Gender mainstreaming in resolution 1325.

A bottom-up perspective on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 in peace building context in Myanmar.

Author: Dominique Vandason
Supervisor: Johanna Ohlsson
Abstract.

Title: “Gender mainstreaming in resolution 1325. A bottom-up perspective on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 in peace building context in Myanmar”.
Author: Dominique Vandason.
Supervisor: Johanna Ohlsson.

The work of the UN, the UN member states, civil society organizations, and committed individuals have played a major role in creating (the more or less international) “gender mainstreaming” approach that have become enclosed as a guiding principle in the narrative of the UNSCR 1325(2000), which is the first UN resolution on women, peace and security.

Previous academic research within the field of human rights, peace and security studies suggest that women may be referred to as one single collective on operational level and thus can be marginalized due to the formation of documents such as resolution 1325 (Edwards 2011; Ellerby 2015; St Pierre 2011). Supported by the research of mainly Alice Edwards and Hilary Charlesworth, that gender is understood primarily as female and that it also is connected to the traditional meaning of the roles of women as victims or caretakers, the study is assuming a feminist theoretical approach coupled to essentialist terminology which is also used as the tool for analysis. It is in my belief that a feminist oriented assessment on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 can increase understanding of the context for advocacy on gender on both institutional and academical level.

However, there seem to be a shortage of studies that focus on how internationally accepted gender narratives are made operational and how this narrative is referred to at the grassroot and civil society level in a peace building context. Therefore the issues on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 are discussed with the civil society actors in the peace building context in Myanmar. The bottom-up perspective assumed in this study is presenting a unique insight on the issue based on semi-structured interviews that discuss strong points and weak points found in the narrative of resolution 1325. The analysis of this paper suggest that resolution 1325 is a good tool for gender mainstreaming by highlighting the gender inequalities on institutional level, but it also fails to address the structural causes of gender inequality caused by power relations that structure the image of gender in both international and local context. In line with the essentialist approach gender is recognized by resolution 1325, however in a submissive way that merely identify women as victims and passive participants of society in the peace building context.

Keywords.
Civil Society Actors, Essentialism, Gender, Myanmar (Burma), Peace building, Peace process, UNSCR1325.

DISCLAIMER.
Any opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of Uppsala University.
# Table of Contents

1. **Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.1 Problem statement.................................................................................................................. 2  
   1.2 Purpose & research question................................................................................................. 3  
   1.3 Previous research................................................................................................................ 3  
   1.4 Definition of concepts......................................................................................................... 5  
      1.4.1 Peace process & peace building................................................................................... 5  
      1.4.2 Civil society actors......................................................................................................... 5  
      1.4.3 Gender.......................................................................................................................... 5  
      1.4.4 Gender mainstreaming................................................................................................. 5  
      1.4.5 Essentialism.................................................................................................................. 6  
   1.5 Disposition & delimitation...................................................................................................... 6  
2. **Theory** ................................................................................................................................... 6  
   2.1 Short history on gender mainstreaming.............................................................................. 7  
   2.2 Feminist critique of human rights...................................................................................... 7  
   2.3 Resolution 1325, gender & essentialism............................................................................ 9  
3. **Method** .................................................................................................................................. 13  
   3.1 Research design.................................................................................................................. 13  
   3.2 Empirical material & interview design............................................................................... 15  
   3.3 Ethical considerations......................................................................................................... 15  
   3.4 Myanmar peace processes................................................................................................. 16  
4. **Analysis** ............................................................................................................................... 16  
   4.1 Case – Myanmar................................................................................................................... 17  
   4.2 Resolution 1325 – Background & principles...................................................................... 18  
   4.3 Analysis of resolution 1325 based on discussion with CSA’s in Myanmar....................... 20  
      4.3.1 Structural challenges..................................................................................................... 20  
      4.3.2 Masculine, feminine & gender identities.................................................................... 22  
      4.3.3 Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration....................................................... 26  
5. **Conclusion** ............................................................................................................................ 28  
   5.1 Future Studies..................................................................................................................... 32  
6. **Highlights & Recommendations** ...................................................................................... 33  
   6.1 Resolution 1325.1?.............................................................................................................. 33  
   6.2 Myanmar............................................................................................................................. 34  
7. **List of references** .................................................................................................................. 37  
8. **Electronic resources** .......................................................................................................... 38  
9. **Appendix** ............................................................................................................................ 40  
   Appendix 1. PM – Presentation of the study on resolution 1325............................................. 40  
   Appendix 2. Question scheme for discussion on resolution 1325.......................................... 41
List of acronyms & abbreviations.

AGIPP - Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSA – Civil Society Actor
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
DDR – Demobilisation Disarmament and Reintegration
GA – (UN) General Assembly
IDP – Internally Displaced People
JPF – Joint Peace Fund
MPM – Myanmar Peace Monitor
NGO – Non Governmental Organisation
PSF – Peace Support Fund
SIDA – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
WPS – Women Peace and Security
UN – United Nations
1. Introduction.

According to a number of scholars an increasing number of conflicts tend to end through negotiated settlements rather than military victory.\(^1\) Peace after a negotiated settlement also show to be diverse and context dependent. Furthermore, the negotiated peace settlements have long term implications on peace that are not thought of during the negotiations.\(^2\) One of the issues absent during peace settlements is equal gender participation. In recent years the international community has grown more aware that gender issues are relevant in peace settlements because it affect both sexes in peace building. This view can be reflected in the increased growth of international focus on gender in the work of international institutions like CEDAW\(^3\) and the recognition of gender issues in conflict and post-conflict contexts in internationally recognized documents such as UNSCR 1325(2000)\(^4\) and UNSCR1820(2008)\(^5\). The work of the UN, the UN member states, civil society organizations, and committed individuals have played a major role in creating (the more or less international) “gender mainstreaming” approach that have become enclosed as a fundamental principle in the narrative of a major guiding document on women, peace and security in peace building which is the resolution 1325. In Short, the gender mainstreaming approach can be explained as focusing on empowerment of women, forward equal protection and prevention, and mainstreaming a gender perspective.\(^6\)

Despite the recent focus on institutionalization of gender issues in peace processes and peace building, both institutional and academic studies indicate that women and men show to have different views about the needs and situation of women in post conflict society and above all that the masculine side of the society lack the knowledge of women’s perspective of life.\(^7\) One of the issues revealed in previous studies on human rights, security and peace is that the adaptation of a gender narrative in international documents is not automatically resulting in concrete actions and bringing suggested results.\(^8\) achieved peace settlements. Indicating that gender issues are vital to address in the rebuilding of both social structures and political

---

\(^1\) Wallensteen (2007); Darby & MacGinty (2008); Bell (2006).
\(^8\) See the “Previous studies” section on page 3.
institutions in order to result in acceptable peace terms for both sexes. Contrariwise, it is argued, that working on peace processes with a fixed set of ideas about gender in socio-political context is limiting the equality of genders, marginalizing women, and leads to new tensions in society.\(^9\)

**1.1 Problem statement.**

Previous academic research suggest that transition of governmental rule can crate many complex challenges for both the institutions and the civil society.\(^10\) According to resolution 1325\(^11\), it is imperative to link women, peace and security in any peace process, because it is mainly women and children who suffer from different forms of violence created in the context of an armed conflict.\(^12\) However, there seem to be a shortage of studies that focus on how internationally accepted gender narratives are made operational and how this narrative is referred to at the grassroot and civil society level in peace building context. One of the issues identified that affect gender mainstreaming in a peace process is the lack of legitimate institutions and mechanisms the can challenge traditional gender images and structures at the political level.\(^13\) The argument propose an obvious choice for a study on resolution 1325 and its principle of “gender mainstreaming” by discussing the narrative of the document with civil society actors that work with gender issues and are involved in the political process of peace building. Said that, it is relevant to discuss gender that is argued for in resolution 1325 from a bottom up perspective due to the position of civil society actors as advocators for change.\(^14\) I believe that the conditions for how gender is advocated for at the civil society level can have a long term impact on how gender issues are normalized in peace building context and the political debate. Furthermore, the choice of the bottom-up approach is because most of academic research focus on top-down operationalization of the resolution of national, regional and international institutions.

Previous research within the field of human rights, peace and security studies suggest that women may be referred to as one single collective on operational level and thus can be marginalized due to the formation of documents such as the resolution 1325 (Edwards 2011; Ellerby 2015; St Pierre 2011). This study is assuming a feminist theoretical approach, coupled to essentialist terminology that is also providing the tool for analysis. It is in my belief that a feminist oriented assessment of resolution 1325 can increase understanding of the context for advocacy on gender on both institutional and academical level.

---

11 The pillars of resolution 1325 are presented in its own section in the discussion of this paper on page 18.
1.2 Purpose & research question.

The purpose of the study is to analyse “gender” in the gender mainstreaming principle of resolution 1325 by discussing the strong points and weak points found in the narrative of the resolution with civil society actors in a peace building process. By presenting a bottom-up assessment the study can have a positive impact on the work of civil society actors in terms of advocacy and operationalization of resolution 1325. Conclusively, the question of this thesis is to answer:

How is gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 reflected upon by civil society actors in a peace building context?

1.3 Previous research.

Resolution 1325 is the first resolution that explicitly target women in peace and security framework and sets a normative narrative for gender equality and women’s empowerment in conflict resolution.\(^{15}\) The resolution includes a broad array of topics on processes associated with gender mainstreaming in peace and security contexts, which today have grown into a very broad agenda of the international community and academic research. Scholars from various disciplines have contributed with both empiric and critical theories to the discussion on women, peace and security agenda.\(^{16}\) Their research have developed the knowledge of the discourse by identifying many critical issues with resolution 1325; covering areas of implementation, insights, and understanding of the resolution. The bulk of previous research on resolution 1325 focus on two standard questions, namely: what forms of peace does peacekeeping contribute to establish, with the focus on gendered contents of peace and peacekeeping; and secondly: it focuses on the operationalization of peacekeeping operations.\(^{17}\) The study of Theodora-Ismene Gizelis (2009) indicates that more equal post-conflict societies have the benefit of significantly higher international support, thereby resulting in lowering the security risks and decreasing the possibility of any renewed conflict.\(^{18}\) A number of studies on participation and representation of women in political institutions argue that “gender mainstreaming” through quotas of more women in political institutions “run the risk of oversimplifying a complex problem”.\(^{19}\) For example the study by Olsson & Gizelis (2015) indicates that instrumentalizing gender equality can have an alter effect of the core problems with inequality, by diverting the focus away from a rights-based approach, suggesting that implementation of “gender quotas” in peace building (advocated for in resolution 1325) do little to actually influence politics.\(^{20}\) The research of Louise Olsson

---


\(^{20}\) Ibid. p 5.
Olsson's research addresses the differences in how women and men are targeted differently by protective measures despite the fact that both men and women suffer equally from various forms of non-lethal violence.\textsuperscript{22} In short, “when the security in the traditional sense for men increases, a similar increase for women’s security does not follow”,\textsuperscript{23} which is why the quality of peace can be experienced differently. Other critical studies indicate that the definition of “peace” disregards women’s contribution to a peace process due to that it does not give any space to women’s security, and that women’s political role is not an integral part in the peace process itself.\textsuperscript{24} There is also a more radical interpretation which suggests that inequality between men and women in peace and security questions is a part of a militaristic world order therefore have little attention to gender inequality. The problem identified in those studies suggest that women’s “participation” is linked to militaristic structures dominated by norms of masculinity that are connected to the ideals of the (male) protector and the (female) protected.\textsuperscript{25} One of more significant studies on resolution 1325 and women’s participation in peace process is done by Kara Ellerby (2015).\textsuperscript{26} Her study evaluates the impact of resolution 1325 and women’s participation, and how the resolution interacts as a policy with the broader goals of peace missions.\textsuperscript{27} Her study indicates that policies on gender mainstreaming often lack the relation to the provisions argued for in the peace agreements and that most peace agreements after 2005 approach gender participation by emphasizing mainly on women’s representation. Ellerby suggests that this limited impact of resolution 1325 is due to the lack of political pressure and due to scarce resources that are assigned for the implementation of the resolution. A critical point underlined by Ellerby is that majority of peace agreements with provisions on gender security mainly focus on protection of women from sexual violence while missing out to address the structures of gender inequality that actually foster the crimes of sexual violence in the first place.\textsuperscript{28}

The ontological differences in the discourse on women, peace and security indicate that there is a wide diversity of understanding resolution 1325. Diversity, that contribute to many interesting debates. The important issue is that it has brought the studies on gender, peace and security to the attention of mainstream international relations, human rights, and security

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p 25-26.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid. p 28.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid. p 186.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid. p 200.
studies. However, with an absence of studies focusing on actual agreements and the construction of peace processes.

