaw activities such as driving forward organizational goals, strategic planning development and overall decision making (Herman, 1994).

Level of Agency in Peacebuilding Project (Dependent Variable)

Project Design and Management
Design — At the beginning of the dynamic between the IPA and Sarah, Sarah felt in order to receive the support and funding from the IPA, she had to submit a project design that aligned with what the IPA was requesting through a request for proposal (RFP) process. In turn she felt this resulted in an original mission creep scenario. Specifically, she felt that in order to receive vital support, the DWPB had to shape her program more in a manner that aligned with the ideals of the IPA. This resulted in a mismatch between what the actual local context needed to end the cycles of violence and what the IPA thought the local context needed. This is because of the
realities that an IPA who is based in a European country, is not living the daily realities of the conflict, does not speak the local language and has spent only a few short week-long trips in Sarah’s context is simply unable to fully grasp what is needed most to end the conflict in this arena.

However, once the application from Sarah was accepted by the IPA and the partnership was established, the IPA met jointly with Sarah and her team to flesh out and develop more refined activities and a work plan. During this time, Sarah identified that her and the IPA worked jointly on these critical parts of the project. As Sarah described, it was here that her and the local team had the space to map out the project, at which time they had the space to define and establish activities that were different than what the IPA had originally planned, and then these ideas were jointly adopted.

*Daily Management* — For the daily management and decision making of the project, Sarah’s team did the majority of this work; the IPA made the decisions on when the regular project reports were due, then based on the progress reports, would sometimes have adjustments that they wanted made to the daily operations. As Sarah shared, “the local team had a project coordinator who focused on the three strategic areas that the IPA managed, in general they managed with them, the local. Most areas were related to capacity building, governance, helping communities with their peace and development plans. Maintaining strong relationship with the IPA was important.”

*Ranked High Agency* While the onset of the partnership with Sarah’s IPA leaned more towards Sarah not having agency in the design of the project, this shifted once the project started. This was in part due to the IPA creating space for and valuing the local insights that were brought to their initial project meetings. This resulted in jointly designing the project activities that were to be implemented, and thus giving equal weight to the local context needs as were given to the IPA’s priorities.
Project Goals

In regards to how the goals were decided for the project, Sarah said that the IPA “based this on the deliverables that were cited in the proposal they [local] put together. I felt it aligned with what we wanted, because they were just asking how to do the things they proposed they were going to do.” The IPA based the goals off of the deliverables that were mapped out in the proposal, which was designed by her. While these goals were somewhat skewed by the framework and requirements in the RFP, Sarah felt they were still able to highlight the goals they thought were most important. The final goals that were agreed upon aligned with what Sarah thought appropriate based on the local context.

[Ranked High Agency] Since Sarah’s project goals were taken into account and integrated into the program, she had high agency in this space of the project.

Communication Between the IPA & DWPB

In regards to transparent and frequent communication, this was occurring regularly between the IPA and Sarah’s project team. However, sometimes the IPA would communicate directly with the male Executive Director (ED) of Sarah’s organization as well, and more often than not, the ED did not relay any of this information onto Sarah.

[Ranked High Agency] This analysis is focusing on the dynamics between the DWPB and the IPA within the components of the peacebuilding project; therefore, based on Sarah’s response to the question, she felt the communication was open and frequent between her organization and the IPA. As it relates to the internal organizational knowledge sharing, and in Sarah’s case the lack of it, this did decrease her agency, but this will be discussed later in the summary analysis of this case study.
**Project Length**
Similar to Katherine, Sarah also expressed the importance and value of setting project timelines that took into account the realities of how long it takes to end cycles of violence, which meant time horizons needed to be longer than just one year. For this project, the IPA set the timelines, which in the long run aligned with the needs of Sarah’s work, but originally did not.

*Ranked Low Agency* Since the IPA decided to set the timeline of the project, despite Sarah’s opinions as a local expert, this is an area where Sarah had low agency in the project.

**Access to Resources for Implementing the Project**
When it came to access to resources that were necessary to implement the project (e.g., equipment, networks and expert knowledge), Sarah said she and her team had the adequate means, and specifically: “the local had these and the [IPA] recognized this. During their first meeting together the representatives from the [IPA] asked what was missing. The IPA turned to the local to understand what needed to happen and what needed to be done; they knew the knowledge and expertise existed with us.”

*Ranked High Agency* Given that Sarah not only had the necessary resources that were required to effectively implement the project, but that this was also recognized and respected by the IPA, this area of the project gets ranked as Sarah having high agency.

