UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

Master's thesis

"There Cannot Be Any Discussion About Us, Without Us":
Dynamics of Exclusion and Inclusion of Female Ex-Combatants
in the Bangsamoro Peace Process

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Abstract

While we know that women often participate in armed groups as combatants, they are routinely left out of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes. Women's groups in various peace processes worldwide have worked extensively in advocating for the inclusion of women and gendered perspectives in post-conflict processes. However, female ex-combatants still find themselves inadequately considered during these processes. Why is that? By studying how civil society organizations (women's groups) advocate for the concerns of female ex-combatants, this study gains an understanding of the exclusionary and inclusionary dynamics by asking *How did Philippine women's groups address the inclusion of female ex-combatants (fighting for the MILF) in talks on DDR in the Bangsamoro Peace Process*? I answer this question by focusing on the case of the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). I build on and expand a conceptual framework put forward by Henshaw (2020), positioned within the field of feminist security studies. I apply a theory-developing approach and analyze the degree to which roots of exclusion (agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy) manifest within women's groups, contributing to a nuance of Henshaw's conceptual framework. I conduct a qualitative case study. Data comes from reviewing primary and secondary sources, interviews conducted online and during fieldwork in Manila with individuals involved in the peace process and participant observations. This thesis contributes to the literature on DDR, peace negotiations, feminist security studies, and peacebuilding in civil society through three main findings. First, the different roots of exclusion were observed in the Bangsamoro peace process, which arguably caused exclusionary dynamics. Second, these exclusionary dynamics were additionally amplified through the (subconscious) manifestation of notions of victimization and homogenization within women's groups. Third, I show that this manifestation of roots of exclusion unintentionally limits women's groups' advocacy work, which is furthermore reinforced by the adherence to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, an international normative framework inaugurated by the UN Security Council. This agenda aims at including gender issues and concerns in post-conflict processes but has been criticized for its narrow focus on women's agency and intersecting identities during wartime – which arguably affects how female combatants' needs and experiences are advocated for. The thesis problematizes the exclusionary dynamics within peace processes that are important to consider if the goal of emancipation and empowerment of *all* women in post-conflict environments is to be achieved.

Abbreviations

BIAF: Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces

BIWAB: Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade

BOL: Bangsamoro Organic Law

BTA: Bangsamoro Transition Authority

CAB: Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro

CSO: Civil society organizations

CVR: Community Violence Reduction

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

FSS: Feminist security studies

FGD: Focus group discussions

GPH: Government of the Philippines

IDDRS: Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards

MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MNLF: Moro National Liberation Front

NAP: National Action Plan

NCDDR: National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

SALW: Small arms and light weapons

UN: United Nations

UNSCR 1325: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

WPS: Women, Peace, and Security

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1 Introduction

The widespread inclusion of women in armed forces worldwide makes the exclusion of them from peace processes all the more concerning (Henshaw, 2020; Shekhawat and Pathak, 2015). Whereas over 60% of all rebel organizations globally include women in combatant or auxiliary roles (Loken and Matfess, 2023), women involved in these forces frequently find themselves systematically excluded from peace talks in general, and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes in particular (Henshaw, 2020). The DDR processes are considered a critical ingredient in consolidating stability and building peace (Shekhawat and Pathak, 2015, p.57) and lay the groundwork for safeguarding and sustaining the communities to which these ex-combatants return, and are important to build capacity for long-term peace, security, and development (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). Given the importance of these processes, but also given the perceived masculinity on matters concerning notions of militarized masculinity, an exploration of the barriers for female ex-combatants to enter the formal processes of DDR, is important.

Academically this is important as a more comprehensive understanding of the exclusionary dynamics that hinder female ex-combatants from meaningfully participating in DDR processes contributes to understanding inclusivity (or the lack thereof) in peace processes. From a policy perspective, this is important because the disregard of female ex-combatants' needs and experiences from these processes can lead to the social isolation of these women, the reinforcement of interlocking systems of oppression, and the destabilization of post-conflict communities (Henshaw, 2020, p.64). "There cannot be a discussion about us, without us" as one of this study's interviewees recited a female combatant in the Bangsamoro Islamic Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB) (interview 3). This claim directly denotes the importance of how inclusive peace processes cannot discard the views and concerns of female combatants – as the implication of their exclusion can have major consequences for the post-conflict environment.

'Agents for peace' formally and informally work on different levels towards the goal of peace in the aftermath of conflict and the emancipation and empowerment of women – women's groups[1] being one of the most prominent actors (Avonius et al., 2019; Krause et al., 2018). These groups perform well in support of gender, women, and minority issues, and their advocacy work

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[1] In this regard, women's groups refer to women that organize around peace issues to bring their priorities to the peace table – part of the overall term civil society organizations (Santiago, 2015, p.6)

is heavily motivated by the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)[2] agenda. Women's rights to inclusion in peace processes have become a widely promoted norm in the international system and international peacebuilding efforts are driven by the assumption that the global spread and implementation of the norms embedded in the WPS agenda induce more inclusive and peaceful societies (Lorentzen, 2020, p.16). Despite the widespread awareness of the importance of gendered issues, female ex-combatants are still disregarded and deprioritized in peace talks in general and DDR in particular. Hence, scholars within the field of feminist studies have raised critiques towards the WPS agenda and claim that the narrow focus on women as victims and a homogenous group undermines the consideration of all women and their specific needs – female combatants are neither soldier nor civilian enough to meaningfully participate in peace processes and the DDR programs pertaining to them (Vastapuu, 2021).

Given the large-scale inclusion of women in armed groups, it is important to study the causes of female ex-combatants' exclusion and to explore the extent to which women's groups promote and advocate for gender equality in the case of female soldiers. Arguably, the diversities that exist between women civil society activists and females within rebel groups need to be recognized, as they are likely to represent different interests during peace processes (Krause and Olsson, 2022). As women's groups have played and continue to play an important role in peace processes (Anderson, 2016), it is relevant to problematize how these groups interact with female combatants and their efforts in advocating for the concerns and interests of these women. In this thesis, I unpack this puzzle and examine how women's groups in the Philippines engaged, or failed to do so, with female ex-combatants by asking:

How did Philippine women's groups address the inclusion of female ex-combatants (fighting for the MILF) in talks on DDR in the Bangsamoro Peace Process?

Female ex-combatants arguably face exclusion on several levels. First, the more direct way of exclusion they encounter is by not being present around the negotiating table. Second, female combatants can experience indirect exclusion, as their interests are not being channeled to the negotiations. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and especially women's groups that are influential in peace negotiations might be unwilling or incapable of collecting information from

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[2] The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is an international normative framework formally inaugurated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, and seven subsequent resolutions have since clarified and elaborated the WPS program (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016a, pp.249-250)

female ex-combatants to better understand their needs and experiences. This lack of consideration means that CSOs might only advocate for a particular group of women, which ultimately can impact the DDR programs negatively. The implications of both the indirect and direct exclusion of female ex-combatants can lead to ineffective DDR programs, resulting in post-conflict instability and unsuccessful recovery amongst combatants which does not contribute well to sustainable peacebuilding and prevention of conflict resurgence (UN INSTRAW, 2010). In this thesis, I focus specifically on the indirect inclusion/exclusion of female ex-combatants, as I am studying the way in which women's groups actively advocate for female ex-combatants' interests and for these be included in DDR programs.

By applying a conceptual framework developed by Henshaw (2020), I examine the exclusionary dynamics at play during the Bangsamoro peace process, which constitutes the peace negotiations (1997-2014) and subsequent implementation phase (2014-2023[3]). This framework establishes a lens through which female ex-combatants in post-conflict processes can be analyzed, as concepts referred to as 'roots of exclusion' explain why exclusionary dynamics are observed in these processes. Through the concepts of agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy, this conceptual framework helps establish why female combatants found themselves inadequately considered during peace talks. The first concept is *agency*, which problematizes the dichotomy of perpetrators and victimhood, which historically has put men in the first category, and women in the latter. Secondly, *hierarchy* denotes the concept of the misreading of women's role in armed forces. Thirdly, *universalism* speaks to the tendency of putting women in one unitary category, neglecting intersectionality and the multiple identities that exist within a society. Lastly, *patriarchy* calls into question the reproduction of patriarchal power dynamics in post-conflict environments. Moreover, I seek to extend the understanding of Henshaw's (2020) conceptual framework. By building on her concepts of roots of exclusion and through the analysis of women's groups' advocacy work, I argue that exclusionary dynamics manifest also within actors relevant to the peace process, resulting in the reinforcement of exclusionary dynamics.

The Bangsamoro peace process is a crucial case in this regard, as it is considered successful in terms of the overall inclusion of women (Palik and Marsh, 2021). This territorial conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH),

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[3] While writing this thesis, implementation of the peace agreement is still ongoing (May 2023), and data collected for the thesis also happened during implementation (January/February 2023)

ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB) in 2014 after more than 40 years of fighting. Women played a crucial role in the peace negotiations and subsequent implementation phase, both formally around the negotiating table but also indirectly through extensive lobbying and peacebuilding activities of women's groups. However, this case also shows that even if including women's groups is necessary, it is not always sufficient to ensure that *all* women's interests are considered – it was in fact observed that women involved in the peace process in the Philippines were not adequately representative of female combatants (UN INSTRAW, 2010, p.6). This is concerning given the female component of the MILF, the BIWAB, that played a substantial role during the Bangsamoro conflict. This case allows me to explore the understudied dynamics of DDR processes and the role women's groups are playing within these, by focusing on the inclusion of female combatants in terms of the extent to which the female combatants were consulted by women's groups and the extent to which their views were incorporated in the peace agreement.

By conducting a qualitative case study of the Bangsamoro peace process I provide a comprehensive and extensive understanding of the exclusionary dynamics at play. The research design is aimed at studying the gendered dynamics within post-conflict processes which benefits from an elaborate exploration of the context in which the peace process unfolds. By applying a qualitative case study methodology, I assess the extent to which exclusionary dynamics are observed in the particular case of the Bangsamoro peace process, by analyzing data coming from the review of primary and secondary sources and interviews conducted online and during fieldwork in Manila (January-February 2023) with individuals involved in the peace process. Data also comes from participant observations during fieldwork in Manila.

The thesis contributes to the literature on DDR processes, peace negotiations, peacebuilding in civil society, and feminist security studies through three main findings. First, the four roots of exclusion identified by Henshaw (2020) were observed in the Bangsamoro peace process, causing exclusionary dynamics. Second, the exclusion of female ex-combatants was amplified by women's groups' tendency to homogenize and victimize women involved in the armed forces, which adds to the understanding of the roots of exclusion put forward by Henshaw (2020). Third, I show how this manifestation of roots of exclusion unintentionally limits women's groups' advocacy work. This is furthermore reinforced by their adherence to the WPS agenda, which arguably strengthens the notions of victimization and homogenization of women in post-

conflict processes (Henshaw, 2017; Manchanda, 2020). The study sheds light on the understudied aspect of the relationship between women's groups and female combatants and problematizes the notion that the emancipatory goals of women can only be achieved to a limited extent if not all women are considered during peace processes. This study is not only able to gain insights into the exclusionary dynamics within the context of Bangsamoro, but it also develops our understanding of how exclusionary dynamics are affected by the work of prominent actors within the peace processes. By problematizing the interaction between the two subgroups of women, this thesis gains more theoretical insights into the exclusionary dynamics, which proves beneficial in following studies pertaining to the inclusiveness of peace processes, and assessment of the WPS agenda.