1.4 Definition of concepts.

1.4.1 Peace process & peace building.

Peace process and peace building is referred to as a range of short-term and long-term actions that are adapted to meet the needs of societies falling into or emerging from an armed conflict. The UN explains that to be successful, the process of peace building should be locally owned and focused on social transformation and the re-establishment of trust through the participation of national authorities as well as the local population, including women.

1.4.2 Civil society actors.

The formal and informal civil society actors can be regarded as a form of domestic capacity builders that are focusing on social and political rather than economic development. In my belief, CSA’s comprise of higher level of participation that can help to reach broader segments of the population. Thus, having a higher chance of success with whatever they want to achieve. Moreover, formal and informal institutions are indicated to play a major role in influencing women’s roles in societies.

1.4.3 Gender.

Gender is defined as a structure of social relations that is reproduced by the distinction between bodies into social practices and ideals, it entails the social distinction between men and women, which vary between countries and over time. According to Olsson (2007) gender should not be synonyms with women even though it is frequently associated to challenge women’s subordination. Gender in this study should not be understood as only equivalent to women, but as a behaviour of male and female roles/images that are designed by structures of society.

1.4.4 Gender mainstreaming.

From the mid 1990s gender mainstreaming became an approach to establish a gender perspective for institutions involved in peace building by setting up a policy framework and practices to incorporate a gender mainstreaming mechanism and promote gender equality. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to contribute to more equal peace for women and men in any planned peace building action. Gender mainstreaming can be regarded as an integral part and a guiding principle of resolution 1325. The term suggest that increased understanding of gender equality in peace process can have a broad implication for the parties involved.

34 Ibid. p 22.
1.4.5 Essentialism.

Essentialism, as it is described by the feminist discourse, details how international human rights system treats women as a single collective group and that the writing and interpretation of international legal documents is based on a norm that women share one common identity.\textsuperscript{37} The argument also suggests that a gender dimension need to be considered in the discussion on the formation and implementation of legal documents.\textsuperscript{38}

1.5 Disposition & delimitation.

This paper starts with presenting the theoretical approach of the thesis in chapter 2, by firstly presenting the feminist critique to human rights and secondly by connecting the feminist critique to essentialism and resolution 1325. To the readers knowledge, resolution 1325 is addressed throughout the whole paper in order to give a more comprehensive image of the resolution but also to present the main arguments related to the resolution within the discourse on human rights, peace and security. This is also a choice that was made due to the physical delimitation of this study where a complete analysis of the resolution would require a paper of its own, additionally there are many papers written on resolution 1325 that are easy to find on the internet. Chapter 3 comprises methodology and presents the choices made in favour for the qualitative method and semi-structured interviews as an comprehensive empirical gathering tool for this study. It also explains the choices made in the empirical gathering process, validity, ethical considerations related to the study and brings forward arguments for the case. The analysis in chapter 4 is structured in four parts: Firstly, the connection is made from the argument for the case in methodology to the historical and contextual relevance. Secondly, the chapter presents the principles of resolution 1325 that constitute the pillars for gender mainstreaming. Thirdly, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the empirical discussion on resolution 1325 with the CSA's collected in the field research in Myanmar.\textsuperscript{39} This is done by assuming the feminist critique and essentialism brought up in the theory of this paper. Chapter 5, concludes the analysis and discussion by answering the study question, and presenting future studies. The paper ends with a final chapter 6 by presenting recommendations to resolution 1325 and Myanmar and highlighting the issues that ought to be addressed. Chapter 6 is believed to be useful for civil society actors and their work on advocacy for gender mainstreaming. The paper ends with a list of references and appendix.

2. Theory.

The theoretical perspective of this study assumes an essentialist-feminist critical approach, that is integral to the feminist critique of human rights. Supported by arguments of feminist scholars like Alice Edwards & Hilary Charlesworth, the feminist critique is suggested to grasp the realities of social world that are incompatible with gender equality, while recognising women’s world as a generalisation and a result of specific societal and political outcomes. This chapter presents a short history on gender mainstreaming as an approach to bring a more comprehensive image of the feminist critique to human rights. Thereafter, a

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. p 254.
\textsuperscript{39} The choice for the field study is presented in detail in Method and Analysis chapters in this paper.
concluding part suggest that essentialism can be a valid critique to resolution 1325 in reference to how gender is perceived in peace building contexts.

2.1 Short history on gender mainstreaming.

The term “gender mainstreaming” has been used in the feminist discourse since the mid 1970’s and was then concerned about the effect of aid development policies on women. The focus of these policies was at the beginning the integration of women into existing structures of development, that successfully broadened to respond to women’s lives. The idea about gender mainstreaming in the work of the UN came to be regarded as a forward looking strategy that was adapted for the first time at the Third Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. By the time of the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the term “gender mainstreaming” has achieved great popularity and was accepted as an integral and necessary term in the discourse of human rights, peace and security. Today the term gender mainstreaming calls for effective participation of women into all levels of work on all operational levels, and advocates for gender balance as a central aim for the gender mainstreaming project. To explain the concept of “gender” in gender mainstreaming the "second wave" of feminist thought has made a clear distinction between the concepts of "sex" and "gender". Their work came to set the standard of definitions by naming sex as a matter of biology and gender as the constructed meaning of sex and the designation of female and male social roles.

2.2 Feminist critique of human rights.

The feminist critique of the field of human rights argue that it is a structure that mainly protects men’s rights and that it is giving the preference to the lives of men. Feminist critique also focus on the interpretation and operationalization of international law, arguing that the international law is structurally biased towards male interests in a way that it marginalises women. Today it is clear that gender is an important part of the human rights system, however the attention that it is given by treaty bodies suggests that it is still being essentialised because of the continuing location of gender within “the traditional roles of women”. One of the critics to the international human rights system is Alice Edwards. The focus of her research presents an argument that “the desire to include equal representation of women on law-making bodies, for example, assumes that women speak with one voice, a voice that differs from that of the male”. Edwards suggests that “gendered” interpretation of human rights relies on and reinforces a collective female identity. This collective identity is in turn essentialising women in treaties and legislations on issues relevant only to women by relegating women’s voice to be “less important”. The main point of Edward’s critique is that

41 Ibid. p 3.
42 Ibid. p 4.
43 Ibid. p 14.
47 Ibid. p 71.
gender mainstreaming in human rights has indeed brought gender issues and women to a rhetorical inclusion, however it seems that gender roles continue exist in inequality. Edward’s argument can be supported by Hilary Charlesworth (2005) who argue that: “the notion of gender mainstreaming is both too broad and too narrow to serve as a useful tool in the international arena”.\textsuperscript{48} Charlesworth suggests that the definition of gender mainstreaming in the human rights discourse is too abstract and therefore makes it difficult to operationalize. Interpreting Edwards and Charlesworth it is plausible to suggest that: resolution 1325 have brought women a terminology recognized by states and a legislative language for advocacy that can be used in peace building by civil society actors. Simultaneously the resolution is presenting a framework that automatically might not entitle women to involvement in policy and decision making processes. There are of course examples where participation of women did contribute to a gender perspective in policymaking like in the Guatemalan peace process; that resulted in specific commitments such as classification of sexual harassment as a new criminal offence and the establishment of an office for indigenous women’s rights.\textsuperscript{49} It is also true that the presence of women in peace negotiations has increased since the implementation of resolution 1325 in 2000.\textsuperscript{50} Still, the most apparent example in many peace processess is that male domination is overwhelming and the adaptation of resolution 1325 by the human rights system do not bring any guarantees that gender equality issues are placed in the peace agenda.\textsuperscript{51} An example of such can be demonstrated in the El Salvador peace process, where although approximately 30% of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation negotiators where women, gender equality was not included in the peace agreements.\textsuperscript{52}

The position of women and their involvement in peace building and reconstruction of institutions in peace building projects is identified as indeed a common problem by Christine Chinkin and Hilary Charlesworth (2006).\textsuperscript{53} Their study suggest that the inclusion of women in peace processes and peace building is somewhat contrasting to their actual participation. In particular, states confer priority on religious or cultural traditions over gender equality. Chinkin & Charlesworth argue that this is a result of structural rather than formal inequality which they identify as the “cultural relativist” argument, that often justifies cultural practices in favour when these practices come in conflict with universal human rights standards.\textsuperscript{54} The cultural relativist argument is also frequently used as an excuse by governments in relation to women’s rights, when these same arguments would not be tolerated against non-gender-specific rights.\textsuperscript{55} Women’s political mobilization is here seen as a threat to culture and traditions, proposing a conclusion: that a society where traditional values and culture have strong resonance can find it difficult in opening up for “new” gender structures. Chinkin & Charlesworth provide a good example on how structural and cultural barriers affect gender

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p 144.
\textsuperscript{51} UN Women. (2015). p 86.
\textsuperscript{52} UN. (2002). p 64.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. p 945.
equality in Kosovo: “the UN-appointed expert to an inter-agency legal working group on domestic violence was a male professor of family law who stated that ‘it would be unthinkable to forbid all kinds of domestic violence’ in Kosovo”.56 The working group accepted this viewpoint as a working value until a local female prosecutor strongly countered it. Accordingly it is fair to argue that the translation from commitment into action is a common problem for both governmental and non governmental organisations that adapt gender mainstreaming.57 One of the major issues identified is that interpretation of women’s rights can find itself in the hands of religious or traditional judges or leaders, which position resolution 1325 as a document that can only be regarded with reservation.58 In this sense resolution 1325 can only be viewed as a document that suggest to weaken traditional state power, religious authority and laws that benefit religion or sectarian establishments. There is also a cultural relativist argument brought up by western lawyers who suggest that international standards should not be imposed on or influence new democracies but should rather rely on local “self-interest” for change of any structural misfortunes.59 In sum cultural relativism is an argument that the feminist critique have to regard with caution since it can allow for the re-establishment of pre-conflict male dominated structures if allowed in peace building contexts.60