**Flexibility to Adapt Project Based on Local Needs**
Sarah found the IPA being amenable for changes and adaptations to the project as it unfolded. For example, “when they started with the peacebuilding project, the partnership with the military was not a part of the program, but along the program the situation then challenged them to work with the state security sector.” Sarah then shared this idea with the IPA, and the IPA was willing to make this large shift to the project, in the middle of a project cycle.
Since Sarah was able to adapt and significantly restructure the project to meet the local needs, and was supported by the IPA to do so, this is another area in which Sarah had high agency in the project.

**Monitoring & Evaluation**

Traditionally, to ensure an objective peacebuilding evaluation can occur, M&E should be conducted by an entity outside of the organization. The IPA Sarah was working with wanted to bring in evaluators from the European arena, which to Sarah and her organization greatly embodied “an outsider” evaluation. Therefore, the ED of Sarah’s organization pushed back and insisted that the evaluation be conducted by a team of individuals who are at least from their own country, speak the same language and have a deeper knowledge of the local context. The IPA was not willing to make this adjustment, and insisted that an international evaluator was necessary. However, both sides eventually reached an agreement where the evaluation team would consist of one local and one international evaluator. Sarah said, “while this process did cause tensions with the IPA, the IPA was not actually angry, and they were always open to listen, to respect and to work things out.”

While agency was not immediately given to Sarah and her team, the fact that Sarah felt they could openly object to the IPA’s methods without fear of retaliation indicates the IPA created an environment where agency existed in this space.

In the following section I do a comparative case analysis of these studies and the empirical findings from this analysis.
Comparative Cases Analysis

Having investigated the empirical findings regarding the variables of interest in the two case studies, I will now turn to the comparative case analysis section of this thesis. As implicated in the empirics, this section examines the components of the project which shaped whether the DWPB had high or low agency in their partnership with an IPA, and possible explanatory powers for the variation in the dependent variables in both cases. What follows are the empirical findings from assigning an agency score (low or high) to the eight areas my study examined as critical to peacebuilding partnership projects, and also exploring whether the meaningful inclusion of the DWPB had an effect on their level of agency in the project.

Empirical Findings of the Power-Based Partnership Structure Case

*Power-Based Partnership Structure —> Meaningfully Included —> Low Agency*

Based on the analysis of Katherine’s power-based partnerships with the IPA, she had an overall ranking of low agency. In the eight areas that were explored through this study Katherine had six areas where she ranked as having low agency and two as having high agency. This overall ranking of low agency is contributed to Katherine being unable to transform and change her peacebuilding project and act independently outside of constraints (Shepard, 2012; Munter et al., 2012; Archer, 1984; Nash, 1999; Willmott, 1999; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). This was an interesting outcome because Katherine was meaningfully included in the project by holding a senior leadership role in her organization, and this role was recognized in the project, which gave her a level of additional authority in the work and legitimacy with the IPA. Based on my empirical findings they suggest support for my hypothesis (H.1), that when a partnership structure is power-based between a DWPB and an IPA, the DWPB’s level of agency is low. A summary of these findings can be viewed in Tables 4.0, 4.1 and 4.2.
Empirical Findings of the Equity-Based Partnership Structure Case

*Equity-Based Partnership Structure* —> *Meaningfully Included* —> *High Agency*

Returning to the original components of the definition of agency, and applying them to this case, Sarah had high agency. Based on the analysis of Sarah’s equity-based partnerships with the IPA, she had an overall ranking of high agency. In the eight areas that were explored through this study Sarah had one area where she ranked as having low agency and seven as having high agency. Furthermore, she had the capacity to shape and define multiple components of her peacebuilding project that she was implementing with her IPA (Shepard, 2012; Munter et al., 2012; Archer, 1984; Nash, 1999; Willmott, 1999; Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). The IPA further gave her the agency to make decisions necessary to develop the most relevant peacebuilding projects that aligned with the needs of the local context. Also, she was meaningfully included in the peacebuilding project by holding a senior leadership role in her organization, and this role was recognized in the project, which gave her a level of additional authority in the work and legitimacy with the IPA. Based on my empirical findings they suggest support for my hypothesis (H.2), that when a partnership structure is equity-based between a DWPB and an IPA, the DWPB’s level of agency is high. A summary of these findings can be viewed in Tables 4.0, 4.1 and 4.2.