The thesis is structured as follows: First, in the literature review, I present the scholarly debate concerning DDR, peace processes, and their gendered dimensions. This is followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework that this thesis applies and expands on. I then elaborate on the Bangsamoro conflict and subsequent peace process, followed by a discussion on the methodology, which entails a presentation of the research data, analysis process, problematization of the validity and reliability, and ethical considerations important to the study. Following this, I provide the empirical analysis of the research data and actively engage with Henshaw's (2020) roots of exclusion in the analysis of the exclusionary dynamics at play. Then, I discuss the findings, bringing up points worth considering when studying this process and the gendered dynamics of it, and the limitations of the study, and provide recommendations for what future research should focus on. Lastly, I finish with a concluding chapter, summarizing the analysis, findings, and implications of the study.

2 Literature review

Already two decades ago, it was claimed that "women combatants are often invisible, and their needs are overlooked" (UN, 2002, p.129). The conversation on inclusive Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) processes is still ongoing, and it highlights the importance of understanding who combatants are and how they can contribute to peace processes in general, and to DDR processes in particular, to be successful. The literature on the inclusion of women in peace processes has become extensive over the last years, yet the focus on female ex-combatants and the exclusion of this marginalized group remains to be discussed more elaborately. By asking how the women's groups in the Philippines address the inclusion of female ex-

combatants in talks on DDR in the Bangsamoro peace process, this thesis marries different strands of literature on DDR, peace processes, peacebuilding within civil society, and feminist security studies.

The literature review will be structured as follows: First, I provide a thorough explanation of what DDR is, and what purpose it serves in peace processes. Here I explain why a gendered perspective in the planning and programming of DDR is crucial. Secondly, I introduce the advocacy work of women's groups during peace processes, and what role they serve in promoting gendered issues in peace talks in general, and DDR in particular. Lastly, I problematize the issue of the widespread exclusion of female ex-combatants in peace talks and then give explanations as to why this occurs, with reference to literature on the topic.

2.1 What is DDR and why should female ex-combatants be included?

DDR is one of the most important steps in peace processes. A successful DDR is key to an effective transition from war to peace and a critical ingredient in consolidating stability and building peace (Shekhawat and Pathak, 2015; Anderlini and Conaway, 2004). DDR has been defined by the UN as "a process that contributes to security and stability in a post-conflict recovery context by removing weapons from the hands of combatants, taking the combatants out of military structures, and helping them to integrate socially and economically into society by finding civilian livelihoods" (UN, 2014, p.24).

An increasing amount of attention has been directed toward the role that girls and women play worldwide in conflict zones and fighting forces. Women have regularly been involved in both conventional and non-state armed groups in conflict zone around the world, throughout history (Tarnaala, 2016), and female combatants have been (and continue to be) instrumental in Sierra Leone (MacKenzie, 2009), Nepal (Ariño, 2008), Eritrea (Bernal, 2000), and Colombia (Bouvier, 2016). Despite this, the existence and needs of female fighters in DDR have historically been overlooked. Women in armed groups often perform non-combat tasks that are gender-stereotypical in their society, such as delivering messages or preparing food and cleaning. In many instances, however, they also participate as fighters, and their role as soldiers and perpetrators of war has received more attention and awareness from the international research community and stakeholders. According to Henshaw (2017), women consistently participate in non-state armed groups, and it is apparent that some women are serving in combatant and leadership roles. Even

though they constitute a minority of most armed groups, they can play influential roles in these organizations and engage in violent activities (Loken and Matfess, 2022; Shekhawat, 2015). Their participation is not limited to the role of supporters or nurturers in armed groups, but their involvement in strategic, material, and logistical combat has been undermined and DDR initiatives fail to acknowledge women combatants (UN, 2001). The neglect of the many and complex roles women play during war and peace leads to a less effective, less informed DDR that does not fully extend to the community level and may not lead to long-term or sustainable peace (Anderlini and Conaway, 2004).

Since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), the focus on inclusive peace processes and how they more effectively lead to peace durability, has been increasingly discussed, contested, and advocated for. As part of this resolution, paragraph 13 states that the Security Council "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" (Resolution 1325, 2000, p.3). Additionally, the resolution stresses the importance of equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts concerning the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, highlighting the important role women serve in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding. The resolution calls for an increase in women's participation at all levels of decision-making processes of peace-making, including DDR (Resolution 1325, 2000).

One of the most effective, yet difficult, means to ensure that the needs, concerns, and ideas of women – combatants and non-combatants alike – are included in a DDR process is to have women included, and gender perspectives incorporated in peace negotiations (UN, 2014). But 'which' women should be included in peace negotiations? Female combatants transgress stereotypes about the peaceful nature of women and hence their specific inclusion into peace processes deserves more attention. The specific experiences of these women during and post-conflict continue to be overlooked, as female ex-combatants are not accorded equal status in peacebuilding with their male counterparts (Shekhawat and Pathak, 2015, p.54). This thesis explores the dynamics at play when female combatants find themselves excluded from peace talks, by calling into question the role that women's groups play in the advocacy work during peace processes.

2.1.1. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes

Disarmament, which is one of the components DDR constitutes of, is defined by the UN (2014, p.25) as the "collection, documentation, control, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes". Even though the disarmament phase is in general seen as a first step in the process of turning combatants back into civilians, the prevalence of portable weapons has made this phase becoming recognized as a symbolic prelude to a much longer and broader series of initiatives designed to convince a post-conflict society to disarm (Farr, 2003, p.28). The effectiveness and extensiveness of weapons collected are of utmost importance, as inadequate marking, removal, and destruction of weapons, consequently, leads to a rise in small arms violence and crime in post-conflict environments. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) contribute to instability after the war and are often attributed to an incomplete and unsuccessful DDR program (Anderlini and Conaway, 2004, pp.3-4).

As a second component, demobilization is defined as the "formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups" (UN, 2014, p.25), and normally constitutes of two stages: first the processing of individual combatants to sites designed for the purpose of demobilization and secondly the attribution of a support package to all demobilized individuals. The discharge of ex-combatants often occurs over a period, during which they are transported back to their homes or new districts (Anderlini and Conaway, 2004, p.1).

The third component, reintegration, is according to the UN (2014, p.25), "the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level". The reintegration component is considered the most challenging part of the DDR processes, as this is a longer-term process, with the goal of ensuring permanent disarmament and sustainable peace (Anderlini and Conaway, 2004, p.1).

Typically, establishing the general parameters of formal DDR processes is done as part of peace negotiations, and those parameters are then solidified in peace accords and subsequent implementation documents (Mazurana, 2013, p.197). National governments are usually directly involved in planning and implementing DDR programs, together with international organizations and donor countries (Anderlini and Conaway, 2004). The UN, the World Bank, foreign

governments, and international NGOs (humanitarian groups) are also actors involved in the design and implementation of DDR. In increasing numbers, local NGOs (amongst these women's groups), are being consulted, and they receive funding to conduct reintegration assistance and social services. It has been voiced by the World Bank (2003) that civilian-led institutions should be "neutral, specialized and administratively competent" in these processes.

2.1.2. DDR and gender

Gender perspectives are important to DDR so that these processes are constructed to reflect the actual (and not the assumed) needs of all those involved. In their Operational guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS), the UN (2014) puts forward a gender-responsive strategy by taking into consideration the needs of both female and male combatants, supporters, and dependents during the different stages of DDR programming, in their module on Women, Gender, and DDR. In the negotiating phase, where provisions of DDR programs are being planned, a gender-responsive approach is of utmost importance, and the IDDRS encourages that awareness should be raised, and training provided among the negotiating parties regarding the different implications of a DDR process for male and female combatants.

Additionally, one should ensure the representation of females in structures established to manage DDR programs and enlist women in leadership positions at national and local levels as stakeholders and partners in DDR (UN, 2014, p. 208). Gender responsiveness in assessment is also important, as the different roles of women, men, boys, and girls in the armed forces require an assessment that should be an integral part already in place before DDR programs start. Assessment teams and planners should consider interventions such as identifying local capacities of women's organizations already working on security-related issues, ascertaining the number and percentages of women and girls in armed forces, collecting baseline information on patterns of weapons possession and ownership among women and girls and assess how awareness can be raised among military commanders about the need to include women and girls in DDR.

In gender-responsive planning and design, it is important that national commissions on DDR are working closely with government ministries in charge of women's affairs and women's peacebuilding networks and encourage the National DDR Commissions (NCDDR) to employ women in leadership positions. Overall, language in DDR strategies, policies, programs,

implementation plans, and other documents should be gender-sensitive and accurately reflect the different experiences and needs of men, women, girls, and boys (UN, 2014, p.210).

Altogether, it is essential to involve actors that are aware of gender dimensions and gender compositions of the fighting forces and it is crucial that these people are familiar with the reality of women's involvement in the armed groups and that negotiations of DDR provisions recognize and account for the reality. In their chapter, Mazurana and Cole (2013) stress the need to understand the possibilities and limitations that exist in the given context in order to have a gender-responsive DDR. They argue that international policymakers and programmers who carry out DDR fail to understand the centrality of militarized gender relationships – resulting in a vast majority of women and girls not passing through national DDR programs. In essence, this is more than just a technical dilemma, it is about the militarized notions of masculinity and femininity, which subsequently leads to gendered notions of threats, violence, and security (Mazurana and Cole, 2013, p.212).

In her article, MacKenzie (2009, p.260) problematizes how DDR processes tend to securitize men and de-securitize female combatants, which has implications for the overall DDR programming and its results. She argues that the security discourses discount the role of women and girls in war, and contribute to the notion of females being victims, as opposed to violent and aggressive men. By prescribing the role of the perpetrator to men in post-conflict settings, women active in combat are undermined, and as a result not accounted for in DDR planning and programming.

2.2 Women's groups' advocacy during peace processes and the WPS agenda

For women's voices to be heard during peace negotiations, the work of civil society organizations (CSOs), women's groups[4], and networks has been crucial. In various studies, the role of the organization amongst CSOs plays an important role in the dynamics which unfold during negotiations on peace and subsequent phases of implementation of the peace agreement. In this subsection, I put forward the existing literature on the role of women's groups during peace processes, and the importance of the WPS agenda in their advocacy work. Subsequently, I address

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[4] Throughout this thesis the terms civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's groups will be used interchangeably.

how these CSOs are able to operate within DDR processes, and lastly how their adherence to the WPS agenda might hinder their advocacy work.

In their comprehensive study of various peace processes across the world, Chang et al. (2015, p.119) depict the significance of women whose peace activism originated as part of civil society, and that their experience in organizing, mobilizing, and lobbying enables them to get either formal or informal access to Track 1 negotiations. Additionally, CSOs strengthen the position of women delegates, as Krause et al. (2018, p.991) claim in their study of the importance of linkages between women signatories and women's groups. This linkage is important the other way around as well, they claim, as women delegates can support advocacy by providing women's groups with information about the negotiation process, making these groups capable of organizing more effectively and creating momentum (Krause et al., 2018).