It is apparent that feminist critique is bound to question normative gender structures, this, mainly for three reasons: Firstly, the normative gender structures are often dominated by local male elites and religious leaders who can define the substance of legal settlements in which women’s rights are unlikely to appear since they are not in the self-interest of such elites. Secondly, the respect of the local “culture” by the international reformers in their support of peace building context can have a view of culture as something private and therefore not within their mandate to be negotiated away. Thirdly, the international legal standards provide the contrary; CEDAW is requiring states to commit themselves to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct with the aim to eliminate any harmful cultural or traditional practices:

States shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.61

2.3 Resolution 1325, gender & essentialism.

Resolution 1325 calls for the inclusion of a “gender perspective” in post-conflict settlements and to ensure the protection and the respect for human rights of women, addressing “to all

actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements”. Resolution 1325 endorses two separate policies in peace building and societal reconstruction, firstly: “gender balance” on all levels of policy making and operationalization; and secondly: “gender mainstreaming” in the formulation of peace building policies, practices and implementation. The resolution provides a number of important operational mandates, with implications for the UN Member States and the entities of the United Nations system. Linking women, peace and security with the advocacy of a “gender perspective” seem to be a prominent however not an unproblematic achievement according to the essentialist critique. According to Charlesworth, the meaning of gender perspective in some contexts links gender with biology implying “that gender is a fixed, objective fact about a person.” Secondly, it does not capture the ways in which gender is constructed in particular societies, but is rather perceiving gender as “natural in some contexts and controversial in others” by reaffirming the “natural identities” of female and male and bypassing the performative aspects of gender. In sum Charlesworth imply that rendering gender to be essentially about women does neither capture the relational nature of gender, the role of power relations, nor the way how structures of subordination are reproduced. Applying Charlesworth’s critique on resolution 1325 suggest that gender is all about women, and that gender is unconnected to masculine identities (which are accepted in times of war and conflict) as violent patterns of conduct just because they are coded as male. In the acceptance of traditional masculine identity as the norm, the conception of gender allows problems that are facing women to be understood as a product of particular cultures. It can also conceal the ways how gender shapes our understanding of the world by reaffirming the “natural” distinction between “feminine” and “masculine” identities. Also Edwards stresses the fact that the configuration of existing human rights system reinforce sexual hierarchies in which the men set the standard for how women are judged, fostering the unequal treatment of women before the law. She argues that this can have a disempowering effect for women by disintegrating the whole discussion to the images of “us” and “them” and relegate women to the margins of human rights debate. Continuing the essentialist approach, Johanna Valenius (2007) suggest that gender is also seen in a stereotypical light, where women are regarded as valuable or vulnerable because “they are different”, which supports the “gendered” idea that women are objectified as unique. Her critique is directed towards the structures of the UN itself, which is perhaps not that relevant to this study, however important to mention that this critique exists as a part of the essentialist discourse. Valenius suggests that there is a gap between the rhetoric of the resolution 1325 and the practice of the UN operations. She recognizes that international organisations, as a result of gender mainstreaming strategies, have realized that conflicts and wars do have gender specific consequences. However, she points out that mainstreaming strategies focus rather on civilian and peacekeeping UN personnel and not so much on local

63 Ibid. Article 1 & 5.
64 Charlesworth (2005), p 15.
65 Ibid. p 11.
66 Ibid. p 16.
population who are directly affected by the conflict. In other words it can be suggested that gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 is a strategy which primarily focus on the effectiveness of UN activities, rather than focusing on local contexts like the participation of women in peace negotiations, reconstruction and society building.

The argument presented by Edwards, Charlesworth and Valenius that gender is understood primarily as female and that it also is connected to the traditional meaning of the roles of women as victims or caretakers, supports the essentialist approach of this paper. The acceptance of such form of “femininity” can easily essentialise the term "gender" to “women’s only” issues, leaving both the roles of men and “masculine identity” unexamined. Most importantly such view may require any structural changes to be applicable mainly to women, but not men. Chinkin & Charlesworth suggest that this is a common view on gender in current peace building contexts. Framing women as victims rather than actors, places women’s expertise and the role of local women’s organisations aside from active participation. Leading the theoretical discussion, Edwards further argues that women’s rights activists and non governmental organisations by putting women’s rights on the human rights agenda have simultaneously engaged women into an essentialist discourse. Said that, Edward’s critique, suggest that human rights law provisions fail to recognize women as autonomous human beings because it overemphasise women as a “home-maker” and “victim”. According to the feminist critique essentialism is a problem as a whole, due to that women are not regarded as legal subjects within the field of human rights system. Assuming this critical view, it can be argued that essentialism itself is a social construction that marginalise the image of women to the figure of a victim. In this case, an essentialist approach can simultaneously be enforcing the masculine dominant stereotypes of gender images when it is identifying the women as weak or helpless. Furthermore, it is imperative to have in mind that the essentialist argument can create an essentialist image of women as victims of “private” male violence when assuming that images of women are merely linked to the images of merely “mothers” and “victims”. In this case, using motherhood and victimization as a lobbying tool in resolution 1325 is creating a paradox for the feminist critique when the critique itself is rendering women to inferior positions. Rendering women’s experiences of violations of human rights to a separate collective can also essentialise women into a stereotyped role of a victim, thus distance women from the mainstream human rights. In sum, one of the issues identified in the women, peace and security debate is that it fails to notice the problematic role of masculine identities in the security discourse and actual wars. At the same time, by highlighting women in a particular way, the goal for the resolution 1325 can be understood as a way to facilitate women’s entry into the corridors of “men’s world”. The negative effect of that implication is that women are set aside into a context in which gendered (male dominant) order is reproduced, where women are marginalised from political

---

73 Ibid. p 73.
74 Ibid. p 316.
participation and decision-making.\textsuperscript{75} Not to forget, there is also the heavy focus on rape and sexual violence in the human rights discourse that plays in to the essentialist discourse.\textsuperscript{76} The main narrative in the studies on peace and security is often only identifying women as victims of rape all though it is apparent that also men suffer from equal violations.\textsuperscript{77} Edwards (2011) identify the opposing differences in understanding of this view by explaining that the instances where it happens to men are referred to as war crimes and torture, and the instances when it happens to women are merely categorised as “helpless victims”.\textsuperscript{78} The example given suggests that essentialising image of gender may further reinforce gender stereotypes that favour masculine identity because, for example, torture is not understood as an instrument of violence that applies to women in the human rights law.\textsuperscript{79}

The conclusion of essentialist critique on resolution 1325 is that the approach of gender mainstreaming is not doing enough.\textsuperscript{80} The argument suggests that in the women, peace and security debate and resolution 1325, the discourse could become stuck at “add women (as victims or peace builders) and stir, with a conceptualization of women as useless or useful to the current mode of operating in the peace and security field”.\textsuperscript{81} The point of the critique is that mere presence and participation of women is not a mechanism that will change the dominant masculine structures. The power structures to which women are added, suggest that peace and security discourse fails to notice the complex role of masculine identities. Gender mainstreaming is also mainly ensured through gender quotas agreed upon by national constitutions as a “part” of peace building action rather than by formulations of documents that occur in peace settlements.\textsuperscript{82} What is missing is the underpinning of physical, economic and legal security as the foundation for all peace building, which underlines that human rights need to be incorporated into national legal systems, including over customary or religious law.\textsuperscript{83} Chinkin & Charlesworth regard such approach to be of significant importance in peace processes where the desire after a conflict can be to reaffirm to traditional life and practices that where accepted before the conflict, that might limit women’s enjoyment of their human rights. It is thus in the context of peace building that measures must ensue that they include women and view the realities of women on equal terms asserted by the male “community”, without any cultural imperatives. Resolution 1325 support for women’s involvement in public life is generally by suggesting formal removal of gendered barriers and by introducing a narrative to encourage equal participation. It does not address the complex reality in which gender is created and sustained by social and power relations: “Treating women and men as though they face similar obstacles will only perpetuate existing disparities between them; and treating women and men as if their interests are always in sharp confrontation offers an

\textsuperscript{75} Valenius (2007). p 514.
\textsuperscript{76} Edwards (2011). p 75.
\textsuperscript{77} Bjarnegård et al. (2015). p 103.
\textsuperscript{78} Edwards. (2011). p 76.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. p 76.
\textsuperscript{82} For example the 25% seats guaranteed for women in the Iraqi National Assembly under the 2005 constitution.
impoverished account of relations between the sexes”. Charlesworth argue that at the best, there is the attention to the position of women in particular contexts but there is no attempt to understand the way in which stereotypes about sex and gender roles affect human rights in question.

According to the feminist critique presented in this chapter women’s political contribution can not be guaranteed by mere representation through quotas or other measures directed on representation. Gender relations in peace building contexts require the involvement of changing the behaviour of both men and women by promoting an understanding between the critique, thought and policy reform. It is thus crucial that resolution 1325 advocators at the civil society level learn from women’s human rights debate. As suggested before, the feminist critique argue that women’s human rights movement did not achieve the change of the dominant masculine underpinning logic and the framework of human rights, but “only” legitimized the introduction of women to the human rights system. The feminist critique also suggest that gender issues are as much about the men as they are about women.


The chosen method of this paper is assuming a bottom-up perspective and a qualitative approach which is closely connected to the theoretical argument of this paper. This chapter presents the research design of this paper by discussing the arguments for the chosen method i.e. bottom-up perspective, qualitative approach and semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the material of the study, the reliability and validity, ethical aspects, and argues for the case of study.

3.1 Research design.

The research design of this paper is assuming a bottom-up perspective and a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews are used as the main empirical gathering tool. The choice for such research design is due to the theoretical underpinnings of the feminist critique applied in this study. The feminist critique suggest that any views on gender need to be brought up by discussing its strengths and weaknesses because gender is first and foremost a social construction.

The bottom-up approach is supported by the arguments presented in the previous research chapter of this paper which indicate that the field of human rights, peace and security studies on peace processes and peace building are mostly focused on top-down processes and do not necessarily include a bottom-up perspective. The argument for a bottom-up approach is the resolution 1325 itself. That is the fact that the resolution was adapted at the UN level due to the work of civil society actors and feminists. To study the resolution from a civil society perspective can bring new knowledge how the principles of resolution are advocated for by civil society actors, 17 years after its adaptation and recognition at the diplomatic level.

85 Ibid. p 10.
87 More on resolution 1325 in chapter 4.2 in this paper.
choice for a bottom-up approach is also strengthened by my belief that civil society actors are capable advocators for change of social structures. Said that, I assume that there is a close link between social activism and the influence it has on views brought up in the public and private sphere by accepting that activism is closely linked to the issues experienced by the actors at the grass-root level.