Conditions for High and Low Agency

This section of the comparative case analysis explores the conditions that drove the level of agency for each case. Based on the findings for these cases the level of agency appeared to stem from whether the IPA granted / gave the DWPB agency, which was based on whether the IPA viewed the DWPB as an expert in the project. This finding is explored in greater detail starting with Katherine’s case, then Sarah’s.
Conditions for Low Agency — To begin, Katherine shared:

When we needed to we’d lean on [IPA] expertise, but it was always critical to keep our local expertise. We always had to fight very, very hard to identify our expertise when in INGOs spaces. I had to fight to be heard. Many [IPAs] come and rely on local expertise to take them into communities, and then they go back and write a paper on what they experienced and they become 'the experts'.

In Katherine’s case, she was beholden to the power imbalance in her work that skewed in favor of the IPA, and the IPA did not view the value and importance of working equally with the DWPB. Based on Katherine’s account, the IPA operated in a more extractive manner, in which they used Katherine and her team to gain access to communities that they would otherwise not have access to as an outsider to the local context. These actions by the IPA signaled they did not value the DWPB’s expertise; therefore, this resulted in them not seeing the value in ensuring the peacebuilding project was driven by the local team. This occurred even though she held a senior leadership position, which indicates that the role a DWPB holds in a peacebuilding project may have less influence on the level of agency she has in the work with the IPA.

Conditions for High Agency — Sarah on the other hand worked with an IPA who valued and had an openness and willingness to the DWPB’s approach to peacebuilding. What drove this was not as clear in this study but would be something worth exploring in future work. This being said, because the IPA went about this project treating Sarah and her team as equals and valuing their insights, Sarah’s sense of agency grew within the program: “This partnership gave me more confidence as a peacebuilder, and moving forward this strength is now always with me.” Because of her high agency, Sarah felt there was space to highlight more localized and in turn effective approaches to peacebuilding, such as when she had the ability to change the original project proposal to work with a new partner, the military. Given the IPA’s willingness to make these project adjustments, Sarah was able to implement a peacebuilding project that was one of
the first projects in her region to bring together military, civil society and rebel groups to discuss the key issues plaguing their communities. Sarah also held a senior leadership role during the project, but given the outcomes from my analysis of Katherine’s case, I cannot claim that the role the DWPB held in the project influenced her level of agency.

This being said, the IPA still had the power to decide whether or not to give the DWPB agency, when according to previous research, agency is something that should be a defining part of a partnership in order to build the most effective peacebuilding projects (Autesserre, 2014). DWPBs cannot be solely treated as resources or as individuals that an IPA can wield in ways that drive forward their agenda. If a peacebuilding project has true intentions of ending cycles of conflict, it is critical for the domestic actors to play a vital and substantive role in the process. Lastly, Katherine inherently lacking the agency that existed in Sarah’s case does not equate to Katherine’s understanding of the importance of having agency. Therefore, in order to implement more localized peacebuilding projects, Katherine fought to get it.

Who Was Viewed as an Expert in the Peacebuilding Project

“They [IPA] only called when they wanted entry points, recommendations from who to partner with. It took a long while for local organizations to build up expertise. Ok, there are a lot of organizations that do not have a strong research background, but this is not excuse. Expertise lie not just with degrees they have, expertise lie in ability to mobilize, access, relationships.”

— Katherine

Another explanatory power around the level of agency a DWPB had in the peacebuilding project (and subsequently how they were treated by the IPA) stems from who the IPA viewed as an expert.

In Sarah’s case (high agency), agency was given by the IPA and her local expertise was also valued and respected. In Katherine’s (low agency) case, the IPAs saw the DWPB more as
resource, where they can extract key local insights to drive forward their agenda, and themselves as more of the expert than the local.

These two varying perceptions from the IPA greatly influenced how the DWPB was positioned throughout the project, and in particular, when changes from the original plan needed to occur in order to meet a shifting conflict resolution need on the ground. For example, when Sarah recommended shifting program partners to also include local military, the IPA trusted and valued her local expertise that this was the right approach and partner to bring into the program. In contrast, Katherine was unable to progress her new ideas when working with her IPA. This unfolded when she highlighted that local gun violence between warring gangs was the major issue that needed to be addressed, but the IPA still insisted that they direct their time and resources on CVE. This CVE approach was needed to a lesser degree in the region, and by directing energy towards addressing CVE and not towards localized gang violence, the IPA was unable to truly mitigate the root causes of the conflicts. It can be argued, therefore, the cycles of violence continued.