The work of several CSOs worldwide adheres to the WPS agenda. In fact, the agenda itself was designed and advocated by women's groups (UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, n.d.). It provides a focus on building women's agency and ensuring women's protection during peace processes, and these organizations play a critical role in realizing change and commitments to the agenda (Peacewomen, n.d.). The agenda has gained increasing significance since the UN Security Council adopted it in resolution 1325 in 2000 and over time the agenda has evolved and entails all following resolutions on WPS, plus National Action Plans (NAPs). It has undertaken a range of developments over the last years to comply more with the need for women's active and effective participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding (UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, n.d.; Kirby and Shepherd, 2016a). As a result, important stakeholders within the peace processes acknowledge the importance of gendered issues and the benefits gender sensitivity in implemented peace agreements has for the overall sustainability of peace in post-conflict environments.

In her work, Anderson (2016) studies the mobilization of women's groups and networks, through studying peace negotiations in Burundi, Northern Ireland, and Macedonia. She finds that women's groups see peace processes as political openings to pursue objectives such as increased women's representation in national ensembles and promotion of women's human rights, adhering to the WPS agenda. She argues that women seek emancipation through mobilization and succeeded in doing so (to a varying extent) in all cases above. In another study, conducted by Bouvier (2016) similar dynamics were apparent in the peace negotiations in Colombia. According to this study, women in the Colombian peace process had their say and shaped the path to peace,

at the table, around the table, and at side tables. Colombian women actively have taken advantage of every opportunity and mechanism available to participate throughout the peace process by creating and working through women's groups and networks (Bouvier, 2016, p.19). By working extensively on the inclusion of women and the implementation of a gender-oriented agenda, it is reasonable to believe that they managed to change the dynamics of the process in many ways – most importantly towards more inclusivity.

In both studies mentioned above, there is an extensive focus on how the women's groups succeed in promoting the rights of women – but they do not address the diversity of women existing in the society and are leaving out the emancipation of female ex-combatants as a result of women's groups' efforts. Is an exclusive focus on civilian women as assets as empowering as it sounds? Farr (2003, p.29) asks. Given the important role DDR provisions serve in peacebuilding, thus being an important element to peace processes, I have argued that the inclusion and visibility of all women, *also* female ex-combatants, is crucial. Farr (2003, p.29) argues that it is necessary to recognize the differences if women are to become full partners in DDR initiatives, as they occupy multiple spaces and identities during wartime. If DDR only focuses on utilizing civilians, this will inevitably marginalize the group of women who fought in armed combat or supported combatants as nurses, cooks, or sex workers. These women do arguably have very different attitudes to the possessions and use of weapons, and they do not fit the social stereotypes of what makes a good woman which increases stigmatization. These are the women who are most likely to slip through the cracks of DDR processes. As a result, they arguably become either social outcasts who barely survive or an increased security threat in the foreseeable future (Farr, 2003, pp.29-30).

Farr's arguments align with the overall critique that the WPS agenda has received. Scholars argue that the narrative presented in it reinforces the essentialist ideas about women's pacific nature and that the sole focus of the agenda on the prevention of violence and the protection of women from violence can risk diminishing the importance of the elements of the agenda pertaining to the meaningful participation for women's empowerment through participation in peace and security governance (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016b; Manchanda, 2020; Vastapuu, 2021). Additionally, it overlooks the reality that women are frequently agents of political violence – either as supporters or combatants in many armed groups globally (Henshaw, 2017, p.1; Loken and Matfess, 2023). This body of literature engages critically with the notions the WPS agenda put

forward, which suggests a careful consideration of how women's groups' adherence to the agenda in all actuality can contribute to the critical elements presented above.

Given the role CSOs play during peace processes and their adherence to the WPS agenda which has gained critique related to the undermining of the importance of the different roles and identities women occupy during conflict, it becomes interesting to study the extent to which civil organizations are able to advocate for female combatants' concerns, which are most relevant in the talks on DDR. Arguably, CSOs can play a vital role in the coordination of DDR programs and the coordination between important stakeholders often result in successful disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants, and CSO support (Lamb and Stainer, 2018). The UN's IDDRS also highlights the importance of the consultation of CSOs during assessment phases of DDR, and notes that one has to "identify local capacities of women's organizations already working on security related issues" (UN, 2014, p.209). In the most recent version of the UN IDDRS, there is a guideline on community violence reduction (CVR) which runs parallel to official DDR programming (UN IDDRS, 2019, p.1). The effectiveness of CVR projects requires the formation of a strong partnership with public, private, and non-governmental authorities (CSOs), and amongst these actors, CSOs are serving a crucial role in the design, planning, and implementation of the CVR (UN IDDRS, 2019, p.8). However, their heavy engagement in these programs might be at the expense of their involvement in the official process, limiting the extent to which the organization can influence talks on DDR.

In Mozambique, CSOs played a crucial role in the DDR program, where civil society was given complete responsibility for the collection and destruction of SALW (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli, 2015, p.78). Also, in Sierra Leone local CSOs played a crucial role during the implementation of DDR, especially in reintegration which was implemented almost exclusively by local NGOs (Klem et al., 2008, p.18). These studies underscore the important role CSOs play in DDR and contribute to its successes, however, the topic of CSOs' role during DDR talks (in planning DDR programming) is understudied. Especially pertaining to the inclusion of gender sensitivity in the DDR process remains unaddressed in the wider scholarly debate. It is plausible to argue that studies of this topic are limited, as CSOs generally face difficulties in entering talks on DDR, especially women's groups with an agenda in essence devoted to women's rights and emancipation – given the highly gendered notion of weapons, security, violence, and threat, which inevitably results in an understanding that DDR should be negotiated by and applied to men. This

thesis contributes to an understanding of the role women's groups in particular address the issue of gender in the advocacy work, and it is thus particularly important to be aware of the limitations that the institutionalized masculinity of DDR programming poses in their advocacy work.

2.3 The exclusion of female ex-combatants

Even though it has been written extensively about how DDR processes systematically have overlooked the importance of inclusion of female ex-combatants in the negotiations regarding the provisions in DDR, the aspect of how actors within peace processes actually operate for these women to be included – overcoming barriers of exclusion – and why they fail, remains understudied.

As noted in the introduction, female ex-combatants face multiple levels of exclusion. In this thesis, I am concerned with exclusion in an indirect manner, by having their voices heard through relevant actors in the peace process. The terms inclusion and exclusion are furthermore elaborated upon in section 3.4.1. In this section, the understanding of inclusion indirectly is assessed through existing literature concerning excluding factors in peace processes, which all somehow relate to the indirect way in which female ex-combatants are included in or excluded from peace processes.

2.3.1. Barriers to entry and possible excluding factors

Palik and Marsh (2021, p.62) claim that barriers to inclusion women encounter, is due to the lack of women in leadership positions (political barriers). In addition, Palik and Marsh point to the technical barriers which relate to the lack of technical knowledge and skills required to write legal drafting in disarmament negotiations. Finally, conceptual barriers are also present in these processes, which are the notion that women do not and should not play a role in the negotiations. All of these barriers arguably exist due to the motives and opportunities surrounding disarmament being highly gendered, and the weapons held by people in combat are often important components of masculinity and have gendered impacts (Palik and Marsh, 2021, p.18).

According to Shekhawat (2015, p.13), female ex-combatants confront double alienation: in addition to their invisible participation in perpetration, the failure of recognizing this role in conflict entails them being overlooked in peace-building processes. Thus, female combatants, even in organized ways, are not considered suitable to participate in peace endeavors. Mann (2015, p. 33) follows a similar point of view and argues that female ex-combatants find themselves

practically excluded from peace talks and treaties, because of a down-sizing and reductionist approach to their experience in combat and because of peace being conducted by 'transnational business masculinity'. Even though these women transgressed gender norms during combat, their importance and visibility diminish as soon as peace talks begin. Shekhawat and Pathak (2015, p.60) argue this happens because the commanders of armed groups deliberately hold female ex-combatants back as they perceive them as being essential to the groups or hiding abducted women and girls due to the fear of legal and social consequences.

Most importantly, the major problem women are confronted with in DDR is that their roles are not recognized, and Shekhawat and Pathak (2015, p. 58) argue that there has been a huge reluctance of the international community to engage and integrate female ex-combatants in the post-conflict setting, mainly due to their absence in participation in peace processes and DDR initiatives. Since it is often so that the parameters of DDR are set during negotiations, where definitions of combatants and eligibility requirements for entering programs are set, women find themselves invisible as there is put forward a quite narrow definition and understanding of what makes a person combatant in fighting forces. Accordingly, these programs tend to focus on males who have actively participated in combat, which poses the question of whether those providing auxiliary positions can rightly be excluded from an understanding of what constitutes a fighting force (Mazurana and Cole, 2013, p. 203).

These contributions certainly add to the understanding of why female ex-combatants find themselves excluded from DDR programs, but all scholars above put forward an understanding of female ex-combatants' inclusion in a direct manner, and what barriers to entry they face in the inclusion around negotiating table, and then subsequently in DDR programs. Shekhawat and Pathak (2015, p.65) furthermore claim that peace in post-conflict societies is only achievable if women (more specifically female ex-combatants) are present around peace tables and raise their concerns, expertise, and experiences in peace negotiations. This voices an understanding that female ex-combatants only by being physically present during negotiations, can have their needs and interests included in DDR programs – only direct inclusion is sufficient for the female ex-combatants to be adequately regarded. I put forward an understanding that an indirect understanding of exclusion and inclusion is also necessary, as this level of exclusion/inclusion also adds to the understanding of exclusionary dynamics. This notion of inclusion/exclusion is more elaborately addressed in the theory chapter.

I argue that the literature on the exclusion of female combatants lacks consideration of the indirect inclusion of these women, and how this affects the way in which their needs and interests are accounted for in peace agreements in general, and in DDR programs in particular. Given the role that women's groups play during peace negotiations, it is plausible to assume that their advocacy work can affect how female ex-combatants are included in peace talks – in an indirect manner. Hence, an in-depth study of how women's groups interact, relate, and advocate for these combatant women to overcome the present barriers in all of their different forms, is conducted. By studying this, my thesis obtains a better understanding of the understudied aspect of the indirect inclusion of female ex-combatants, why female ex-combatants are not adequately included in peace talks, and whether these reasons allude to the mobilization of women's groups.

2.3.2. Women's groups and female ex-combatants – a possible alienation?

Women throughout the world have begun to organize and take action at various phases of DDR, as they have seen a need for their work (UN, 2001). In their research, Palik and Marsh (2021) show how the presence of active women's groups surmount the barriers and that peace processes in Colombia and the Philippines provided a ground for the strengthening of these groups, which work for the inclusion of women in negotiations. Despite these efforts, a segment of the female population – more specifically women who were active in combat either directly or indirectly – experienced exclusion from negotiations on peace in general, and DDR in particular. Palik and Marsh (2021) mention the issues of acrimonious relationships between the conflicting parties or the lack of success in forming a bloc that more effectively can advocate for the inclusion of *all* women affected by the war. Even though their study contributes extensively to mapping out the existing barriers within the processes of DDR negotiations, it remains to be answered which specific dynamics are at play when barriers of political, technical, and conceptual manner fail to be overcome, and what role women's groups play in these dynamics.