The qualitative approach of this study is chosen because of the significant function of semi-structured interviews to collect relevant empirical data that can help to identify and understand relevant topics associated to the study question. It has also a higher focus on details of the context that is studied which in turn result in a more explorative approach in the analysis of the empirical material. The support for semi-structured interviews as a comprehensive empirical gathering tool for this paper is found in the argument by Steinar Kvale & Svend Brinkmann (2015) that “an interview is where knowledge is constructed in the interaction between two people”. Their argument suggests that production of knowledge is dependent on direct contact with other people, and in doing so it helps to understand the context and the subjects. The qualitative approach is also providing reliable and comparable “in depth” data that a quantitative approach can have difficult to produce.

The material gathering process is based on a field study conducted in Myanmar (the choice for Myanmar is explained later in this chapter). The structure of the field study included two sub-processes in order to answer the research question: Firstly, the pillars relating to protection, prevention participation and reintegration in the resolution 1325 are presented in chapter 4 the discussion of this paper. The four principles and selected articles from resolution 1325 where later used for designing the discussion scheme that worked as a guiding tool for discussions with the respondents. The discussion topics where also created in mind with the feminist critique and the essentialist approach of this paper and relate to the study question of this research.

The selection of respondents was based on their area of work and competence, however, limited to civil society actors that work with gender issues in the peace process and to more or less extent have previous knowledge about the resolution 1325. The gathered qualitative material is discussed under the premisses of a reflective approach based on the essentialist critique, which is continuous throughout the analysis chapter of this paper. Delimitation of the study is made accordingly to the research question and the scope of this paper. In order to maintain the critical approach proposed by the theoretical argument of this study and due to the limited space of this paper, the resolution 1325 is discussed and refereed to throughout the whole paper. This can also be regarded as a way to uphold an analytical position of the reader.

90 Ibid. p 70.
91 The discussion scheme is presented in appendix 2.
3.2 Empirical material & interview design.

To interview individuals that are having a position of power is suggested to produce certain arguments regarding specific questions and subjects. Having this in mind the precedings included: an analysis of the field of study, mapping relevant civil society actors, study of resolution 1325, and an in depth reading of essentialist critique and feminist theory. This strategy allowed the study to focus on gathering necessary knowledge on civil society actors, their agenda and focus of advocacy but also helped to bring an insight to the narratives and social behaviour that are common in Myanmar. Most connections with civil society actors was established due to networking, with the help of influential individuals, with the help from Myanmar Institute of Theology and the Swedish Church in Myanmar. Background material to the study includes resolution 1325, to some extent the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and information on the peace-process provided by a number of CSO’s. In total, a number of 14 discussions where conducted that included 16 individuals of which 3 where male and the rest where female. It is also relevant to mention that 4 of the respondents where western foreigners, which might have had an impact on the answers brought up in the discussion. The discussions where performed in English and all participating individuals had good knowledge and understanding of the English language.

The choice for semi-structured interview was aimed to produce knowledge through carefully deigned questions with the goal to obtain a description of what the research question is investigating. Having an explorative approach the semi-structured interviews functioned more as open-end discussions, which is a favourable method of material collection by the feminist discourse. The empirical material consists of active note writing and audio recordings from discussions on resolution 1325 with the CSA’s. The empirical material is analysed according to the topics on gender structures, gender images of masculinity and femininity, and structural and legal challenges. Both the recorded and written material is available for the readers which means that it meets the requirements of reliability. However, the validity of the research material can be questioned, since in theory the validity is connected to the knowledge of the individual. Accepting such position, the quality of the knowledge is always affected by conditions like time and experience which makes it possible that arguments brought up at the discussions in this study may change over time. It is also imperative to have in mind that the study assumes a subjective position based on the essentialist approach of the feminist critique.

3.3 Ethical considerations.

Due to the ongoing peace process in Myanmar the bottom-up perspective assumed in this study is presenting a unique insight of civil society actors view on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325. Since the issues on gender is a sensitive topic in the peace building process, every respondent was presented with a short PM on what this study is about prior to the meetings and discussions. Those that participated agreed with the terms of the

93 Ibid. p 19.
94 Ibid. p 75.
96 The presentation of the study is presented in Appendix 1.
study upon that no quotations would be used in the analysis of the material, which is also the case. The confidentiality of the responders is therefore secured by referring to “discussion” in the analysis. The empirical material is available for the reader however only after consultation with the respondent that it may be given out to third parties. The choice for this ethical approach is made due to the sensitivity of the subject and due to that disclosure of the respondents may affect their well being. This is based on an assessment of the political and security situation in Myanmar.

3.4 Myanmar peace processes.

The transition of military rule to democracy remains volatile in Myanmar, presenting many issues for the peace process such as: the military still possessing 25% of the seats in the parliament by re-drafting the 2008 constitution, the president is chosen by military faction, changing central economy to market economy, promoting peace for the ethnic minorities, disputes over landownership, etc. One of the main actors that are involved in shaping this process are the many non-violent pro democracy movements CSO’s and NGO’s (supported internationally) that work in Myanmar. Their advocacy can be regarded as a facilitator between ethnic groups and current rulers that conclusively end up with drafting new documents on ceasefires, currently with the strongest of the ethnic insurgency groups. Civil society actors that work with the peace process in Myanmar can therefore be regarded as an important link between the government and various ethnic movements. Myanmar is also a country with one of the most dense ethnic demographics comprising of almost 135 ethnic groups, plagued by internal conflict for more than 60 years. The start of democratization of the country in 2011 and opening up its borders brought new possibilities to challenge traditional politics and society structures due to more international presence inside Myanmar with a stronger and more focused support for peace building. Parts of internationally accepted advocacy documents, such as resolution 1325, are used frequently in the work of civil society actors. However, as presented in the opening chapter of this paper, there seem to be an inconsistency in the understanding of the international language in the advocacy for such documents by civil society actors. Said that, facts presented do not make Myanmar a special case for study since the issues presented are similar to other peace building contexts like in Sierra Leone or the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, the Myanmar peace process is chosen as the case for this study due to the relative stability and the positive progress of the peace process, and the ease of access to the civil society actors involved.

4. Analysis.

The analysis chapter begins with presenting a short historical background of the case study which is Myanmar. Secondly resolution 1325 is discussed according to its gender mainstreaming approach by presenting most relevant narratives found in the resolution that are equivalent to the study. The third part of the analysis is made with the focus on the meaning of what is said by CSA’s which is based on the empirical material that is referred to as the “discussion” throughout the text. Assuming a feminist critique and the essentialist

97 Ibid. p 2.
approach the analysis reflects upon specific themes of interest identified by CSA’s focusing on gender and gender mainstreaming, considering the strength and weakness of resolution 1325.

4.1 Case – Myanmar.

Myanmar (Burma) represents one of the most complicated and longest cases of internal conflict in a country, that have lasted over 60 years. Ever since the independence from Great Britain in 1948 the conflict has involved ethnic minority groups (consisting about 40% of the population) that are seeking greater autonomy or independence. In 1962 a coup d’etat replaced country’s parliamentary democracy with a military junta which was followed by state repression of its citizens, emergence of war economy, expansion of drug production, among other issues. Nominally a “civilian” government was installed in April 2011 which raised hopes for democratization and reconciliation. The change of the government has however not contributed to an end of fighting between the government and some of the ethnic groups like Rohingya and Kachin. Due to which the government is facing serious human rights accusations mainly referring to the mistreatment of Rohingya’s which are denied (the rights of) citizenship, among other issues. There are also reports of forced labour, child soldiers, rapes and forced relocation, pointing to that there is an absence of the rule of law. Local populations have been taxed by both government forces and by non governmental fighting groups without knowing what social benefits the taxation might bring in return except of “security”. Many development projects have been implemented in coordination with confiscation of land, leading to forced displacement, and in some cases brought illegal extraction of natural resources by international companies, armed groups and the government. As a result of the issues presented many ethnicities in Myanmar, has demanded a political dialogue and push for a federal state status and for ethnic autonomy which today poses a major issue for the whole peace process.

Despite the many allegations it is still fair to state that the government initiated peace negotiations of 2016, and the regime change in 2011 have brought some positive development to Myanmar. Mainly this has led to a decreasing number of military operations which has reduced the number of conflict related casualties, and the scale of atrocities associated with human rights abuses. Majority of people have also managed to attain some kind of security and an increase of humanitarian conditions. Ethnic minority groups have regained a position of participation in national politics, for example through participation in

106 Ibid. p 17.
107 Ibid. p 17.
The ceasefires have brought economic development to former areas of war and government neglect. The peace process have also brought up many new issues of conflict among the participating actors, one of which is women’s participation and gender equality in the peace process and peace building.

4.2 Resolution 1325 – Background & principles.

Since its implementation in 2000, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, has become an important tool for supporting and promoting women’s rights and empowerment. The resolution underline the need for gender approaches in restoration of peace and security in post conflict contexts, and the need to incorporate a gender perspective into all levels of peace operations. The resolution is not legally binding, however the principles it proposes are increasingly recognized by states and organizations for example by establishing national action plans on women peace and security. Resolution 1325 is a result of a long political process that have its roots in the adaptation of the UN Charter in 1945. During the “UN Decade for Women” (1975-1985) the question regarding gender equality and women’s empowerment became increasingly connected to peace and security discussion. Following the “Beijing Deceleration and Plan for Action” in 1995 specific targets where formalized for the international community, UN member states, and civil society organizations, that related to the role of gender in peace and security operations. Thus, when resolution 1325 was finally adapted it rested on a substantive policy development involving states, international- and civil society organizations.

The resolution rests on three fundamental pillars which are participation, protection and prevention, and reintegration that all ought to be included in a gender mainstreaming effort. These four “goals” are central for the resolutions advocacy on women, peace and security that constitute the gender mainstreaming approach to improve participation of women in all efforts that create peace. The resolution is:

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.


112 To date (2017) there are 63 counties that have adapted the principles of resolution 1325 in a specific national action plan that covers women, peace and security. NAP work as guiding document for the government to implement the principles of resolution 1325. Peacewomen. (2017). “National Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security” www.peacewomen.org [Online 2017-03-20].


114 Ibid. p 4.
Article 2: Encourages the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

The resolution thus aims to ensure the participation of women in any peace process and guarantee women’s inclusion in issues ranging from conflict prevention to peace building on all political and operational levels. This has strongly been backed up by the argument that women’s participation can contribute to higher sustainability of peace in a post-conflict society. The resolution addresses the aspects of gender balance in peace building and peace operations. Further, the resolution recognizes the need to improve protection of all civilians, in particularly women and children, in armed conflict:

Expressing concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and recognizing the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation.

Article 13: Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants.

Jana Krause (2015) evaluates the operationalization of “protection” in resolution 1325 and unfortunately finds out that “to a large extent this is built on the assumption about sexual violence that focuses on ‘rape as a weapon of war’ and diminishes women’s roles to that of the victim – the opposite of what UNSCR1325 attempted to achieve”, Krause’s argument underline that international focus on sexual violence in conflict can also divert the attention of donors away from other gender related issues, like gender mainstreaming. Protection is also linked to the misbehaviour of UN, EU, AU, NATO mission personnel such as sexual exploitation and abuse towards host population. Gender mainstreaming is however an important issue in resolution 1325 as it does argue for the importance of gender perspective in peace keeping and peace building:

Recognizing the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard noting the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693).

Article 1: Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.