**Meaningful Inclusion**

Finally, as my analysis highlighted, both women were meaningfully included in the peacebuilding project because they held senior leadership roles. This section of my analysis explores the role of the causal mechanism in this study, by first discussing how the IV possibly shaped the causal mechanism and second, the causal mechanism’s relationship with the DV. Lastly, based on the findings in this study, I discuss two other items that should be considered when conducting further research into the concept of meaningful inclusion in the field of peacebuilding.

First, the women were meaningfully included in both cases even though one was operating in a power-based and the other in an equity-based partnership. Therefore, this study cannot argue that the partnership structure shaped the causal mechanism. This being the case, based on the interviews with Katherine and Sarah, they believed they were given senior leadership titles,
because the they had over 10 years of peacebuilding experience. They further believed this experience gave them the qualifications to operate at a higher professional level and receive the senior leadership title that they did from the IPA. However, given that the IPA decided the title for the DWPB in the project, it would be necessary to interview them to understand their logic. Thus, unless such an interview is conducted what the DWPBs report is partly speculative. Unfortunately, this study did not have the time nor the access to the corresponding IPAs to conduct these interviews. While this is the case, this study highlights even when a DWPB is meaningfully included she can still have low agency in a peacebuilding project, which was observed in the case of Katherine. Second, while both women were meaningfully included in the peacebuilding project my study did not find support for this mechanism having any effect on the DV. This is the case even though there appears to still be a relationship between my IV and DV, which is discussed in the Comparative Case Analysis section of this thesis.

There are three additional items that should be considered when reviewing the causal mechanism in this study. First, based on the findings, I argue there needs to be greater exploration into and testing of other possible causal mechanisms that can describe the relationship between this study’s IV and DV. Second, another alternative could be that these future tests still look at meaningful inclusion as a causal mechanism, but instead operationalize it differently than what appeared in this study. Other such studies can operationalize meaningfully included by using concepts such as women having a seat at the decision making table, versus sitting on the periphery of the room in second tier chairs; frequency women were included in formal and informal discussions, online and offline; and, how comfortable the women were to speak in these settings - and were they were listened to. Regarding the latter, a similar empirical study was conducted on the United States Supreme Court, Justice, Interrupted: The Effect of Gender, Ideology, and Seniority at Supreme Court Oral Arguments, and the findings from this study could be helpful in understanding how best to operationalize meaningful included for DWPBs (Jacobi et al., 2017). Lastly, it is also important to note that meaningful inclusion has not yet been operationalized in the field of peacebuilding research. It is thus an emerging concept in the
field of peacebuilding and this thesis is therefore adding to the real time discussion on the what amounts to meaningful inclusion in a gendered space (Paffenholz et al., 2015).

Unfortunately, due to time constraints of this study I was unable to deeply explore and test these other possible ways of operationalizing meaningful inclusion and test other possible causal mechanisms.

Table 4.0. Meaningful Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Katherine</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Leadership Role</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry/Junior Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1. Partnership Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power-Based</th>
<th>Katherine</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RBM management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA sets rigid grant application guidelines</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA sets priorities of the peacebuilding project in the grant proposal and is not willing to change</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Equity-Based                                    |           |       |
|Trust-based funding structure                    |           |       |
|IPA is willing to work with the DWPBs capacity and accesses to resources to complete a grant application | X         |       |
|IPA is open to changing funding priorities to better meet the local conflict resolution needs | X         |       |
Table 4.2. Level of Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peacebuilding Project Dynamics</th>
<th>Katherine Low</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Katherine High</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between IPA &amp; DWPB</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Length</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to Adapt Project</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Katherine Low</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Katherine High</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations and Biases

In the remaining part of this section, I will discuss the limitations and biases of this thesis. These include, in addition to the limitations caused by research design, challenges related to both empirical and theoretical limitations. Then I highlight how particular biases may have affected the outcomes of my study.

Research Design Limitations

In what follows, I discuss the limitations of my research design. There were several limitations to my research design. To begin, including more cases in my study would have strengthened the test on my explanatory variable and helped to better control for the alternative explanations. I used two samples that fit study’s selection criteria for in depth analysis and the other 13 for a much briefer analysis. Indeed, a more comprehensive versatile cohort of peacebuilders would have allowed for disentangling the contributions of different factors in determining the level of agency. For instance, in both cases analyzed the DWPBs were the primary contact to the IPA and also held the leading position in their respective peacebuilding project. In principle, this does not have to be the case, and teasing apart the individual contributions of these two factors will demand a larger sample that includes all possible combinations the two factors. Similarly, my analysis is entirely performed on DWPB. While this facilitates the analysis by eliminating the gender-specific component of the dynamics, it does not allow for explicit evaluation of the role gender plays in these dynamics. Finally, each specific case involves numerous other nuances that simply cannot be accounted for in the analysis, therefore, analyzing more cases would have rendered the results more robust as it would minimize the sensitivity of the findings to individual cases.