Throughout her study in Mali, Lorentzen (2021, p.471) found that women's organizations are using the UNSCR 1325 as a tool for advocacy and working to spread knowledge about the resolution through training and workshops across the country and how their work leads to empowerment amongst women. She studies this through norm trajectories and the concept of frictional interactions, and as an element in her study, she considers how the interplay of various local women's groups affects the inclusion of various women in peace talks. Lorentzen

problematizes the occurring homogenization of women, given the complex identities found amongst them.

The study shows that horizontal friction arises when "expectation for women to represent a shared identity as women clash with other axes along which their identities intersect, such as ethnicity, political ideology, age, class and location" (Lorentzen, 2021, p.477). It became apparent in the Malian case that clashes between women representing the rebel groups and those representing the civilians, resulted in heated debates in meetings where representatives of these groups were present. According to Lorentzen's (2021) analysis, many of the civilian women found it ambiguous that women from the rebel groups perceived their affiliations with their group as more important than their shared identity as women. Moreover, Lorentzen (2021) observed that it was important for civilian Malian women to be perceived as separate from the women representing the rebel groups. The challenge arose in credibly uniting the women from the different groups, as bringing them together resulted in more fragmentation. Consequently, these horizontal frictions led to the reinforcement of existing power dynamics in Mali, further empowering some actors (civilian, urban women) and disempowering others (rural women involved in rebel groups). Moreover, as Vastapuu (2021, p.231) accurately denotes in her chapter, female soldiers are not enough civilian in the eyes of mainstream women's organizations, simultaneously not enough soldiers in the views of DDR practitioners – which ultimately causes the exclusion of these women.

These dynamics are concerning given the UNSCR 1325 and its call for inclusive peace processes. The emergence of frictional interactions between the different groups of women in society inevitably leads to the exclusion and disempowerment of women representing rebel groups, many of these former ex-combatants are hard to avoid. As Lorentzen (2021, pp.478-480) argues, these emerging tensions between the different women are both due to the practices of international actors' work of bringing the women together and trying to homogenize the groups, but also due to the longstanding class tensions existing in the Malian society, alienating the urban women from the rural and vice versa, creating tension and fragmentation when the question of who has the right to represent the women and their interests in the peace process is raised. This study gives interesting insights into the dynamics played out within processes of peace, but it remains to be answered why these tensions are emerging and whether similar dynamics are applicable in other contexts, something I attempt to do by investigating the dynamics in the Bangsamoro peace process in this thesis.

So far it has been pointed out, with reference to existing literature and conducted studies on the topic, several issues that female combatants face when it comes to their inclusion in peace processes. The mentioned contributions all offer an explanation for how the different barriers hinder female combatants to participate (directly and indirectly), but it remains to be answered how the extensive work of women's groups in these processes affects the inclusion of these women and their interests, and whether the failures of women's groups are due to ingrained dominance of men in the domain of weapons and DDR, the neglect of women active in combat, or the perceived acrimony between those active in women groups (mainly civilian women) and those having fought in combat or supported armed groups. For this specific question to be answered, it is arguably plausible to study a case that is considered successful in terms of women's group's efforts in including women in the peace process, but where female ex-combatants found themselves being excluded. The peace process between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) fits well in this regard.

Before continuing to the next chapter, it is important to disclaim and acknowledge that other actors within peace processes also influence the dynamics at play – to a greater extent than women's groups do. Institutions (political, societal, cultural) in favor of men continue to dominate societal processes, and processes of peace are no exception. The dominance of males throughout history is certainly a fact that cannot be overlooked. Even though awareness has been raised of the importance of gendered issues and the inclusion of women in these processes (for instance through the WPS agenda), it still remains a challenging task to substantially include women in a meaningful way. This certainly poses difficulties for CSOs and their advocacy work, especially pertaining to the inclusion of women, whether civilians, combatants, or others, in peace processes.

3 Theory

The literature review has shown that different factors might be at stake when explaining why female ex-combatants keep being excluded from peace negotiations, despite the efforts of women's groups to promote the WPS agenda and successfully achieve more inclusiveness within peace processes in general. In terms of the direct inclusion of female combatants, these exclusionary dynamics include barriers of political, technical, and conceptual manner. With regards to the overall consideration of these women within peace processes, factors such as the lack of recognition, and the notion of them being neither soldiers nor civilians enough make it challenging for them to get their voices heard in post-conflict processes.

The study of the exclusion of female combatants from post-conflict processes has gained increased attention over the last couple of years (Shekhawat and Pathak, 2015; Darden et al., 2019; Henshaw, 2020). However, due to this topic still being understudied, and the literature being limited, there are few attempts in developing theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, the feminist security studies (FSS) approach serves well as a point of departure when studying the phenomenon of female ex-combatants in peace negotiations, as it takes a critical approach to the gendered portrayal of notions such as security and war and engages with the diverse and essential role gender plays within security theory and practice (Henshaw, 2020, p.64). Within this school of thought conceptual frameworks have been developed, and for this thesis in particular Henshaw's (2020) framework of 'roots of exclusion' will serve as the building block. By utilizing the concepts put forward in the framework and applying them to the case of the Bangsamoro peace process, this study gains an understanding of the exclusionary dynamics at play there.

In what follows I briefly present the overall school of thought within FSS, then continue by explaining the four roots of exclusion identified by Henshaw (2020): agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy. Where applicable, other contributions on the topic are added as each root of exclusion is explained, giving additional perspectives to the conceptual framework. As I seek to extend the understanding of Henshaw's framework by adding the component of women's groups and their advocacy work, the developing of theory that takes place in this thesis serves as a main contribution to the body of literature pertaining to the exclusion of female combatants. The concepts put forward in this chapter serve an important role in extending the understanding of exclusionary dynamics, as I argue that the manifestation of roots of exclusion not only alludes to societal structures as Henshaw (2020) (implicitly) implies, but more directly also within actors influential in peace processes, also amongst women's groups. This is more elaborately discussed in the theoretical expectations.

3.1 Feminist security studies and feminist interventions in post-conflict processes

Sharing a common heritage with earlier feminist work in international relations, political science, and international political economy, FSS gives individuals working within this field the opportunity to position themselves in the intersection of security studies and feminist theory/gender studies. The approach aims to open the general field of security studies to allow feminist (and other) narratives to be recognized and taken seriously as security narratives, as

scholars argue that the insights garnered by feminist longstanding engagement with issues of peace, war, and violence should make an impact on the field of security studies (Wibben, 2011, pp.7-8). Feminist perspectives contribute to security studies by proposing alternative conceptions of power and violence, that go beyond the traditional military notions within international relations, and scholars within this school of thought problematize the linkages between militarism, masculinity, and women's lives. These perspectives fill the blind spots in mainstream approaches to security studies by aiming for a revision and reorganization of the study of security studies so that it reflects the current state of affairs, in terms of women's lives and experiences and how these relate to notions of war, security, patriarchy, and power, more accurately (Wibben, 2011, pp.5-6).

Post-conflict processes are an important area in which FSS can make room for feminist interventions that arguably can contribute to the dialogue on peacemaking and sustainable peace. According to Henshaw (2020), post-conflict processes are ripe for feminist interventions and should build upon the previous efforts in establishing dialogues across epistemological and ontological divides on issues related to gender and conflict, amongst them the existence, motivations, and impacts of female combatants. What has been seen as problematic from a feminist standpoint is the tendency to foster an essentialist view of women as a population in need of protection, by placing women rather than systems of gender at the center of discourse. Inevitably this discourages a contextualized understanding of the gendered experience which is crucial in the domain of security (Henshaw, 2020, p.65).

Keeping this in mind, Henshaw explores how feminist work can inform efforts to address the lack of complete and meaningful inclusion for combatant women in post-conflict settings. She explores this by addressing the roots of exclusion, and her point of departure is the notion that the widespread inclusion of women in armed groups makes the exclusion of such women from processes of peace concerning, especially when considering talks on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). Arguably, one needs a comprehensive understanding of the needs and experiences of women both directly and indirectly active in combat, which in turn could serve the emancipatory goals of feminist security studies (Henshaw, 2020, pp. 63-64). My thesis aims to gain a more comprehensive and cohesive understanding of the roots of exclusion, by exploring the dynamics in depth in one of the most successful cases of feminist interventions in post-conflict processes, namely in Bangsamoro, where women played an influential part, gender perspectives were accounted for, and specific gender provisions incorporated (Olsson et al., 2022).

3.2 Roots of exclusion

According to Henshaw, there exist four different 'roots of exclusion' which are metaphors for dynamics that contribute to the exclusion of female combatants in post-conflict efforts: agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy. She stresses the fact that these roots of exclusion must be made visible in order to produce successful and transformative (feminist) interventions. Her conceptualization serves well in establishing a ground on which my study will build on, as I seek to contribute to the criticism FSS has voiced regarding the lack of feminist perspectives within the study of security, peace, and conflict. It is important to note that Henshaw is not providing a theory, nor is this the way in which I engage with her work. The four concepts of roots of exclusion are useful as a point of departure in a theory-developing approach. My aim is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of exclusionary dynamics that could serve useful beyond this case, and the four roots of exclusion play an important function to anchor the analysis and discussion of the dynamics at play in the Bangsamoro peace process.

In the following sections, I give a summary of Henshaw's four concepts, followed by the supplement of aspects apparent in other scholarly contributions, where relevant. This is followed by the theoretical expectations and then the framing of operationalization and conceptualization of relevant variables to the study.

3.2.1 Agency

Agency, the first root of exclusion, incorporates the challenge of overcoming myths of victimhood. In this sense, this refers to the belief that women engage in combat because they are being forced to, putting them into a victimized position. This narrative has some basis in facts, as studies have indicated that females are more likely to be part of armed groups due to forced recruitment, however, this is not the same as saying that all women are pressed into service (Henshaw, 2020, p.67). This notion calls into question the simplistic and gendered portrayal of agency and encourages to push back the narrative of agency as a dichotomy.

Tensions amongst groups during conflict could be found in the conversation and theorization of victimhood and agency – and how these notions might affect the challenging situation female ex-combatants find themselves in a post-conflict setting. From studies conducted in Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Aceh, it has become apparent that female participants of armed groups were largely excluded from the DDR process, and this resulted in female ex-combatants receiving nothing in financial reintegration packages because they were not registered – not

acknowledged – as combatants. In contrast, financial compensation was given to civilian groups, amongst them widows of men killed during the conflict – which is an impactful example of the tendency to focus on women only when they are considered victims of the conflict (Hauge, 2016, pp.6-7). Even though recent literature has brought more focus on women as actors in the conflict, more attention is given to women as victims (Hauge, 2016, p.8). In her working paper, Henshaw (2017) claims that the lack of focus on women being actors in conflict is due to the WPS agenda itself, which arguably focuses too much on women as victims in need of protection. Henshaw (2017, p.1) argues that the narrative found in the agenda overlooks the reality that women are frequently agents of political violence, and proposes that by seeing these female ex-combatants and making their voices heard in peace processes, more inclusive outcomes can be crafted.