---

Accordingly, women’s physical inclusion is not enough to ensure gender equality. Pointing to that there is a need to challenge norms and strategies used to marginalize gendered activities and ideas. Thus, it is important to underline the difference in representation and actual participation.\textsuperscript{118} The success of gender mainstreaming depends on how serious actors include gender into their policies and practices. Furthermore, the formal and informal structures in a post-conflict society need to be well informed about the influence the women’s role have on economy and society (which is also an area that is understudied by scholars).\textsuperscript{119} The three pillars presented above suggest that resolution 1325 can be a useful document on gender mainstreaming with the focus on participation, protection, prevention, advocacy, and implementation of gender measures to all operational structures and levels. However, it does simultaneously point out that these are the very structures that remain to be challenged in the minds of individuals and social understandings.

4.3 Analysis of resolution 1325 based on discussion with CSA’s in Myanmar.

4.3.1 Structural challenges.

Resolution 1325 reaffirming the position of women is not entirely a correct image of the world since most of the women today are not active political actors nor are included in peace negotiations. Neither is the “reaffirming” a correct choice of word since it reaffirms something that does not exist, which itself is an interesting assumption in a world where women are not accepted in the spheres of politics. This points to that who is reaffirming what must fall to the discussion of the feminist critique on power relations. Power relations are in this sense structured accordingly to the position of the dominant.\textsuperscript{120} Since women are far less represented in politics this domination can be clearly suggested to be allocated by men. According to the feminist critique the applicable gender norms dominated by men’s logic is suggested to reflect the images of masculine and feminine as strong and warring respectively weak and peaceful.\textsuperscript{121} Following this logic it can be suggested that reaffirming is rather confirming the role of a women as weak and peaceful which is because gender equality is not a common practice in peace building and women’s capacity is not regarded as having the same potential as the capacity of men. Strengthening of gender equality by reaffirming the role of women in this context might also be regarded as stereotyping women’s image as peaceful due to their needed inclusion, i.e. there is a need for balancing the male “aggressive” attitudes with “peaceful” women’s attitudes that creates false stereotypes and generalisations that in turn can exclude one gender over the other due to acceptance of differences between masculine and feminine gender roles. This image of women is very much persistent at the village level where stereotyped images are connected to local cultural norms and social structures. According to discussion fact remains that women’s inclusion in peace building is needed not because women are peaceful but due to the fact that they are marginalised in the process. The marginalisation of women’s voice to merely peaceful is also why men find it hard to believe that women can have an impact on the political debate and negotiations within the peace building context, or even something more “dramatic” like choosing a woman as

\textsuperscript{121} Valenius. (2007). p 515.
their representative. It is thus important to look at the women, peace and security framework through an essentialist lens. It is apparent that essentialising women as more peaceful do create a certain image of women in the peace process. The stereotyped image of women is also questioning women’s capabilities from the viewpoint of advocacy on political issues in the long term peace building efforts.

The discussion suggest that women and men are generalised to certain capabilities in certain environments. It is also relevant to assume that in social contexts there is a need to accept a certain degree of essentialism, which is due to that essentialism itself have a very critical view on what is culture and cultural differences. There are stereotyped images that men and women carry various potentials and identities like there are images of traditional societies that focus more on home. Such images should not entail that all women are peaceful and that homes are the sole place of contact between individuals. Essentialising the image of women in peace building is simultaneously pushing away men from the discourse on gender making it “a women’s issue” which is the opposite of what gender mainstreaming is about. Simultaneously, arguing that few “strong women” like the Myanmar’s democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi is a gender norm broker do not provide any security that other women will be included in the political debate or that other women will be chosen as leaders. “Women’s language” is still difficult to be validated in the political discussion since the language or the narrative they have to enter is something of a “men’s world”. Stereotyped images of women and men are in this case not “socially healthy” since they acquire gender images that may not be representative for neither sex in a post-modern world. It is therefore vital that the suppressed voices can join the discussion and include both men and women since both are active participants of the society and both can bring a perspective on security issues and peace building. Regardless the essentialist critique the discussion indicate that CSA’s believe that resolution 1325 puts women’s rights at least closer equality to the rights of men. Simultaneously, gender equality is expressed to be hard to advocate for, and it is also regarded as a challenging perspective for the local actors. Talking about stereotyping of gender roles and in particularity the role of women appears to be difficult in the context of local communities since both men and women reflect to their specific role in the society which they have acquired accordingly to the rules and structures of the culture. In most cases the leaders of communities in the conflict zones have difficulties to appropriately meet the gender mainstreaming perspective of the resolution 1325. Typically to such environments, women are relegated to the role of caretakers and mothers, and men to the role of providers for the family. Thus, women on the grass-root level are far from reaffirming their role and their perspective in politics and peace building. This “grass-root cultural boundary” is however not creating an in group conflict since the roles of gender are not reflected upon as essentialising, and neither do they promote an alternative perspective like gender equality and inclusion.

The role of religion is often brought up to discussion by CSA’s. Religion and religious leaders are referred to as sometimes making women “invisible” through religious practices and teachings of religious values. The encouragement of women’s participation and inclusion by these practices are met by distress and passivity which suggests that religious leaders have
limited knowledge on the legal aspects of gender mainstreaming documents like the CEDAW and resolution 1325, and what it means for men and women. One of the issues brought up in discussion is that religious leaders focus is directed on the family which they perceive as “their business” and that there is no need for law to intervene in the private sphere of the family. An example brought up is that the religious leaders view on domestic violence is that it needs to be met with obedience and patience rather than constructive measures or action. Due to such socially dominating religious views the gender roles are understood in a passive way, thus, neglecting women to achieve same status as men in both the religious practices and in the public sphere. This traditional perception of gender identities is believed to be mirrored in the interaction of the society. Traditional perception that results in passive acceptance of gender roles, or more specifically the youth and women show of obedience towards the older and men. A similar structure is said to be accepted in the peace process which contributes to that issues on gender are met with reluctance and passive attitudes.

It ought to be that religious thinking, practices and acceptance have to support gender equality in Myanmar. Simultaneously it cannot be excluded that resolution 1325 is developed based on certain Christian thinking. Religious customs are often rooted in a society which means that religious practices affect the images of gender, suggesting that a feminist perspective on how religion is an integral part of any particular culture is needed. Referring to resolution 1325 reaffirming narrative, it is regarded as traditional UN language that can assume a lot of things. Here, it is fair to argue that most of the United Nations Security Council resolutions are signalling a norm of pre-existing rights and resolutions based on certain Christian thinking. The intriguing is still that the narrative of this “diplomatic language” is created to meet a demand of the stakeholders and a narrative that can be accepted by all the drafters of the resolutions. Positions that are dominated by guess who? The men.

No matter to structural challenges, the resolution 1325 is regarded to be a good tool for gender advocacy. However, the structural challenges that lie in the public and private sphere are far away from what 1325 advocators have the ability to address. The issue brought up by the CSA's is that it is difficult to push for gender mainstreaming since there is a lack of understanding for what gender is about, which will be discussed next in this chapter.

4.3.2 Masculine, feminine & gender identities.

It is brought up to discussion that the world is built up by gender roles and that the images of these gender roles “protect” ethnic cultures. Such conception of culture can be understood as cultures and traditions shape how people view gender and what is accepted as “normal” in a in a certain context. Previous research suggest that men are being “masculinised” as to the images of strong leaders and women are being “feminised” to an image of weak caretaker already at early age. Images that are in particularly amplified in times of conflict. The acceptance of gender images just described entails that it is hard to confront gender norms in a post-conflict setting especially when these images are representing the roots of a culture. In

---

the peace building context of Myanmar, many ex-military and ex-political prisoners are becoming politicians. According to discussion the background of these individuals can affect their capacity to understand gender norms based on equality, inclusion and peace. Here, it is referred to that ex-military and ex-prisoners can more likely embrace a more traditional “masculine” gender standard of a warring society due to that their experiences of gender norms is mainly mirrored by a society in conflict with a restrictive view on the equality of genders.

The discussion bring forward that there are few men that understand why women are important in peace building processes. It is also brought forward that those men who speak about equal gender participation are not fully aware of the difficulties to put that in practice. What is agreed by CSA’s is that men and women have different views on peace and security which contributes to difficulties in men and women reaching a common understanding. It is suggested that the issue of “understanding” the needs of women have to be brought to debate if gender mainstreaming is to work at the public level, and that this debate need to include how gender roles are practised at the private sphere. Accordingly, there is a need for in depth understanding of social and structural barriers, which is a form of knowledge that men do not necessarily posses due to their dominant and privileged position in both the public and the private sphere. One of the explanations to men’s privileged position is that, in contrast to men, the women in most cases are not participators in active violence which is why their voices are forgotten at the discussion table. Furthermore the acceptance of culturally generated traditional gender images detaches the woman from fulfilling her individual goals. For instance it is brought up that when women get married they sacrifice their position in the public sphere. Now, there are few contrasting assumptions given that women are included in the political dialogue, and that some ethnic groups in Myanmar are good in reading reports and recommendations on gender and bring them to action. However, it is generally accepted that women’s detachment from the public results in that there are fewer women finishing their education which consequently leads to that less women have an understanding over the work of political institutions, and thus most women are only vaguely interested in taking any political positions. Simultaneously there is a lack of educated men on what is gender and a gendered perspective in politics, which both creates an issue for gender mainstreaming. Few men comprehend that inclusion of women can also benefit men, and there are very few examples brought up on that issue. However, the most visible effect of gender equality that is discussed in favour for men is the liberation of women’s economic status from being dependent on the male provider to being independent, which can “lessen” a man’s burden for being the sole provider of an income to the family.

When discussing masculine and feminine identities it became clear that in most cases “gender” is rather synonymous with women. This essentialist perception of gender is dangerously close to being “masculine exclusive” and cannot be more away from what gender mainstreaming is about. Furthermore, it creates additional boundary to cross for gender mainstreaming. This is possibly the greatest challenge for advocators of resolution 1325 and more explicitly it is identified as a serious undertaking for the position of a special gender adviser that Article 3 refers to. Assuming the essentialist critique the position of a
“special adviser” is itself a marginalising narrative on gender because it readdresses gender equality by creating a “special position” for a “gender expert” that can be regarded as conflicting to what gender mainstreaming is about. In this case it is fair to view the appointment of a special gender representative as marginalising gender issues from the rest of the human rights discourse merely by the reference to the position of such expert. Following the essentialist critique, to confine gender to special representatives or other actors that specialise in women’s issues can very well contribute to stigmatisation of gender to special “women’s only” issues only. Simultaneously it has to be remembered that to generalise is also a common human practice and in some sense appointing a special adviser does not entail that men’s focus solely address women’s only issues. The discussion suggest that there is a belief that in some sense men understand women’s discrimination, however, the issue here is that men are generally not discriminated due to their sex. Referring to Article 3, the special gender representatives and advisers do not necessarily need to have the effect to move gender issues to be a special issue in a male dominated human rights system. To defend this conflicting argument to the essentialist critique the representation of women proposed by Article 1 only need to involve a statement that argues for peace as a state for both men and women rather than assuming that everybody knows that peace is universal. Which is clearly not the case of common knowledge. Said that, it does not have to be that men are less gender oriented. The person advocating for gender equality “merely” need to have the knowledge about gender and have gender equality as a moral and ideological underpinning. In this case, specialisation on gender can be regarded as welcomed since it should open up opportunities for women by for example promoting the capacity of women. The challenge identified here is how to run gender in parallel with peace and security issues and not make it a “special needs” issue. Special gender adviser’s work needs therefore to be seen as something that can bring gender issues to an operational level, and bring an understanding for gender practices from the process to the goal. The inclusion of gender at the operational level is thus dependent on the individual mandate of the special adviser and how these issues are prioritised on the operational level of the institutions. Another issue of a special gender adviser is that at least for women to become a special actor, it is a kind of “mission impossible” which is apparent not only in the government structures but also at the structures of the UN. \(^\text{124}\) It ought to be that since women are the ones that experience and understand discrimination, it is favourable that women can lead the voice for women rather than having men speaking on their behalf.