Unfortunately, given the scope of this empirical analysis, it was not possible to do this level of in depth analysis of data gathering with additional cases, this was due to time limitations of this study. This being the case, these factors do not undermine the comparison of these two cases, but it highlights as an area that calls for caution when generalizing the implications of this study and
therefore encourages future studies. Importantly, in spite of the small size these samples provided a good testbed for developing an analysis framework the extremely limited number of samples hinders generalizability of the findings. As such this work should be regarded as an initial study that can guide future larger scales efforts that can adequately capture the nuances of the interplay between peacebuilding partnership structures and the level of agency in DWPBs.

Moving forward, in addition to the above, also in future studies it is recommended that more time is needed to find participants and ensure they meet the criteria needed to successfully examine the relationships between the IV and DV of interest in this study. This being said once participants were identified they were open and willing to share their experiences, which allowed for this in depth analysis to occur.

**Empirical Limitations**

The empirical limitations can be divided into four issues concerning limitations of the empirics in the sources and implementation of more in-depth data collection.

First, the DWPBs were asked to discuss one partnership that was most important and formidable for them. For both, this required to call upon their memory because the partnerships were from the past. Relying on memory and trying to isolate that experience in comparison to other experiences can result in the DWPB not fully remembering every pertinent details.

Second, the difficulty of collecting empirical data on the individual DWPBs was another limitation of this thesis. Given the high-level roles these women held in their work, their schedules were limited and the locations in which they work had limited phone/internet access. For these reasons, I was unable to conduct interviews that were as long and frequent as I would have preferred, which could have allowed for deeper exploration into my variables of interest.

Third, the criteria I used for selecting DWPBs to interview, especially the 10 plus years of peacebuilding experience, inherently led to a likelihood they held a leadership position in the
peacebuilding project. This is because the number of years of experience allowed for a greater chance of growing within their career through promotions or applying for higher positions that aligned with their level of experience.

Fourth and final, given that the partnership structure, causal mechanism and level of agency indicators were similar in some respects and somewhat interlinked, being able to measure and observe them independently of each other was challenging. There are two reasons for this. First, if the DWPB has a leadership role, she is more likely to garner respect and have the ability to make decisions that others under her are not only willing to follow, but also required to follow based on her seniority. The combination of respect from others, decision making abilities and having others follow her becomes the bedrock of her agency—that is, the capacity to act and make decisions based on her own free will. Thus, parsing her title, role and agency apart becomes a difficult feat and one that does not clearly separate casualty from association.

Secondly, a consistent theme that emerged from my additional 13 interviews (outside of the main two on which I focused my analysis), was this: whether a partnership was power based or equity based had to do with how the IPA viewed the DWPB. This fell on one of two sides: if the DWPB was viewed as an expert, she was able to co-create the project which means the partnership was equity based; conversely, if the DWPB was viewed as a non-expert, then the partnership structure was IPA-led and a therefore should be categorized as a power based, top down approach.

**Theoretical Limitations**

One of the main theoretical limitations of my study has to do with the coding of my independent and dependent variables. Through conducting my study on the components of the peacebuilding project, what emerged were more complexities in the partnerships between IPAs and DWPAs that could not be simply explained as high or low agency, or power or equity partnerships. Therefore, future studies can explore applying more nuanced rankings to partnership and agency, in order to fully capture the factors that exist in these projects.
Biases

There are three possible biases that are important to highlight in this study. First, a major bias in this study, which after analysis became apparent, had to do with the DWPBs that were selected. Given the criteria that was used to select the DWPBs for this study, they tended to be women who had a high profile, received awards, spoke on the international stage and worked with many IPAs. Given these factors, these DWPBs might have more agency than a DWPB who is early in her career, less prominent and not as widely known. Therefore, this is an area that be explored in future studies.

Second, only DWPBs were interviewed and in turn only their perceptions of the partnership were captured. What could enhance possible future studies is also interviewing IPAs, and gathering their insights around the partnership with a DWPB.

Finally, given the leading roles the women I interviewed held in their communities, through the interview process it was important they were perceived to be strong, capable and able to wield influence in all spheres of their peacebuilding work. Therefore, they might not have been as forthcoming and willing to acknowledge areas in which they had low agency.
Alternative Explanations and Additional Observations

As the comparative case analysis demonstrates, the empirical findings support the hypotheses. However, the empirical findings have also highlighted other issues that raise questions on the conditions which influence a DWPB’s level of agency in a peacebuilding project with an IPA.