The perceived notion of victims and perpetrators during violent conflict, traditionally has prescribed women into the role of the first, and men in the role of the latter. When women – either voluntarily or forcefully – join armed forces, executing violent acts and thus are considered perpetrators, this is arguably highly contested among the general society affected by the conflict. The literature concerning this is fairly new but has emphasized that women also take part in violence and torture and that this has been neglected as it contrasts with the general view of women as peaceful (Hauge, 2016, p.5).

Here, the notion of *de-securitization* of female combatants comes into play. The neglect of female fighters is according to MacKenzie (2009) taking place in the framework of securitization and desecuritization and DDR processes have been seen as more important to men, as avoiding discontent, unemployment, idleness and further mobilization and violence amongst them is a priority. Women are not seen as a threat to security, thus being disregarded in processes of DDR, and not accounted for – nor by the leaders of the armed forces, or by actors important in the peace process – further reinforcing the notion of women not being eligible for provisions of DDR.

3.2.2 Hierarchy

Secondly, hierarchy as a root of exclusion, speaks to the uncovering of the gendered division of labor in conflict – productive (male) and reproductive (female) labor roles. However, they are more fluid than assumed, and they cause misreading of women's labor during a conflict as architects and analysis of DDR attempt to force a complex labor structure into discrete categories of combatant and non-combatant. This is especially problematic in disarmament efforts, where

"one soldier, one gun" practices subsequently exclude women who did not carry arms during the conflict (but participated by other means) or when a group of women shared a gun amongst each other. The notion of hierarchy calls for re-envisioning DDR and calls into question that these divides do not reflect well the lived experiences of women in armed groups (Henshaw, 2020, pp.68-69).

3.2.3 Universalism

The third root, universalism, brings intersectionality into focus. Women are not a unitary category within which issues and interests are the same, and the failure of seeing the complex intersectional identities cause exclusionary dynamics. Women are intersectional along the dimensions of race/ethnicity, class, sexual and gender orientation, colonial hierarchies, etc. According to Henshaw (2020, p.71), the circumstances that surround female combatants and the unique challenges this diverse group of women are facing after conflict, can be shed light on by engaging in an analysis of intersectionality. Religion and tribal communities are important elements within universalism that are important not to neglect. Previous studies suggest that women navigate their multiple identities in complex ways and that any attempt to collapse such identities into a one-dimensional frame may inflict a form of violence on individuals and communities. As the literature review has put forward, clashes between groups of society may complicate things further in negotiations for peace. These groups have distinct and sometimes competing interests despite tendencies by international actors and predominant narratives to homogenize women.

Peacebuilding interactions are characterized by frictional encounters between conflicting parties and other actors. In their study, Björkdahl and Höglund (2013) claim that these encounters are essentially contests over power, and peacebuilding commonly entails asymmetrical relationships between groups involved in the processes. These interactions can thus be said to impact the mutual relationship between different groups and actors in the post-conflict setting altering local power relations. As a result, actors who are considered prevailing and powerful in struggles over discourse and practice, risk marginalizing and silencing important communities, as made apparent from studies of peacebuilding in Rwanda and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Björkdahl and Höglund, 2013, p.298). Lorentzen (2021) builds on this notion and claims that horizontal tensions emerging during peace talks, alienated urban (civilian) women, from rural (combatant) women – which subsequently contributed to empowering the first and disempowering the latter.

3.2.4 Patriarchy

The last root of exclusion Henshaw explores is patriarchy and its contribution to the return of women to the private sphere. Arguably, DDR programs consciously or unconsciously reproduce patriarchal power dynamics in reconstructed societies. Male power depends on the existence of someone in need of protection – which reinforces the notion that women are only victimized during the conflict without their own agency to act. It has become apparent that even rebel commanders are actively taking steps to ensure that women in their command would be unable to receive DDR benefits. It is also apparent that even when policies are designed to be "gender-neutral" they still contribute to the continuation of the status quo as women are still not occupying roles within decision-making. Henshaw (2020, pp.72-74) argues that the status quo is being reinforced in post-conflict settings. Here, efforts to recreate of order are a huge undertaking, and when women who defied gender norms by engaging in violence are being ignored and disregarded, the efforts of making peace become equivalent to underpinning traditional norms and values, not necessarily in favor of women's emancipation. Henshaw (2020) also alludes to the criticisms directed towards the WPS agenda for its contribution to the narrative of women as victims, which in turn also reinforces patriarchal structures that existed in the conflict-affected area.

3.3 Theoretical expectations

The concepts presented in Henshaw's framework put forward the explanation of the causes of exclusionary dynamics in peace processes. They serve as an interesting point of departure in the study of how women's groups work in order to address the issues and concerns of female combatants.

In the case of Bangsamoro, it is reasonable to believe that the roots of exclusion appear to cause exclusion dynamics within the peace process. Heavily ingrained societal and cultural norms, inclined towards the concepts described above (agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy) arguably apply in many contexts worldwide, and the Philippines should be no exception. However, as I attempt to extend the understanding of the conceptual framework and how the concepts of roots of exclusion play out in the context of peace processes, I presume that Henshaw's framing of the exclusionary dynamics at play during peace processes could benefit from a more detailed "theoretical story". She argues that the roots of exclusion affect exclusionary dynamics but does not suggest how or by what means these dynamics become solidified in peace processes. My expectation in this regard is that roots of exclusion manifest in actors relevant and influential within

peace processes, which reinforces the exclusionary dynamics if awareness of the notions of agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy is not raised. Through the study of women's groups' advocacy work, I attempt to detect whether these roots of exclusions have manifested, limiting their opportunity to adequately address the concerns of female combatants.

Moreover, Henshaw (2020) does not distinguish between the indirect and direct ways in which female combatants can be excluded from peace talks. By studying the advocacy work of women's groups, I expect the observed roots of exclusion to affect how female combatants are considered in an indirect manner. However, it is plausible to believe that the roots of exclusion also affect direct exclusion (presence around negotiating tables). Although the aspect of direct inclusion is not under scrutiny in this study, it is important to note that the roots of exclusion plausibly apply to several levels of inclusion in peace processes.

3.4. Conceptualization and operationalization of central variables
3.4.1 Inclusion and exclusion in peace processes

Calling for inclusive peace processes raises the question of whom to include around the negotiation table, how, and why (Hirblinger and Landau, 2020, p.306). Moreover, for parties involved in negotiations of peace, the contributions and indirect influence from various actors outside the process can serve important roles in the resulting peace agreement. In their work, Hirblinger and Landau (2020, p. 316), argue how relational inclusion pays attention to the potential strategic essentialization of multiple identities of actors while accounting for the complexity and intersectionality of these identities. They claim that this approach to inclusivity requires thinking about the space between actors, rather than homogenous actor groups, thus enabling asking questions about how their multiple relationships can be transformed through peace-making. In relation to a gender perspective, this approach not only considers gender relations but accounts for the existing power relations related to class, and ethnicity, and how women are situated within these (Hirblinger and Landau, 2020, p.316). Given this, relational inclusion should be understood as a platform where antagonistic contestation is enabled at the negotiation table. For this to happen in practice, one has to move towards a notion of inclusion that focuses on the themes and narrative underpinning the antagonistic relationship within peace process, moving away from the notion of formal inclusion at the table and emphasizing the physical presence of a group representative voicing the seemingly homogeneous interests of a bounded constituency, Hirblinger and Landau (2020, p.316) stress.

Following this line of thought, the inclusion of particular groups would thus imply the possibility of raising their concerns through someone present around the negotiating table. For this to adequately happen, marginalized groups should be frequently approached and consulted. In their recommendation on how female ex-combatants meaningfully should be included, Almeida and Dudoet (2022) argue that one has to make use of the knowledge that women in resistance and liberation movements have acquired during conflict times and use it as a resource during the peace process. In this study, I operationalize inclusion as the degree to which female ex-combatants fighting for the MILF (BIWAB women) were consulted by women's groups[5], which subsequently channel these particular interests and needs during negotiations on peace (DDR in particular). Moreover, the consideration of female ex-combatants is regarded as the degree to which their interests and specific needs were adequately incorporated in the final peace agreement and pertaining documents. This serves as a measure of indirect meaningful inclusion in the peace process.

3.4.2 Female combatants

Following the operational guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) created by the UN, I apply a similar definition of women involved in armed conflict, and do, as the discussion above illustrates, take female combatants *and* female supporters/females associated with armed forces into account and call both combatants, as it is oftentimes virtually impossible to separate these roles (Henshaw, 2020, p.68). The first is conceptualized as "women and girls who participated in armed conflicts as active combatants using arms" and the latter as "women and girls who participated in armed conflict in supportive roles, whether coerced or voluntarily [… being] economically or socially dependent on the armed force or group for their income and social support" (UN, 2014). As the discussion above has shown, not all actors or relevant stakeholders in peace processes (or in general) acknowledge the existence of females associated with war, something that can prove challenging when studying their inclusion/exclusion in the peace process.

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[5] It is plausible to believe that female ex-combatants were consulted by other actors involved in the peace process, and by those means managed to channel their interests and concerns. As this study is concerned with the interaction and relations between female ex-combatants and women's groups, the role other actors might have played in the meaningful inclusion of female ex-combatants is not under scrutiny but should still be regarded as an alternative explanation to dynamics of inclusion/exclusion.

3.4.3 Women's groups

Important to this study is the role that women's groups play in the dynamics of post-conflict environments. Being a civil society organization, a women's group is understood as a non-governmental organization (NGO), that in some way or another works towards the improvement of women's rights, advocating for women's emancipation and gender equality. These groups do not necessarily only work during peace processes, however, their advocacy and activities have been tremendous during times of peace negotiations and implementation, where they use methods such as lobbying to influence the direction of the talks, amongst other things (Anderson, 2016). Depending on their ways of operations, these groups can play a quite significant and influential role in the peace process, even though their participation is oftentimes limited to outside, and not around the negotiating table. The groups are mainly referred to as women's groups throughout the thesis, but also the term civil society organization is used interchangeably.

4 Case context – the Bangsamoro conflict and the peace process

In this chapter, I give a brief introduction to the case, with a special emphasis on the origins of the conflict, the prospects for peace in the Bangsamoro region of the Philippines, and the role women played and are playing in the course of the peace process.

4.1. The origins of Moro resistance

Moro is the collective name by which Filipino Muslim ethnolinguistic groups are usually known, and even though the term Muslim has been used interchangeably with Moro, the latter one is more precise as it indicates a political identity distinct to the Islamized people of Mindanao and Sulu. Today, they comprise 5 % of the total Filipino population, where the majority living in Bangsamoro (UCDP, n.d.). This region is located in the southernmost part of the Philippines in the islands of Mindanao and is distinctive from its regional counterparts as the majority of its population are Muslim, in a predominantly Roman Catholic country.

This distinctive difference dates to the 14th century, where Muslim traders brought the religion to the islands of the South Philippines (Angeles, 2013). When the Spaniards conquered the various regions of the Philippines, colonizing the territory, the tribes in Bangsamoro remained un-conquered, arguably because of their already stabilized political order, their organized army, and their mentality of resistance (Werning, 2009, p.2). The Spaniards never succeeded in subjugating the Moros in the south, however, this became to be the achievement of the USA after

their victory over Spain in 1898, continuing the colonization of the territory. The provinces of Bangsamoro remained under the direct administration of the US Army for several years, and in the following decades after the American-Spanish war, the Americans expressly began to appoint the elite of Northern Philippines as civil servants in the South, to maintain law and order in the Muslim provinces and soften up parts of the southern ruling elite (Werning, 2009, pp.2-6).