Reffing to the role of gender on the international level some of the respondents argued that resolution 1325 reaffirming role of women in peace building does not necessarily stereotype women in any image, but rather acknowledge the role of women in the peace process. The discussion brought up here identifies that it is the structures of the UN that contradicts itself due to not relating security issues to the important role of women in the security discourse.

\(^\text{124}\) In the 32 years between 1957 and 1989 a total of only twenty women served as UN peacekeepers. Peacekeeping deployment peaked at 125,000 peacekeepers in 2009, at which time women represented around 7 percent of UN police personnel, and were only around 2 percent of deployed military forces. UN. (2010). “Gender team progress report”. [Online 2017-04-28] 
according to resolution 1325. Moreover, since resolution 1325 acknowledges that there is a structural barrier to women and women’s decision making role at the UN level (including the lack of representation of women at the Security Council and the fact that there has never been a women appointed to be the Secretary General despite many prominent candidates), suggest that UN need to practice gender equality itself in order to rightfully be able to push states and governments in a gender mainstreaming direction. Another issue identified in Article 3 is that it assumes that the Secretary General is a man and the excuse that it has been written during the time when Secretary General was a man does not excuse the fact that no woman has never been elected Secretary General despite their equal qualifications to the male candidates.

In the context of human rights, security and peace discourse it can be argued that the concept of gender mainstreaming and the needs of women are in some way left alone in its own space due to an essentialised perspective on gender. Here it is important that women and men who are advocating for gender are not generalised in the discussion because they rise certain specific issues that address gender. The discussion on gender should not be positioning different views in categories since this itself creates generalisations that might turn to be negative. For example the discussion bring up that being a feminist is in many cases passively misunderstood at the local society levels, which creates a negative stereotyped image of those who promote gender equality. Feminism is also a way of being and acting in a certain way that is not necessarily supported by a local legal framework since it involves a very different view on women and men that is contrasting to the accepted norms in a peace building society. Furthermore, if resolution 1325 is approached from a critical feminist perspective such as essentialism it can result in undermining women’s achievements. Adapting resolution 1325 can in this sense be regarded as a symbolic act that need to be translated into action in order to push forward any changes that the pillars of the resolution designate. Women, peace and security do not need to be referred strictly to promotion, protection and prevention, it can entail a more creative interpretation such as inclusion and respect for all genders. The details in how these words are interpreted can be a depending factor in how gender mainstreaming is advocated for in peace building.

Said that, the essentialist image of gender is believed to have an impact on women’s inclusion and participation in politics. In cases where it is most apparent is at the political institutions level where most of the positions located within the social sector are referred to as “female” positions. The common belief brought up in discussion is that there is a lack of gender advisers and that gender awareness can be an issue that can also “irritate” the male leaders. Gender as a topic is also mainly educated to women by the international actors, leaving the men in an unconformable uneducated position when gender is raised in the political debate. This might be why men see gender with reservation. The special gender adviser is in this case believed to be a vital asset in peace building since knowledge on gender can reduce the conflicting views on gender. The issue raised here is that women have little power to bring gender issues to the awareness level of the “dominating males” which entails that men need to promote and work for gender inclusion and gendered approaches in politics and their everyday activities. No doubt there is a need for “male champions” that can bring gender to

the negotiation table and to open up a serious discussion. In this case, men have to take their role seriously in providing support and opening the “structural doors” to gender issues due to their privileged position of holding most positions of power. Men are also more likely be accepted as “experts”. Furthermore, men know how other men think about women which entails that through men’s mainstreaming they can add women to the mainstream political discussion without being marginalised themselves.

4.3.3 Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration.

The discussion argue that the DDR programs do provide a gender approach and the inclusion of women is apparent at some stages of social reintegration, which might be an effect from advocacy for gender mainstreaming in DDR programs found in Article 13, resolution 1325. Only one of the respondents suggest that the specific reference to different needs of women in Article 13 may be encouraging a stereotype of women, thus it could work better without referring to the “different needs”. This single and isolated argument indeed fall in within the essentialist critique but since it is one isolated argument it is hard to generalise it as an essentialist example. In the broad discussion it is agreed that women are a minority in DDR programs. It is also believed that women have different perspectives which means that DDR programs need a gender component and a concern for women’s needs. To become an example or a guiding tool at the operational level, Article 13 should be regarded as a first step to include any active combating women in the readaptation to society. In this case the DDR programs need to be designed to the needs of women because the needs of women are relegated from mainstream DDR approaches.126 The discussion indicate that there is a common knowledge in the discussion on DDR programs that working with peace should include experiences of civilians, especially women and children, targeting forms of physical and psychological stresses. However, that the discussion on the different needs of women/girls and men/boys is not fully understood at the grass-root levels.

It is apparent that DDR programs proposed by Article 13 have a long way to be accepted due to social structures and gender attitudes when referring to what is discussed in the previous section. It is can be also suggested that what is missing in Article 13 is the commitment to safety and security of all ex-combatants not only “different needs of women and men”. Assuming these “facts” it is fair to state that the image of women as peaceful can affect women from having and live up to the role of a combatant. This confirms the status of women in DDR programs as generally excluded, in line with Article 13. A tough reality that many women ex-combatants have to face in the peace building context. It is apparent that there is a need for a serious commitment to the implementation of the DDR strategies at all operational levels, including in the internally displaced people camps. Women need DDR programs equally to men and a DDR is a necessary mechanism that can address women ex-combatants issues, their marginalised position in the society, and their need for social integration.

4.3.4 Legal challenges.

To this day, the UN has adopted many resolutions on women and peace. Unfortunately, the gender voice of resolution 1325 is only a moral voice and it is mainly through the voices and the will of each country at the UN general assembly that states can make resolution 1325 come to an effect as a legal document. It is thus apparent that the sense of legality of resolution 1325 apply and depend on who is advocating for it. In the case of Myanmar, resolution 1325 is not legally binding since the government is not implementing its provisions in their work. The discussion bring up that there is simultaneously no international institutional structures that can punish or push the government for being inactive on gender issues. The UN is not believed to have that effect due to that it itself has gender problems. Referring to Article 1 of resolution 1325 it is the government that needs to have the ownership of resolution 1325, which means that the CSA’s can only act as moral agents. Article 2 of resolution 1325 on the implementation of more gender equal perspectives by the secretary general does suggest that women’s representation can be legally implemented though a Women, Peace and Security national action plan. However, this requires investment of time and resources, and the political will of the government.

According broadly to the discussion, the challenge of legal inclusion of resolution 1325 can be referred to the structural inclusion of gender equality in the peace process. In this case, where men are referred to as the leaders during a conflict it simultaneously acknowledges that peace will be dominated by men. Conclusively, the adapting of resolution 1325 will not mean a lot for women in conflict areas. It is brought up that resolution 1325 has contributed to a discussion on gender quotas and in some cases the implementation of such quotas has been successful. However, the strong identity of masculinity at the political level is persistent to any gender mainstreaming operations that can be advocated for by resolution 1325. It is also argued that this masculine norm contribute to weak commitment to gender issues which means that women’s inclusion and gender mainstreaming is very much dependent on the ideology of the political leadership, its moral standing, and institutional practices. Referring to the feminist approach, the identified masculine norm can be connected to the gendered role of men as the “provider” (of security, food, economy) and traced to the process when men leave for military duty or flee from it. In this case, the absence of men leaves the women behind in their communities who in turn are forced to take men’s roles in administrating the society and perform in masculine images. Assuming this logic it is fair to argue that women are active participants of society during conflict, which logically should ensure women’s position and inclusion in peace building and peace process negotiations. In contrary, what happens is that men readapt their position at the discussion table and their masculine role as provider without or little inclusion of women. This issue of gender balance is rightfully

---

127 Resolution 1820 (2008) Criminalising sexual violence in armed conflict; Resolution 1888 (2008) Requests a team of experts to the areas of sexual violence (evaluation); Resolution 1889 (2009) Stresses the participation of women and the importance to hold perpetrators accountable; Resolution 1960 (2010) Stresses the need to punish perpetrators of sexual violence; Resolution 2242 (2015) Stresses the need to investigate acts of sexual violence committed by the UN personnel.

addressed by the feminist critique which question the moral aspect of the power relation between the male and female. Morally, men should reaffirm the acquired position of women and recognize it as an important and valuable asset in peace building instead of rejecting it and creating future problems of women’s inclusion and gender equality issues. Somehow it is puzzling that it is women who need to adjust to a masculine norm and negotiate their place at the discussion table in a peace building context when they assumed a masculine image during conflict. This is apparently something that resolution 1325 have to find its way to influence and approach with the advocacy for gendered mainstreaming.

By urging the member states to ensure increased participation of women it is clear that the ownership of resolution 1325 is directed on the international institutions and the state. It is also relevant to have in mind that the state is the only actor that can change its own structures in a constructive and gender equal positive-peace standard. Clearly, the interest on gender by the actors involved in the peace process depend on how gender is linked to the issues the actors argue for. In this case the lack of gender perspective in peace building means no gender mainstreaming. It can be therefore assumed that gender is simply not regarded within the discourse of the “popular security” issues that are discussed in the peace process. There is little talk about these details and it is apparent that there are few men interested on this subject, which is said to be due to that women have different understanding of women’s needs compared to men’s image of women’s needs. A view that is supported by Louise Olsson’s study presented in the “previous research” chapter who identifies that men and women have different perception of what is peace and security.129 It is certain that the private sphere, cultural norms, and the issues of cultural relativism open up for a discussion on customary law and women’s rights. The tension between the public and the private is also very apparent at the peace building level. In some cases it appears that the lines between gender images are blurring and the framework of resolution 1325 do contribute to the blurring of these gendered lines when states develop national action plans on women peace and security accordingly to the goals of resolution 1325. However one of the issues is to bring a WPS policy to the operational and strategical levels. Here a WPS policy need to have a local consultation and bond with the institutional practices in order to be implemented satisfactory. A feminist approach on resolution 1325 is in this case bringing a perspective on work with gender mainstreaming according to the local needs, work as a standard for a policy framework, and function as a recommendation.

5. Conclusion.

How is gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 reflected upon by civil society actors in a peace building context?