Alternative Explanations

Below highlights alternative explanations for where a DWPB’s level of agency may have also stemmed from in the peacebuilding project. These findings appeared in the research and can be explored in a future study.

IPA Projects Led by Women Positioned the DWPB to Have More Agency

The gender of the IPA project lead is one component of the partnership that the DWPBs who were interviewed for this study highlighted as influencing their level of agency in the project.

In the case of Sarah, her IPA project lead was a female, and as Sarah shared:

_This partnership gave [me] more confidence as a peacebuilder. The [IPA] lead was a woman; she worked hard to also provide additional resources on human rights and gender, shared information about other countries and other partners, she was very open, very open to hearing the needs. She was open with us and shared information. She also invited women peacebuilders and other lady colleagues to have exposure of other international partners, as a professional development opportunity._

Sarah further described working with a female IPA was helpful, in that she felt more comfortable speaking with the woman and was more likely to communicate her thoughts.
In the case of Katherine, while she did not highlight if the gender of her IPA hindered her agency, she did mention that the lead was a male. Given that Sarah expressed being more likely to communicate freely about local needs, push back or highlight other approaches because the IPA lead was female, in a future study it can be explored if the gender of the IPA lead affects the level of agency a DWPB has in her work. Culturally, this could be a distinguishing factor for a DWPB who comes from a more traditional gender role context.

**Additional Observations**

In this section, my empirical findings elucidate the salient role individuals play in shaping peacebuilding partnerships and the level of agency a DWPB posed, and in particular, how the DWPB established agency on her own accord. These additional findings speak to this and were observed while gathering my empirics and are critical to highlight, for they can shape future studies.

**Leveraging Expertise, Resources and Influence to Gain a Higher Level of Agency**

“I needed to have the confidence to put my foot down. Women were strong together. We were very selective in who these women were in our team. We were strategic who would be the nucleus of the organization. We looked for a variety of women with a range of expertise and deliberately chose strong women. Quality of the women was important to us versus a large number of women in the room.” — Katherine

Although the two types of cases differed in terms of level of agency, there were interesting approaches both DWPBs took to build their level of agency, even though their partnerships did not inherently include this in the program structure. Both DWPBs understood the importance of bringing their vital local experience, expertise and insights into the peacebuilding project, otherwise the project would not reach its full potential.

In the case of Sarah, as highlighted earlier, the IPA she partnered with valued and elevated her expertise, thus giving her greater agency in the project. Furthermore, the partnership with this
IPA is on its 12th year and over the years, Sarah leveraged the agency that she was given at the beginning of the partnership to ensure she had greater agency as the project progressed, leading to her being able to implement peacebuilding programs that aligned more with the local cultural and conflict resolution needs.

In comparison to Sarah, Katherine understood that while agency was not given to her by the IPA, she still needed it in order to implement critical peacebuilding projects. Given her cultural, linguistic and local peacebuilding competency in the region, she intimately understood the nuances of her conflict context and . These nuances could not be understood by an “outsider,” thus limiting their ability to develop programs that could address the root causes of the conflict.

Katherine saw her approach to building agency as critical to the success of her future work, and believed “ . . . because of women’s traditional role, negotiating is not very common for us [DWPBs]. What we need is more of this and training around this.” To ensure these insights and strategies were integrated into her work with the IPA, Katherine first built a team of DWPBs that had strong negotiation and mediation skills, and had previous experience working with IPAs. This team further consisted of women who held senior leadership positions and had a history of working in policy and community work. They further ensured they were well networked and connected in the region. Second, when this team was in place, they did a strategic planning session, mapping out how to best negotiate with the IPA in order to ensure the localized approach to peacebuilding was integrated into the project. Between the skills of her team and the strategy they developed, Katherine was able to build agency for DWPBs in future partnerships with IPAs. She took the lessons from her initial relationship with the UN agency, learned from them, and approached future partnerships in a manner that ensured local agency was a part of the program structure.