The Republic of the Philippines became independent in 1946, however, the mainly Christian central government continued the resettlement of northern (Christian) farmers to the south due to development purposes as the island of Mindanao as its location ensures the richness in minerals and favorable agricultural conditions. This large-scale systematic resettlement caused the Muslims to lose their land and by 1976 around 80% of the Muslims became landless tenants (Werning, 2009, pp.6-7).

In the mid-70s the Moro people started uprising against this settler colonialism, mobilizing armies fighting to regain independence. It should be noted that the Moros are not a homogenous group, as the people are divided by language and Islamic orthodoxy – hostility amongst the different tribes is present in the way of horizontal conflicts called *ridu*. However, they share a common sense of antagonism towards the central authorities fueled by this long history of displacement and dispossession of their territory and have joined forces in fighting for their independence which resulted in one of the most long-lasting conflicts in world history.

4.1.1 The emergence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

Amongst the many groups that were formed, the conflict and the peace efforts that involve the major Muslim groups of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are the focus of this thesis. Mainly, this is due to the scope of the paper but also because of the interesting dynamics pertaining to this peace process with regard to the gendered dimension.

The MILF originally split off from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1977, in order to pursue a genuine regional authority and demonstrated a capacity to wage an everlasting war. Both groups were founded on fundamentalist Islamic principles and committed to an independent Islamic state of the historic Moro homeland, encompassing the 13 provinces in Mindanao (San Juan, 2009, pp.24-25). With the signing of the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 between the MNLF and the government of the Philippines, fractions of the groups disagreed with the leadership of the MNLF and officially established MILF in 1984. Compared to the MNLF which

followed a more secular ethnolinguistic path, MILF had a more religious cast. Moreover, MNLF has nurtured ties to liberation movements elsewhere in the world, whereas the primary concern of the newly established MILF was "the Moro problem", giving more weight to the religious distinctiveness of their people (Rood, 2018, pp.71-72).

4.2. Peace efforts and the role of women

The efforts of negotiating peace between the government of the Philippines and the MILF have been many throughout the decades[6], but it was not until 2010, under the newly appointed President Aquino III, that the conflict reached a maturity that led to negotiations and the signing of the peace agreement in 2014, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) (Olsson et al., 2022). Negotiations surrounded land distribution, recognition of *Syarah* law, rehabilitation of war-ravaged areas, and implementation of previous agreements begun by the MNLF (San Juan, 2009, p.25). Subsequently, the negotiations led to the successful establishment of the new political entity Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), following the Plebiscite that accepted the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) in 2019 (UNFPA, n.d.). In essence, the region shall be under the supervisory powers of the president of the Philippines, as is the norm in a presidential system and a non-federal government – and MILF got their Filipino citizenship with a Bangsamoro identity (Coronel-Ferrer, 2018, p.109)

Aquino's government increased the meaningful participation[7] of women among the negotiators, compared to previous negotiation efforts. Most notably the academic and activist Miriam Coronel-Ferrer was appointed chair of the peace panel of the Government of the Philippines and became the first woman to ever sign a peace agreement in world history (UN Women, 2020). This success can partly be attributed to the extensive efforts of civil society organizations (CSO), especially women's groups – both based in Manila and in Bangsamoro. The network of the different groups active both during negotiations and implementation is complex and consists of a variety of women with intersectional identities, making a study of the advocacy that they carry out challenging, as differentiating between their agendas and subsequent goals,

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[6] Starting in 1997, but on several occasions (2000, 2003, and 2008) put on a halt, triggering new armed confrontations (Herbolzheimer, 2015, p.2)

[7] The term meaningful participation was contested during negotiations, as members of the MILF negotiating panel did not initially understand the understanding of the concept and its implication for the negotiations (Chang et al., 2015). As the processes proceeded however, MILF became more inclined to include women, and their panels too included some women.

achievements, and influence can have an impact on inclusionary and exclusionary dynamics in the peace process.

Regardless, their efforts during the negotiations have been considered crucial to the inclusion of women's rights and concerns. Due to the extensive work of CSOs, the CAB includes 8 provisions directly addressing women in Bangsamoro – some of them further turned into legally binding decisions and reforms in the crafting of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) in which the women's groups were also active in lobbying (Olsson et al., 2022, p.19; Nario-Galace, 2021, p.63). Also in the implementation phase, they engage heavily in the monitoring of the provisions, and their work toward gender equality in Bangsamoro and beyond continues. For many of the CSOs in the Philippines, the UNSCR1325 serves as a great deal of inspiration and several of the women's groups push the WPS agenda as it has become a template for the promotion of women's inclusion in peace processes (Maligalig, 2016; interview 7).

Despite the efforts of women's groups resulting in the direct inclusion of a female chairperson on the government side, the negotiating panel on the MILF side remained mainly male (Chang et al., 2015, p.105). This runs contradictory to the presence of women in the organization during the conflict. In fact, the Moro women self-organized into several civilian and military entities, among these the Bangsamoro Islamic Women Auxiliary Brigade (BIWAB). This is an all-female force that constituted a part of the MILF armed forces, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), consisting of 10 000 members divided into 29 battalions (interview 10). BIWAB's main mission was to ensure the safety of the combatants by attending to their medical and basic needs and to serve as a reserve force to the armed force of the MILF (van Hoff et al., 2021). Even though the female force only constituted approx. 10% of the total number of combatants in the BIAF, their role in combat has been seen as important.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) efforts in the Bangsamoro context are called Normalization, as disarmament and demobilization, in particular, are considered loaded terms that invoke surrender and forcible action by the victorious parties (Muggah and Rieger, 2012, p.2). This track speaks to the process of going back to normal, and it is a "process whereby communities can achieve their desired quality of life, which includes the pursuit of sustainable livelihood and political participation within a peaceful deliberative society" (Annex on Normalization, 2014, p.1). The roadmap of Normalization includes the decommissioning of 40, 000 MILF guerillas and 7,200 of their weapons, and the final objective is to dissolve the armed

group of MILF, and put their weapons beyond use (International Crisis Group, 2021, p.8) Even though the Annex is thoroughly written, provisions related to female combatants are ambiguous and lack clear language about the prospects given to female combatants in the post-conflict setting (discussed further in section 6.1). One of the main issues has been the lack of an official list of the women in BIWAB, which has made the consideration of these women more challenging (Arcala-Hall and Hoare, 2015).

Despite the influence women's groups had under the peace process in terms of implemented gender provisions in the overall peace agreement, current reports show that gender inequality in post-conflict Bangsamoro still persists, especially experienced by BIWAB women (OXFAM, 2021). Still, these women are not sufficiently decommissioned, both in terms of women included in the programs and in terms of the decommissioning itself not being sufficiently tailored to meet the needs of the female combatants. For instance, it is problematic that the support provided in the post-conflict setting does not distinguish between women and men (Sarmiento, 2021). Moreover, only 10% of the women are decommissioned (by February 2023), and BIWAB members are feeling left behind in terms of opportunities (Sarmiento, 2021; OXFAM 2021, pp.16-23).

Altogether this specific case proves interesting in investigating how in a seemingly inclusive peace process, exclusionary dynamics are nevertheless present, and to what extent the female combatants encounter barriers to entering negotiations on peace, most specifically related to the Normalization track. It is interesting to explore the way women's groups active in the process addressed the issues specifically pertaining to BIWAB women and given their successes in advocating for women's rights in the Bangsamoro in general, why this success does not translate to the subgroup of combatant women. While the peace process between the GPH and the MILF has been described as gender inclusive, I show that there was significant variation when it comes to which women were included in the talks and in the agreement itself.

Given the interplay between Manila- and Bangsamoro-based CSOs and BIWAB women, it is important to consider the general level of gender equality in the country, in relation to the level of equality in Bangsamoro, as this aspect, in particular, could potentially affect the dynamics that play out in the peace process. The Philippines has for a long time scored high on global indexes of gender equality and women's rights. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the Philippines is making significant progress in closing gender gaps in

economic participation and opportunity, and health and survival (Hocking, 2022). There are, however, great regional differences, and the question of gender equality is particularly acute in Bangsamoro, as this region ranks lowest in the country. For instance, reports show that it is only in Bangsamoro that women have significantly lower literacy and educational levels than men (SDRI, 2021). The domestic roles prescribed by cultural norms often constrain Moro women's opportunities to be full participants and beneficiaries in both social, political, and economic spheres, something that compounds the issue. This gender disparity in the region should not only be attributed to the cultural differences between the regions, however. Arguably, also the long-lasting conflict affects the gendered dynamics in the region, resulting in women finding themselves in disadvantageous situations and positions throughout the region (SDRI, 2021, p.10)

5 Methods

5.1. Research design - the case study approach

Given that the topic of exclusionary dynamics is understudied, and I am uncovering one specific peace process, interview methods and qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary resources were selected as the most suitable ways forward. A qualitative case study approach proves beneficial in the study of dynamics at play within the peace process of Bangsamoro, with regards to the inclusion of female combatants and how women's groups interact and advocate with this subgroup of women. I address this through an in-depth study of the women's groups' advocacy work in the Bangsamoro peace process, both during negotiations (1997-2014), and during the implementation phase (2014-2023). This thesis aims to understand the roots of exclusion in the Bangsamoro context and how they might have affected the female combatants' possibilities of participating in the process, by exploring how exclusionary dynamics might manifest in women's groups' advocacy work.

This study positions itself in the field of feminist security studies (FSS), which calls for qualitative research in a field dominated by a quantitative approach to study. Scholars within this field focus on the understanding of context, observing intersectionality, challenging the dominating power structures, and aiming to redefine concepts that are taken for granted in the discourse of security studies. Arguably, adding women to the analysis without taking into consideration the social structures within which women are situated, yields poor results, and is something FSS addresses at the core of its approach (Henshaw, 2020, p.65). A qualitative approach is arguably better suited for studying social contexts such as the gendered dynamics of peace

processes, as it provides us with the deep understanding that is needed to draw inferences in a descriptive manner.

My methodological decisions are guided by my two-fold theoretical approach. This dualism is one of the advantages of conducting case studies as they facilitate the identification of new variables and insights that can nuance existing theory. Firstly, the thesis is a theory-guided study, which according to Levy's typology (2008, p.4), is an approach where the aim is to interpret and explain a single historical case. This is done by structuring the analysis through a well-developed conceptual framework. Secondly, I seek to further the understanding of the exclusionary dynamics at play within the peace process, thus this thesis will also take a grounded theory approach in which the aim is to develop (existing) theory through a 'retroductive' approach (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.34). Here, theory is seen as something emerging out of data collection and analysis, common in qualitative studies. By delving into the specifics of the Bangsamoro case, I try to extend the conceptual framework of Henshaw (2020), giving nuance to some of her assumptions with examples from the Philippines.