The initial position of CSA’s on resolution 1325 is fairly contradicting to the feminist critique. The analysis suggest that there is no doubt the resolution 1325 recognize the existence of gender inequality and women’s marginalisation at institutional and operational level that ought to be addressed. It further indicates that the position of resolution 1325 is to

129 See Louise Olsson’s explanation of women’s and men’s perception on peace and security presented in previous research section on page 3.
address what is actually happening to women in times of armed conflict and in the aftermath of a conflict, and how institutional structures lack equal gender distribution. Resolution 1325 is apparently a prominent tool for gender mainstreaming and do give the CSA’s a possibility to claim women’s rights based on internationally amended document. The apparent embracing of resolution 1325 gives the CSA’s a language and a framework that provides legitimacy. In a broad sense resolution 1325 gives CSA’s a perspective on issues they want to change by providing a framework they can grasp onto, and a framework that is used to communicate with the government and international actors that are involved in the peace process.

Despite the initial embracing of resolution 1325, the issue identified in the analysis indicate that “gender” is still a marginalised topic on all institutional levels. Regardless to CEDAW and resolution 1325 there is still a vague knowledge about practical operationalization of gender mainstreaming at the UN institutional level and practical implementation in peace building efforts. From a critical feminist perspective this is due to accepted power structures that are formed by masculine dominated norms. The discussion indicates that there are obvious gender behaviours that contribute to maintenance of the “masculine dominance” over the political (public) sphere and in the family (private) relations. This masculine dominance in both the public and the private sphere is identified as contributing to the discrimination of feminine values in the peace building context. Said that, it is hardly a new finding for the feminist critique. However the issue here is that women are passively acknowledged by the generally accepted images of gender which are prevalent in resolution 1325. Therefore it can be argued that when women acquire their own “unique” role in peace building the image of women as unique and equal is regulated by the perspective of the dominant masculine norm, which in turn is essentialising gender to women’s only issue. This lies with the fact that men have overall better political, economic and social opportunities in the society, and it is the men who create the rules of engagement. In this case it is believed that masculine dominance is created by the role of men as leaders and protectors of the group and groups cultural values. The discussion indicates that masculine dominance essentialises women at decision making positions where women leaders can be regarded as “heartless” on decisions that affect the society negatively, thus depriving women their feminine image of a caretaker. To not fit in the masculine image and being deprived of feminine characteristics can be very marginalising for many women leaders. It can be simply said that for a woman to become a public figure it creates private problems.

The masculine norm also seem to be exclusive when referring to the unique characteristics of women as merely victims and above all marginalising conflicting gender images. Here is where the importance of having a special gender adviser in the peace building context is considered crucial. It is believed that such person need to understand gender structures and have a moral commitment to cultivation of equal gender participation and representation for the actors involved in the peace process. It is also imperative that men understand why gender equality is important and why it needs to happen without the men fearing of being sidelined and without women being positioned in a less representative category. It is brought to attention that marginalising gender by suggesting that it can be dealt with after the initial
reconstruction of basic societal structures shapes an acceptance of masculine dominated norms, which proposes that it will be more difficult to achieve gender inclusion and gender balance at a later stage in the political dialogue. Assuming this logic, suggests that resolution 1325 need to be owned by all actors in the peace building context. That the success of gender mainstreaming is dependent on the legal position of the resolution in a state, and the values and ideas of the people that work with the resolution.

Relying on the feminist approach the inclusion of men to the debate on gender is imperative in order to facilitate a power balance and bring men to understand the advocacy for gender equality that can challenge unequal structural gender norms. According to the analysis it ought to favour gender mainstreaming and question gender practices that are performed by the state. The privileged position of men in most of the social structures is in this case suggested as critical to open the possibility for a debate on gender and for men to take the lead for gender mainstreaming. However, it is also stated that to challenge the image of dominant masculinities means that any man who is speaking about gender equality is simultaneously questioning his own position of power and those of other men. In this case, to be a champion for gender mainstreaming can only be done by prominent and rightful leaders, leaders that can afford to speak up for others and can argue for any criticism and above all leaders that do not omit women in the process.

A relevant issue addressed in the discussion on the legacy of gender and resolution 1325 is religious practices and culture. The discussion indicates that resolution 1325, is questioning the religious and cultural stereotypes i.e. the traditional norms and views of gender. This is done by questioning the power structures between genders and the authority of the prevalent culture by bringing an alternative image on gender. The discussion suggest that traditional religious and cultural practices contribute to frame and promote a segregated image of gender. Cultural traditions and religious practices in the private sphere of the family also are identified as apparent contributing factors to how gender structures are perceived and replicated in the public sphere. Also the traditional views of family structures detaches women from fulfilling her individual goals, which is indicated to be a common factor why women become marginalised in the first place. Surely resolution 1325 is a tool for gender advocacy but the structural challenges that lie in the private sphere are far away from what gender mainstreaming advocators have the ability to address. Resolution 1325 can not (if even marginally) change religious teachings or the views of religion on gender. This is because religion is entangled in peoples private life in a way that makes it is hard to accept any critical arguments against religion. It is also believed that formal religious leaders are silently accepting the world around them without questioning the inequalities gender images. On the contrary, only radical religious leaders are outspoken on political matters with perhaps not the most positive consequences for the society, i.e. Ashin Wirathu.130 It is unfortunately difficult to see how religion as an important actor within the private sphere of the society can discuss gender without criticizing its own role and practices. Simultaneously it is relevant to

---

address religion as a strong actor in the private sphere that does affect the minds and perspectives of actors involved in peace building in the public sphere.

In an attempt to improve the situation of women in armed conflict and peace building context the resolution 1325 was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000. The main focus of the resolution is to affirm the need of increased participation of women at all levels of governance through four fundamental pillars which are: participation, protection, prevention and reintegration. The critical feminist approach of this study indicate that it is relevant to analyse obstacles in peace building context that may essentialise women’s participation by identifying generalisations and stereotyped images of gender. By conducting a study in a bottom-up approach provides views on gender and gender mainstreaming of resolution 1325 from a grass-root and civil society perspective based on real experiences of civil society actors. Assuming a feminist theory and method is contributing to an insight of additional perspective on gender mainstreaming from the point of advocacy of CSA’s to the discourses on human rights, security and peace studies. The analysis of this paper suggest that resolution 1325 fails to address the structural causes of gender inequality caused by power relations that structure the image of gender in both international and local context. The structural causes of discrimination are identified as political exclusion, religious practices, cultural conceptions and lack of education. It is also apparent the the inclusion of women advocated by resolution 1325 is somewhat separated from gender equality by endorsing only women’s participation in peace building. Gender is recognized by resolution 1325, however in a submissive way that merely identify women as victims and passive participants of society. Therefore, it can be argued that resolution 1325 is essentialising the image of women and fails to acknowledge and confront the complex structure of gender images and the complex interaction of gender roles. The study also suggest that the feminist critique is itself in a sense problematic. The work of feminist scholars and CSA's that eventually ended in drafting resolution 1325 is being criticized mainly by scholars from the same discourse rather than being advocated for as reliable method for analysis. The critical argument here is that the feminist approach is heavily academic and that there is a gap between academic research and what is actually happening outside of the academy. To put it simply, the comfort zone of libraries and offices might not portray the different reality outside of these premisses. It is also fair to add that the academy seeks to justify its own subjective presumption of reality by producing arguments based on somebody else’s answers which can distance the academic research to the realities perceived. According to discussion there are mixed arguments whether resolution 1325 position women as mere victims and mothers or if it is the feminist critique that creates this image. CSA's provide that resolution 1325 do provide them with a tool for gender advocacy to claim legal rights based on international standards. CSA’s are also advocating for women’s inclusion with the help of resolution 1325, which means that the feminist critique of resolution 1325 as a narrative that is weakening women’s capabilities as political actors needs to be questioned by additional empirical studies. It does however not exclude the possibility that gender images are dependent on the context where they are criticized, which means that the feminist critique is applicable, i.e. on discussing gender structures of the UN or gendered images of women leaders to name a few examples. This can be agreed as a relevant conclusion to this study on gender and resolution 1325. Said that, the study indicates that
gender in resolution 1325 is positioning women’s weakness portrayed in a patriarchal system of men and a masculine image, that is the dominant gender image both at local and international establishments. It is also relevant to not generalise the image of women as never involved in violence or war, since that is what creates the generalisation. Women are actors in conflict, they might not be involved in direct violence to the same extent as men, however they do contribute to the society and support men that are away occupied in fighting. Thus, women ought to be treated equally in any peace building efforts. What is imperative is to strive towards a gender uniformity and accept gender as something universal.

5.1 Future Studies.

There is a need for more research on the conflicting view between the diplomats and CSA’s on the legal position of resolution 1325. If the resolution 1325 should comprise a guideline for the member states of the UN then it ought to be that the UN itself need to follow same standards. By assuming a feminist approach could be interesting to analyse how masculine attitudes at the UN institutions include gender mainstreaming in their work and how this affects the legal position of the resolution. Here, the issue touches upon the international law and how it should be regarded which could be the key question.

It is also apparent that there is a lack of consultation with the local leaders in a peace building context. Due to that, local leaders do not fully grasp their position of barging. Here, it is more often the “outsider” in form of foreign led operations who sees the role and potential of these individuals, however according to the foreign needs and strategies. Subsequently there is a consent that gender mainstreaming is a western concept, at least to some extent. Hence, the “international” operations are broadly pre-assumed to be western oriented with their respectively pre-assumptions about power. However this itself is a complicated matter since it is intersectioned with foreign aid. Donors seem to understand that the civil society is gaining ground in Myanmar and many aid efforts are directed to organizations inside the country. Simultaneously there is a lack of a monitoring mechanisms that can clearly point out the weaknesses with aid. It is apparent that corruption is an issue, referring to that CSA’s actors “aid” friends activities with no specific results reported back to the donors. Working with gender is clearly used as a strategy to get funding by both local and international organisations. In this case the resolution 1325 has contributed to better funding of organisations, the question is if it has any prominent factor at the peace building itself when this study indicates that local and grass-root social structures lack a gender awareness.

Lastly, the United States Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, announced in 2011 that 44 million USD was assigned to implement resolution 1325.\textsuperscript{131} Because its exclusive focus on female victims it would be interesting to analyse how much of the assigned effort contributed to address gender power structures that facilitate women’s exclusion in the first place.

6. Highlights & Recommendations.

6.1 Resolution 1325.1?

1. Recalling the Article 2 of 1325, the recommendations from the Secretary General should always be implemented in a national action plan, that can be implemented in the national legal framework. Here, CEDAW should be regarded as an important tool for advocacy on gender mainstreaming due to its legal commitments that is applicable on states. Together with CEDAW and the general recommendations of resolution 1325 it is important to apply a broader framework on gender mainstreaming.

2. Resolution 1325 highlights the reality of the institutional sphere at the UN level, however this sheds also a perspective that the UN still need to adapt to the advocated need of gender mainstreaming. The changes made at the UN level need to be brought up as standard setting by political institutions and promoted by mainstream media.

3. Education of men on gender and women on politics ought to be mainstreamed to the peace process before an acceptance of gender equality can be transmitted to the peace building context. Here, both men and women need to be aware of the process and the goals on gender equality. It is also important that the transition of society as a whole can play its role and catch up with what is argued for by resolution 1325 (and by the CEDAW), before gender mainstreaming can be accepted as a norm.