Key Findings from the other 13-Interviews
In order to add depth and breadth to my thesis, I have included key findings from the interviews with the additional 13 DWPBs. While these 13 cases did not meet my selection criteria, and did
not directly provide a clear connection to my causal story between my IV and DV of interest in this study, they still provided insights to the gendered experience of DWPBs. Therefore, by including findings from these additional 13 interviews in this thesis they serve my study in two ways: (1) first and foremost, it acts as a powerful lightning rod to view the gendered components of the peacebuilding space and (2) they provide a roadmap of what needs to be true, improved and taken into consideration in order to shore up the efficacy of peacebuilding projects. This being said these initial findings while powerful, should be explored in greater detail in future studies, which given the limitations and main focus of this study, were unable to be explored.

To understand why DMPBs were not treated as the primary actor in 87% of the cases I studied (13 out of 15), I posed the following questions: (1) were there traits and / or credentials that these men held that the DWPB did not possess? (2) were there any traits and / or credentials that the DWPBs held that the DMPB did not have?

Firstly, in the 13 cases where DMPBs led over DWPBs, I was able to confirm that these were all in patriarchal societies which reinforced the public and private belief system that holds: it is inappropriate for a woman to have a leadership role and instead needs to take a subservient role.

This then catalyzes a circuitous problem for DWPBs seeking to hold a primary leadership position with an IPA: the more she plays a subservient role, the less opportunity she has to gain the necessary experience to eventually lead. And the less she leads, the less she is counted on to lead. Similarly, DWPBs did not have the same access to gain educational degrees and secondary schooling due to the societal structuring that, again, favors male actors. Therefore, DWPBs gain neither the leadership experience, nor the credentialing that their DMPB counterparts gain.

This then begs the question: is leadership with IPAs and credentialing necessary for effective peacebuilding projects? The case studies of the two primary actor DWPBs (Sarah and Katherine) would say no, this is not in fact necessary. Rather than “leadership experience” and “credentialing”, it was their hands-on experience in the communities they were serving and their
roles as mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters that uniquely positioned them to have credibility and access with even the most treacherous of warlords. Women have been shown to be more effective in these roles because they are seen as not only familiar, but also non-threatening and subservient.

In the 13 cases in which DMPBs led, while they had leadership experience and credentials such as bachelors and advanced degrees, I found they lacked both the community-based credibility as well as the ability to leverage their roles as fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons in the same way my two DWPBs did. I attribute this discrepancy to the fact that the DMPBs were already in the seat of power, and therefore did not have to seek secondary paths to achieve credibility in the ways that the DWPBs did.

Restating my theory in brief and how these additional findings reinforce my theory: In the relationship between IPAs and DWPBs, the power skews to the IPAs because they hold the greater amount of resources. Due to this power imbalance, the valuable insights, strategies and expertise of the DWPBs are not incorporated into the peacebuilding projects. It is my position that if there were a deliberate balancing of power between the IPAs and DWPBs, and if DWPBs were given the agency necessary to in fact lead the peacebuilding efforts, the result would be targeted and contextual approaches that meet the conflict resolution needs of the DWPB’s communities.

Taking into account the additional 13 interviews I conducted, there is an additional obfuscation of the DWPB’s insights, strategies and expertise that is occurring. These women were subsumed into a secondary position because of the DMPB who was taking the lead in nearly 87% (13 of 15, Supplemental Table 1) of the partnerships with IPAs. In these instances, their lack of agency meant there are highly valuable and contextually important insights that do not get put to good use in the peacebuilding project. This reinforces my original theory, by highlighting how the power imbalances are greater for DWPBs because partnership dynamics within peacebuilding
projects continue to be gender blind to the vital and powerful role DWPBs play in sustainably ending conflict.

This is seen by DWPBs being secondary actors in peacebuilding partnerships with an IPA and project, and also within their own domestic institutions that they are working in. Instead their DMPB counterparts continue to hold positions of power within their organizations and are the primary actors when working with an IPA. This results in DWPBs inability to drive forward peacebuilding approaches that are most relevant in the contexts they operate in (e.g., local peacebuilder, mother, women in society, daughter), resulting in not being able to truly meet the conflict resolution needs of their communities and the groups they represent. Lastly, the fact that the DWPBs were stuck in a secondary and not primary role in these 13 other cases, further highlights the power imbalances DWPBs face in their work. This however is occurring on an internal-domestic level, and being reinforced by DMPBs. This again highlights yet another power imbalance DWPBs face when working to ensure their critical perspectives are being built into peacebuilding projects.
Conclusion

More localized approaches to ending cycles of violence are drawing the attention of many organizations and nation states, that are seeking more effective approaches to building sustainable peace. Specifically, ensuring peacebuilding projects properly leverage and meaningfully incorporate local expertise, knowledge, background and networks is being seen as vital. While this approach is beginning to gain traction in the field of practice, there have been few studies that empirically analyzed how to create better localized approaches to peacebuilding, in particular examining how local and global partnership structures can affect the efficacy of a peacebuilding project. Nor have these studies explored this issue through a gendered lens. Therefore this thesis has taken on the task of studying this previously understudied phenomenon, with the aim of contributing to the understanding how partnership structures, that are fraught will power imbalances, between IPAs and DWPBs contribute to DWPBs having agency to drive forward peace projects that align more succinctly and appropriately with their local cultural and conflict contexts.