A case study approach allows a detailed analysis of a political phenomenon, with rich contextual descriptions. At the same time, a case study approach facilitates the opportunity to say something interesting and meaningful about the case being studied, it also should be able to show implications for similar cases and transferable insights in other contexts, engaging with wider academic debates pertaining to the phenomena (Halperin and Heath, 2020, pp. 234-237). To do this successfully, it is necessary to be aware of the applicable universe of cases and be clear about the substantive focus and the empirical scope of the study. This thesis aims at understanding the exclusionary factors at play in peace processes and examines the degree to which these factors manifest in the broader civil society (women's groups) which in turn affect their advocacy work. Engaging with the conceptual framework of Henshaw, my approach both allows for applying conceptual assumptions to new contexts but also adds insights to the phenomenon adding nuance to the framework.

As established elsewhere, scholars such as Shekhawat (2015) and Henshaw (2020) argue that the widespread inclusion of women in armed groups makes the exclusion of these women from peace processes even more concerning. In cases like Nepal and Colombia, similar exclusionary dynamics are observed, and Henshaw (2020) draws on these cases to exemplify the ways in which the dynamics manifest in different contexts. I am specifically exploring the

relationship between women's groups and female combatants, making this case belong in a universe of cases of peace processes where CSOs played a substantial role during peace negotiations and implementation phase. The adherence to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda by influential actors within peace processes becomes an interesting component in the study as it assumingly contributes to exclusionary dynamics as scholars criticize it for its essentializing of women and disregard of female combatants (Henshaw, 2017; Kirby and Shepherd; 2016b, Manchanda, 2020) - particularly in contexts where traditional and conservative values are ingrained.

The case of Bangsamoro is similar to other cases in the population of peace processes as the component of religion/secularism becomes an important consideration as the difference in both religious affiliation and the degree of religious orthodoxy varies amongst the different actors in the peace process, most notably between women's groups and female combatants. This case thus sheds light in particular on these gender dynamics in settings where religion is a major fault line in a peace process.

In this sense, the Bangsamoro case is arguably a descriptive case study, which according to Gerring's (2017, pp.56-62) typology is a common way of studying in qualitative analyses. Scholars argue that case studies are better suited for descriptive, rather than for causal analysis. It has been argued by scholars within social sciences that descriptive analyses are often identified with ideographic storytelling or with messy, observational data that is insufficient to draw causal inferences and are of little scientific value (Gerring, 2012, p.721). However, as argued by Gerring (2012) description is necessary to understand causality, and vice versa, so description should proceed independently of a causal proposition. Conducting a descriptive case study of the Bangsamoro peace process, describing how roots of exclusion affect the exclusionary dynamics of female combatants, and examining the role women's groups play in these dynamics, can provide a good groundwork for further analysis aiming at exploring causal mechanisms at play in the peace process pertaining to the exclusion of female combatants in the Bangsamoro case, but also valuable for the drawing causal inferences regarding exclusionary dynamics in peace process beyond this specific case.

5.2. Research data

The research design consists of a qualitative study of the Bangsamoro peace process, and data collected through interviews and participant observation allow for a thorough understanding of the context in which the phenomenon under scrutiny is playing out. In advance of data gathering, boundaries have to be set in order to answer the research question put forward. These boundaries pertain to the temporal and spatial domain, as well as the variables and factors important to my study. Assessing these factors, I arrived at the conclusion to conduct fieldwork in Manila, the Philippines, interviewing relevant actors to the peace process (amongst these women's groups representatives) and having the opportunity to understand the context-specific factors of the process, ensuring that the conclusions I arrive to in my study are in tune with how dynamics play out in reality. With regards to data saturation, it could be argued that the study could have benefited from more interviews, with a bigger sample of women's groups' representatives. It is also important to note that none MILF members involved in the peace process were interviewed, only the government negotiating panel is represented by the interviews. Working around this issue I have supplemented with data from secondary resources so that the voices of all parties are included, which arguably can have implications for the study.

It is important to note the way in which women's groups' representatives are treated in the study, as this has a considerable methodological implication. Firstly, women's groups' representatives were interviewed to gain an understanding of their advocacy work during negotiations and the subsequent implementation phase by asking how they interacted with/were considerate of female combatants in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). They provided me with important insights into their activities in their capacity as experts and practitioners. However, as this study concerns the roots of exclusion that limit the female combatants' opportunities to be part of the peace process (indirectly, by having their interests and concerns voiced during peace talks), the women's groups became subject for analysis themselves, as actors that themselves potentially and unintentionally contribute to exclusionary dynamics. Interviewing CSOs serves purposefully as the study goes to the core of exclusionary dynamics, and having the women of CSOs voicing their perspectives adds interesting insights to the case.

5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews are a beneficial source of data for this study as they facilitate a deep understanding of the context by probing deeper into people's experiences (Halperin and

Heath, 2020, p.173). The study surrounds a presupposed conceptual framework and entailed topical questions that covered the peace process in Bangsamoro, and the gendered dynamics at play. The questions in the interview guides (Appendix I) span around the four concepts presented in section 3.2. To avoid bias, the questions aimed to be non-leading, and were structured according to themes and concepts important to the study.

I interviewed different actors relevant to the peace process in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the gendered dynamics. As the main focus of my study is the relationship between civil society organizations (women's groups) and female combatants, I was careful in selecting participants who could tell me about the interplay between these groups of women, and additionally tell me about the opportunities of involvement that female combatants had during negotiations. Mainly, these actors were divided into three subgroups: women's groups' representatives, persons directly involved in the process, and people knowledgeable about either how the peace process proceeded or how gendered dynamics play out in Bangsamoro. Different interview guides were developed for the respective subgroups, as the wording of the questions and the topics raised had to differentiate between them. In total 12 interviews were conducted, 3 women's groups representatives, 5 actors directly involved in the process, and 4 people serving as experts in the context. The respondents were regionally dispersed, with 5 being based in Manila, and 5 from Bangsamoro and 2 based in both places (full overview of the interviewees in Appendix II). Most of the interviews were conducted in person in Manila, however, some happened virtually (with people based in Bangsamoro), and one interview was a written exchange through e-mail. All interviews lasted somewhere between 30 minutes and 2 hours, and in those cases where meetings were scheduled in person the interviews happened in public spaces or in the interviewee's respective offices.

I got in contact with all my respondents through the method of snowballing, but my initial contact was crucial to the access to relevant stakeholders. The importance of gatekeepers should not be disregarded when collecting data through interviews. This is the person or the people you have established formalized contact with before going into the field, they open doors and provide the researcher with contacts so one can embark on collecting data. It is important to acknowledge that relying on gatekeepers pinpoints the problem of whom the researcher talks to (has access to) will determine the story being told in the end (Sindre, 2021). Both the use of gatekeepers and the method of snowballing can enforce the potential pitfall of bias in terms of data collected, as there

will be limitations to which people I possible can get access to: gatekeepers may have their own agenda in setting up contact and subsequent interviewees may suggest interviewing people in their own network, increasing the likelihood of only interviewing like-minded people. The outreach to a variety of actors is thus hindered, which subsequently can affect the analysis. My data collected through interviews are representative of people involved in the peace process – it is possible that many of the respondents (especially the high-ranking politicians or people serving in important roles in the administration, see Appendix II for an overview of their positions) have an interest in portraying the processes of negotiations as positively as possible, in order to maintain an image of successfulness with regards to women's inclusion. For this particular matter, it is important to think critically about the responses of the interviewees, using secondary sources to corroborate their statements and make an overall assessment of the credibility and sincerity of their answers.

Another thing that is important to keep in mind when conducting interviews is the meta-data that comes out of the data collection, which in turn also can be used as a source of data on its own. In the case presented above, where respondents would either respond to something considered falsified/incorrect answers, or not answer at all, this pertains to meta-data that is important to consider, as these can hold hidden meanings. Fujii (2010) explains meta-data to be the spoken and unspoken thoughts of the respondents, which are not always articulated in their interview responses, but which emerge in other ways. Some of the types of meta-data Fujii (2010) is concerned with are denials, evasions, and silences. Denials suggest the denying of concepts or line-of thoughts put forward during the interview. Evasions speak to the avoidance of answering specific questions, that is talking about something else, whereas silences are the neglect of speaking about a certain issue, by not bringing it up during the interview.

All these types of meta-data can be polyvalent, and their meaning can be multiple and contradictory. Nevertheless, these sorts of meta-data can help make sense of the ambiguities and complexities that can be found in post-conflict settings (Fujii, 2010, p.240). There was for instance a tendency by several of the women's groups' representatives to speak highly of their involvement and interactions with female combatants over the last couple of years. However, as my questions were more related to their interaction during negotiations (and the questions were explicitly framed in that exact way), they would not answer, and rather talk about how they now have established contact with the women in BIWAB. This evasion and silence should provoke critical analysis of

the reason behind the avoidance of speaking about the matter of interactions during negotiations, which is more elaborately discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

Moreover, I noticed an ambiguity when speaking with the interviewees about female combatants and their role in the armed group. Both evasions – people avoiding answering my questions about women engaged in violence and upfront denials of this being the case – suggest the disbelief that women, in fact, served a combatant role. Silences on this matter also suggest the disregard for women playing such a role during a conflict. The presence of this sort of meta-data suggests the need to reconstruct the presupposed categories of roles people can play during a conflict, and in my specific case, these observed denials, evasions, and silences made me reflect on the victimhood and agency dichotomy, important to this study. By letting the interviewees tell their stories which at first sight might not seem credible as they do not fit the presupposed conceptual framework put forward, disregarding these stories could lead to drawing incorrect inferences, as these stories also tell something important about the reality of the phenomena being studied. Shortly speaking, disregarding the ambivalence of the stories being told (or not told at all) and relying too much on analytic categories can lead to systematic holes in the data, and is important to make an account for them in the analysis.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the question asked involved broad concepts that are difficult to capture as they change meaning depending on the person asked (Fujii, 2017, p.66). Even though my focus of the study is the peace process, it was of utmost importance for me to familiarize myself with how gender norms are playing out in the Philippines in general, and in Bangsamoro in particular. An understanding of this allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the exclusionary dynamics at play. However, when asking questions pertaining to concepts as broad in nature as "gender" is, it became important to me to frame questions in a way that made the answers comparable across interviews, regardless of their gender, positions, or regional belonging. Fujii (2017, pp.64-65) stresses the importance of posing questions across a common set of domains, so that comparing answers across interviews and making out of how people construct specific aspects of the social world, would be easier. In my case, I approached the issues of the broad nature of the concept of gender by asking the interviewees more specific questions. Instead of asking them direct questions about gender equality, I asked them to describe the opportunities women (in Bangsamoro/in Manila) have in terms of education and employment, and also about the female combatants' opportunities to enter peace talks, implying that these were important during combat

too. In some interviews, it became relevant for me to suggest that the women in BIWAB had transgressed gender norms which also allowed me to take notes on how the respondents addressed/reacted to this statement, which ultimately suggested their view on gender norms.