4. Women’s actual needs in comparison how they are described in resolution 1325 is that in the resolution women are brought up by sympathy and compassion. The reality is that women are thought of as being more involved in issues on family and children. This view is somewhat holistic and traditional which is stereotyping the images of not only women but also men, one of that women emphasize on security (peace) and men on protecting (fighting).

5. Speaking about and discussing gender issues is a popular subject among the UN member states. Women’s participation is high on the agenda, which can not be questioned. However, it is the governments who need to have the ownership of the 1325 since they are the sole actor that can implement its articles in a peace building process.

6. Resolution 1325 is an important tool for gender advocacy. At least everyone should have a vague sense of what it entitles and requires. It is imperative that all diplomats have a basic idea of what resolution 1325 is about and that everybody understands it. It is however relevant to have in mind that there is a “flood” of subsequent resolutions, which means that on a daily thematic meeting the advocacy of more specific resolutions can diminish. Can it be possible that sometimes a bit less is more?

7. It is a fact that resolution 1325 is written under chapter 6 of the UN charter which makes it “only” a recommendation. Said that, there is a need for actors involved in a peace building process to embrace the context of resolution 1325, and specific actions conducted by the UN accordingly to the resolution.
8. Article 13 of resolution 1325 mentioning the special needs of women indicate that women do have needs that have been bypassed in previous DDR strategies. The need the article creates is the balance between gender rather that over emphasize it on the males. This should be strongly reaffirmed in the implementation of UN missions.

9. The religious practices play an important role by fostering the traditions that are important to any culture. Modern legal language is challenging religious structures that is dominated by men’s images of the world. Resolution 1325 can challenge the private sphere and religion which it does by admitting that there is a difference in the position of gender in the society. Differences that are fostered in the private sphere of homes and reinforced by traditional views of religious practices.

6.2 Myanmar.

1. Advocating for a universal narrative on gender is vital for the progress on gender mainstreaming. Gender is too broadly synonymous with women which is an generalisation that can find it difficult to bring changes to the gender dynamics of the peace process on its own. It is imperative to educate not only women but also men on gender issues.

2. Due to 1325 advocacy there has been an increase in discussion on sexual violence and women’s security issues. The government seems receptive that there is a need for a WPS plan but have not come with any visible results yet. First to achieve is the gender quotas, which are met with different views by politicians which have to overcome the step that women are not needed in the peace process. There is still a lack of acknowledgement of women for being legitimate actors. There is a need for recognition of the social barriers that women need to overcome in order to be accepted as actors in peace building.

3. The lack of social services, parental leave and so on, do contribute to women’s lesser value in politics due to their inherent role as caretaker. The improvement of social infrastructure can ease the burdens of women located in the private sphere thus, opening up space and time for public participation in spheres of politics and such.

4. There is a general marginalisation of women’s issues due to cultural challenges. The women are still outsized by their male counterparts at the political level. This needs to find a stronger policy recommendation. It has to be acknowledged and find legal protection at the government level and be practically implemented at the community levels.

5. Resolution 1325 is a tool for advocacy of CSA’s in the peace process. However, there is a need for a more active discussion among the CSA on their particular experiences of work with gender and resolution 1325, what has been achieved, and how changes can be advocated for more effectively.
6. Education and information sharing among the CSA is important to achieve a coherent and structured advocacy for gender equality. Young people have to be included in this debate, so that they to are aware of gender issues and understand their role in gender mainstreaming.

7. It is an issue that grass-roots representatives have little knowledge on resolution 1325 and in particular lack a critical view on legal documents. It is also disturbing that the rule of law do not favour women in the context of domestic violence. It is however hard to tell if it is due to lack of knowledge and critical reasoning in local contexts or if it is due to lack of the international commitment that raise gender issues in the local context.

8. In the peace process there is no role for the civil society neither they are recognized as mediators in the political dialogue among the communities. It can be useful to implement an outsider strategy. CSA' should influence the peace talks and provide public policies as recommendations. There should be a structure of inclusion for CSA's that work with gender inclusion to the peace process that can cover the existing gap in gender advocacy. CSA's can also having a monitoring role using the international framework as accountant for the stakeholders.

9 To implement resolution 1325 in practice requires a commitment from the state. To fulfil this requirement it is also necessary to have some reservation to categorization of people accordingly to their needs. It is apparent that there are people that do not want to be referred to as feminists just because they work for gender equality. In this sense categorization can be marginalising since the mainstream politics is not inclusive to new terminology that it does not clearly apprehend. We also have to accept that men and women are different and have different physical needs, which is something that have to be discussed in both public and private spheres.

10. In Myanmar there is a need for strong advocacy from a gender advisor with legal powers in order for the subject to be properly addressed. UN Women can be used as a mediating tool in the communicative structure between the Diplomats, the UN, the politicians and the civil society. This is due to that UN women can provide useful mediating tools, best practices and trainings, but also facilitate such meeting. However it still needs to have national ownership and draft.

11. In the context of Myanmar there is a need to apply the 1325 goals at the level of armed groups, since very few have women as leaders at decision making levels. At the military level the inclusion to the peace table is decided by obtained military ranks. Since women are not participators they will not be included as legitimate actors. This system is traditional which promotes gender marginalisation and creates barriers for women.

12. Referring to article 1 of resolution 1325 there is a need for representation of women on all levels of national institutions. The article suggests that both men and women need to enforce resolution 1325. Here it is the image of individual politicians and community leaders that need to show strength and accept the moral obligations of the pillars of resolution 1325.
Those in power to influence gender perspectives are in particular those in the position of power who are able exercise gender mainstreaming on other levels of public spheres such as religion. Of course it is harder for older people to accept the gendered challenges which means that the youth could be the actor who ought to play a significant part in promoting gender mainstreaming, thus the youth ought to be the actor involved in peace building and the construction of the private and the public.

13. It is apparent that 1325 is not a resolution that dominate the peace process. Especially on the top level, Aung San Su Kyi have to be more inclusive in her advocacy for gender, be open for and use her authority for inclusion of gender. There are more and more areas of Myanmar that start to experience peace and also more ethnic groups start to join the peace talks. Reparation and reintegration of women to the society has to have a priority of its own in the peace building discussions rather than being subordinate to other main topics.
List of references.


**Electronic resources.**

Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process. [www.agipp.org](http://www.agipp.org) [Online 2016-09-01]

http://agipp.org/en/who-we-are


http://gyaw.org/the-karen-conflict/
Appendix.

Appendix 1. PM – Presentation of the study on resolution 1325.

Meeting with ………………………… – ……………..

Dear ……………., thank you for the interest in the study on resolution 1325. Firstly I Need to make it clear that the study has NO intention to criticize the work of any person nor the work of any organization.

What I want to explore is the narrative of gender in the resolution 1325 at the civil society level in a peace process / peace building context with the focus on gender mainstreaming (that is one of the four pillars of the resolution 1325). The choice of the bottom-up approach is because most of academic research focus on top-down operationalization of national, regional and international institutions. This is also where I see the "problem": there can be differences in local context vs international context in meanings, the perception of international narratives vs local can be different, terminology can be understood differently, goals can have various status etc. Another important fact is that resolution 1325 is adopted due to work of feminists and civil society actors.

In short, my aim is to try to improve the understanding of resolution 1325 by discussing its flaws and strong points with the civil society actors by focusing on gender mainstreaming. The theoretical argument adopts a feminist approach that resolution 1325 can essentialize women (and thus also men) to single collectives, a structural misinterpretation which might affect gender mainstreaming and the goals of resolution 1325 (Edwards 2011; St Pierre 2011; Ellerby 2015).

The study is academical and it is financed by my host university of Uppsala and the Swedish SIDA. This is my second master thesis and the major for this thesis is human rights, peace and security studies. The study will be published, however with the option for full anonymity for those involved in the study that do not wish to have their names or the names of their institutions published. Nonetheless, I have to underscore once again that the study is NOT critical to any organization nor person, with the focus on the resolution 1325 itself and gender mainstreaming. The study itself is written in English, however I have applied for funds (which I hope I will obtain) in order to make it possible to make a copy in Myanmar.

What I would like is firstly to meet with you and discuss the resolution 1325 at your office or any other calm place. In our discussion we will mainly focus on topics that relate to gender mainstreaming that can be referred to resolution 1325 and the way gender is operationalized. The discussion will take about an hour.

.................................................................................................................................

Sincerely / Dominique / Master researcher at the University of Uppsala / Sweden / Email: discodominique@gmail.com / Telephone: +95 (0) 9 458986113 +46 (0) 729 261838.
Appendix 2. Question scheme for discussion on resolution 1325.

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. According to some academics resolution 1325 position women as victims and mothers, thus, the weaker of the two sexes.

   - What do you think about that argument?

   - How do you perceive capabilities of women as they are described in resolution 1325?

   (Do you find any stereotyped image of women in the resolution 1325? (SEE BELOW)

2. Resolution 1325 is: *Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

   - Does this create a stereotyped image of women as peaceful?

   - Why do you think so?

   - Do you believe that women who do not fit in the stereotyped image of women can be marginalized in politics and policies?

   - Do you believe that women who fit in the stereotyped image of women have it easier to work with politics and policies?

3. Do you see any (structural) barriers that “gender mainstreaming” proposed in the resolution 1325 need to overcome?

   - Can you describe these?

4. Resolution 1325, Article 2: Encourages the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

   - In your view, what does the adaptation of resolution 1325 (by the United Nations) mean for women in peace building processes?

   - How does it affect your work?

   - Do you view resolution 1325 as a tool for gender advocacy?

   - Can you describe for me why do you think so?
5. There are two different (conflicting) positions between the diplomats and the CSA on the legal status of resolution 1325. Diplomats argue that resolution 1325 is only a recommendation while the civil society actors argue that it is a legal document.

- What is your view on the legal status of the resolution 1325?

- Why do you believe so?

6. Resolution 1325 Article 13: “Encourages all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants”.

- Do you believe that the reference to special needs of women in resolution 1325 can relegate women to “a less important issue”?

- Why not / yes?

- Can you describe your argument?

7. Resolution 1325 Article 3: Urges the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf. In my view this is limiting women's issues to special Gender Advisers or Gender offices, that contribute to the view on gender issues to be a special topic in a male-dominated system.

- What do you think (what is your view)?

- A: Can this lead to further segregation of women’s rights from the mainstream human rights?

- In what way?

- B: Can this lead to inclusion of women’s rights into the mainstream human rights?

- In what way?

7. Resolution 1325 Article 1: Urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

- Who (do you believe) need to take what role in the advocacy for resolution 1325?

- Who do you believe need to have the ownership of resolution 1325?

8. “Men” are not mentioned in resolution 1325 (except for when referring to secretary general).

- Do you believe that this can affect the goal for gender equality?

- Why do you believe so?

9. What visible contribution of resolution 1325 is there to the peace process in Myanmar?

Can you give any examples on the differences below:

10. How do you believe cultural norms affect the legitimacy of resolution 1325?

11. How do you believe religious practices affect the legitimacy of resolution 1325?
12. Do you see any differences between women’s actual needs in contrast to the narrative argued for in the resolution 1325?