The specific focus of this paper was to examine how the partnership structure between an IPA and DWPB would affect the DWPBs level of agency in the main components of a peacebuilding project, and how are meaningful inclusion further affected this dynamic. To understand this critical and rich nuances which exist in such a partnership, from the perspective of this theoretical framework I hypothesised that when a partnership between an IPA and DWPB was power-based, then the DWPB would have low agency. Additionally, I hypothesized the inverse of this as well, in that when a partnership structure is equity-based the DWPB has high agency. This study analyzed two cases, at an individual level, of DWPBs who had partnerships with IPAs. One case’s independent variable was a partner structure that had power-based and the other case had equity based partnership structures. The study further used semi-structured interviews with DWPBs to gather the empirics, which were then analyzed using the methods of most similar case comparison.
The empirical analysis of this study suggests that when partnership structures between IPAs and DWPBs are equity-based the DWPB has higher agency, and therefore more autonomy to drive forward the projects that meet the needs of her local peacebuilding context. What is more the analysis showed that my causal mechanism (meaningful inclusion) did not have an affect on the relationship between my independent (partnership structure) and dependent (DWPB’s level of agency) variable. Furthermore, the empirical findings indicate that IPAs still wield the power of when to give a DWPBs a certain level of agency, and that this hinged greatly on if the IPA viewed the DWPB to be an expert or a resource. Additionally, it appeared that when the IPA project lead was female the DWPB felt she more comfortable to express her agency, which both DWPBs in this case believed they should have and when it has not been given to them they therefore fought for it using various tactics. Therefore for peacebuilding practitioners to improve and develop more localized it is critical to consider these findings.

However, as the extended analysis demonstrates there have been limitations to this study including possible biases. Including more cases in my study would have strengthened the test on my variables of interest, helped to control for other explanations and make the results more generalizable. Also, more nuanced rankings to my independent and dependent variable may have allowed better captured the complex peacebuilding dynamics this study was exploring. To overcome possible biases that arose in this study selecting DWPBs who have less peacebuilding experience and international notoriety could be beneficial. Also, interviewing IPAs in future studies could again provide more insights into their effect on the DWPB’s level of agency.

Lastly, historically women-specific analyses have come after a male “baseline” study has been done; gendered analysis are typically afterthoughts and not forethoughts (March et al., 1999). Nevertheless, it should be noted that the empirical analysis of local peacebuilders— using the frameworks I have employed—has in fact not been done for any other master status peacebuilding group (e.g., youth, male, religious, queer, people of color, elderly, etc.). The development and testing of such analytical frameworks contributes to the field of peacebuilding research in that it provides modes in which key relationships and concepts can be observed and
measured. Therefore, it would be my recommendation that future studies explore these master status groups using the frameworks I have employed.

Furthermore, having these additional studies to compare my woman-specific analysis would allow for greater contrast when it comes to the understanding the gender specific aspects of the peacebuilder experience. Absent of baseline and / or comparative studies, my gendered analysis serves the dual purpose of both paving the way for understanding peacebuilding partnership dynamics while also attempting to shed light on the unique experiences of women in this field.

Finally, the inclusion of the remaining 13 interviews points to the issue of gender not because there are DWPBs in leadership roles with agency, but rather because of the opposite: there are instead male peacebuilders (DMPBs) in leadership roles with the agency. While it is beyond the scope of my thesis to analyze these DMPBs and their agency, it is worth noting the parallels to men in power as the default throughout history: from tribal leaders, to kings, to presidents, to dictators (Eagly et al., 1984). These concepts should therefore be explored in future studies.
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Supplemental Table 1

The list of DWPBs interviewed and the top level data that was gathered from these interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DWPB Case</th>
<th>Is DWPB primary Contact with IPA?</th>
<th>Main contact’s gender if DWPB is a secondary contact</th>
<th>Meaningfully included (Held Leadership Role in Peacebuilding Project)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 (Katherine)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 (Sarah)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4</td>
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