It is necessary to mention the potential pitfalls regarding access to interviewees. Ideally, this study should have drawn from the insights and experiences gained from female combatants in the Bangsamoro conflict and in the subsequent peace process. Getting their perspectives would add substantially to the analysis and would contribute to a more nuanced analysis in which several points of view are considered. Especially when the analysis aims at explaining the relation between the civil, urban women and combatant, rural women, it is certainly an added value of the voices if the latter were to be represented too. However, access to the women of BIWAB is challenging, and I got rejected when approaching the leadership of MILF when asking for permission of doing interviews. I tried to establish contact with several of these women directly, asking for informal conversations, however, also this proved to be difficult (mostly due to practical reasons: all these women are based in Bangsamoro, and internet access and mobile network are unstable). However, in trying to solve this potential pitfall, I got to interview several other women from the region, considered independent and neutral in their assessment of the relationship, and in many ways, these women were able to present to me the view and concerns of the female combatants in a very informative manner. The potential pitfalls of this approach should certainly not be disregarded, however, in combination with other sources on the matter (documents and reports from the region with firsthand experiences from the female combatants), I believe my approach to solving the issue of non-representing of BIWAB women as adequate.

5.2.2 Participant observations and additional fieldwork material

Two settings in which I participated as an observant took place in Manila. This is considered participant observation, as these were settings where I was listening to what was being said in conversations and discussions, watching what was going on, and taking notes of what was happening (Clark et al., 2021, p.392). In addition, ethnographic research that involves noticing and observing allows for grasping the complexities of social life, which is difficult to obtain through more formalized research methods (Krause, 2021, p.331).

The first event was a meeting where several women's groups' representatives met to discuss and put forward a proposed draft for the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and

Security (NAP WPS). Questions regarding women's rights and their living conditions nationally were raised, however, also women in Bangsamoro seen in the context of the peace process were discussed. This meeting was held in Tagalog, however as the language contains a lot of English words and phrases (especially in the academic and political jargon), I was able to understand some of what was spoken of in the meetings. In two of my interviews, which I conducted after this meeting, I asked for clarification on things that were of particular interest to me, such as the Normalization track which was discussed, and the matter of intersectionality in the Philippine society.

The second event was a celebration of the World Hijab Day 2023 at the Senate where I got to speak to high-level politicians and women from the Muslim community both in Manila and Bangsamoro. This event also happened in Tagalog, however an exclusive conversation happening between a senator in the Senate and persons working for the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in the aftermath of the event, I was invited to observe and even ask some questions myself.

Informal conversations with Muslim women and men also happened, and I also visited museums where the culture and history of the Bangsamoro region were exhibited, and observations were made during everyday life during my four weeks stay in Manila. These can hardly be considered participant observations but provided me with a deeper understanding of the context I study, especially important when I could not travel to the region itself.

5.2.3 Documents

To be able to get access to people I could not interview or engage in informal conversations with, the female combatants, this study also makes use of documents and literature as sources of data. According to Clark et al. (2021), these kinds of data are also useful to cross-reference different perspectives and triangulate data. Analyzing the documents and articles relevant to the Bangsamoro context, especially pertaining to the livelihood of female combatants (different reports, news articles, publications), enables me to extract excerpts or quotations to illustrate a point that my data collected in the field could not cover (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.200). As mentioned above, the use of documents written on the matter of female combatants in the Bangsamoro peace process, allows me to cross-check and corroborate statements - which in turn increases both validity and reliability of the study.

5.2.4 Considerations related to data collection

One important decision I had to make relating to the collection of data, was whether I should conduct my fieldwork in Bangsamoro, or just in Manila. Due to security concerns in Mindanao (the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly advises against traveling there), I decided to stay all four weeks in Manila, which also resulted in the study taking a slightly different approach[8]. Being in the region of Bangsamoro would allow me to delve into the culture and society, however, I was able to get to know several (Muslim) people from Bangsamoro who had moved to Manila. These people provided me with a lot of insights into the everyday life of the Bangsamoro people, and through these people, I got to learn a lot about the history of the region, how the peace process played out there, and how the process was perceived across the different Bangsamoro communities.

All over, my approach to data collection and the research data available for analysis provide me with a strong basis from which I can draw conclusions. Applying multiple sources of data (both in terms of different research participants, as well as different forms of data collection, that is both interviews, observations, and documents) enables me to approach the research question from different angles and triangulate the data. Where interview data did not provide sufficient information, or where interviewees presented non-consolidated views, the use of secondary resources such as documents and reports from the region served well in making statements clearer, as I could cross-check information. As a result, triangulation yields more complete data and results in more credible findings and facilitates the process of finding agreement between different perspectives. Moreover, applying different methods enables me as a researcher to more easily identify whether differences are due to biases in one or another of these methods (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.175).

5.2.5 Analysis process

In order to get most of the data, I analyzed the interview material using NVivo software which allows for a systematic approach to the collected data, by coding the data into a variety of categories. Ultimately this system of codes and categories makes the corroboration of answers

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[8] I ended up not having good access to female combatants in the BIWAB, which made the initial study of the female combatants and their perceptions of exclusionary dynamics difficult to assess. I draw on secondary resources to have their perspectives represented in this study too, however, the approach is more focused on the way in which women's groups interact and relate with these female combatants, providing insights into their advocacy work within the peace process.

easier, as the different responses across interviews would be gathered together based on their respective content.

Because the study takes both a theory-guided approach, simultaneously as I apply grounded theory as a component to the analysis, the data collected is analyzed through 'retroduction', a dynamic process in which the interaction induction (observation to theory) and deduction (theory to observation) is applied – this is a continuous interaction between theory and observations, which a practice researchers often turn to in the study of social phenomena (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p. 34).

Initially, the coding process with the making of categorization seemed obvious with regard to the study. First and foremost, the four concepts relating to the roots of exclusion were important, as were interactions between female combatants and women's groups, and the Normalization and peace process. As I analyzed each interview, more categories became relevant, such as the interviewees' perception of gender norms in the Philippines and in Bangsamoro, the perception of female combatants among the general public, and the role of religion both generally in Bangsamoro and during the peace process, amongst other things. Altogether, these categorizations helped in analyzing the data, as well as detecting meta-data (written more extensively about in section 5.2.1), and I was able to analyze the data thematically (see Appendix V for an overview of codes and description).

With regards to notes taken during participant observation and other informal encounters with people in the field, these serve as added material to the interviews and are treated as data on the same conditions as the formal interviews. This material is not systemized using software, but the data works well in triangulation between the different methods.

5.3. Validity and reliability
5.3.1. Internal versus external validity
Validity in research is considered an important judgment criterion relating to the integrity of the conclusions drawn from studies (Clark et al., 2021). Conventionally, validity has been differentiated between internal validity, which concerns the accuracy of the conducted study, and external validity, which relates to studies' representativeness in the imagined universe of cases. In what follows, I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of my study concerning the two concepts of validity.

When conducted correctly, case studies offer cohesive and consistent explanations of the phenomenon being studied and are thus considered to uphold internal validity well (Halperin and Heath, 2020). This criterion in particular is important when studying gendered dynamics at play in the Bangsamoro peace process, as a wide array of factors affect the circumstances. By focusing on the exclusionary dynamics in one peace process, a thorough understanding of the case can be achieved. Interviewing representatives of women's groups and other actors relevant to the peace process provided me with knowledge of the realities during the peace process. Due to the difference in the interviewees' geographical and occupational backgrounds, the completeness of my study and the confidence in my findings are increased. My four-week long fieldwork improved my understanding of the context and increased my ability to detect factors not considered in the conceptual framework. Additionally, the fieldwork supplemented the collected data with participant observation and informal conversations. Interviewing female combatants in Bangsamoro would have increased the internal validity. However, out of practicality (I do not speak Tagalog or any of the other languages spoken in the Bangsamoro region, and overall, the proficiency of English amongst these women is considered low), and the issue of access, I tried to work around the problem applying alternative methods as mentioned above.

Scholars argue that external validity is limited for case studies, as the case is not selected randomly and it is challenging to assess the representativeness of the case (Gerring, 2017, p.220). My study sheds light on the relations between female combatants and women's groups in the context of the post-conflict process in Bangsamoro, where ingrained structures that are caused by religion and culture, arguably are key for the understanding of the exclusionary dynamics at play. In other instances, the interplay of factors could be different, suggesting that in peace processes in other contexts (both spatially and temporally), different results may be yielded.

In several regards, however, this study can provide insights that other cases geographically and temporarily different from it can serve well from. Firstly, the interplay between female combatants and women's groups is applicable to almost every peace process as armed groups oftentimes constitute of female combatants (Matfess and Loken, 2023), and women's groups have been active in almost all peace processes after the introduction of UNSCR1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (Chang et al., 2015). This study can serve the purpose of providing transferable insights, as it sheds light on the way in which the different components have a say in the roots of exclusion present in Bangsamoro, and how they manifest in women's groups – transferable to

other peace processes in which the interplay between religion/secularism and thus different portrayals of feminism are present. In addition, this study's chief objective is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of conceptual prepositions, illustrated by insights from the Bangsamoro case, and its main contribution will be regarding theory development.

5.3.2 Reliability

Another important research criterion for research is reliability, that is the trustworthiness of the inferences drawn from the study, and the evaluation of the degree to which concepts are measured correctly. It is also related to the replicability of the study, as it can serve as a measurement of the degree to which the same results are yielded was the study to be conducted again (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.191). For research to be reliable, transparency in the study is required, by presenting research design, methodological choices, and research advances in detail. In dealing with concepts that are constantly changing over time, reliability is especially important in qualitative studies. This subsection aims to provide a sufficient and adequate amount of transparency.

The restrained replicability of the study conducted is a limitation of different kinds of research designs. In qualitative studies replicability has to be reflected on, as what is chosen to be emphasized in the field may vary between researchers, responses of interviewees are likely to be affected by characteristics of the researcher (positionality) and because of the unstructured nature of qualitative data which is the interpretation of is influenced by subjective decisions of the researcher (Clark et al., 2021, pp.369-370).

Dealing with the issue of reliability (and replicability) in studies is done by the careful judgment of and asking of critical questions about the data material and its sources. Possible bias is assessed by the explicit consideration of interviewees' positions and the origin of documents. Triangulation between the different sources is also a strategy employed, which is the application of a variety of methods and sources all concerning the same research question, which in turn increases reliability (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p.175). This thesis combines semi-structured interviews with observations and documents, thus findings are bolstered and cross-checked in order to have reliable data.

5.4. Ethical considerations

In the following subsection, I present how ethical consideration informed methodological choices, important in fieldwork-based research. Ethics should play an important role in each step of the

data collection and processing and should also play a role in the development of research design and data collection.

Krause (2021, pp.336-337) points out the need for scholars of political science to enhance the space in which scholars are allowed to reflect on the reality of embodied research, the researchers' vulnerability, and the choices made in the field, as all of these factors have an impact on the research process. In the following subsections, I give an extensive discussion pertaining to the ethical consideration of my study.

5.4.1 Ethnographic sensibility and positionality

According to Krause (2021), ethnographic sensibility is especially important in research involving fieldwork in conflict-affected areas. It is crucial to have open reflections on the researcher's positionality, and shortcomings and failures of the study are important components of ethical and transparent writing, which in turn also will affect the validity of the research positively.

Ethnographic sensibility in this sense relates to the limited or/and uneven immersion in the field site, and it is argued that researchers might opt for this kind of immersion as factors such as gender, race, nationality, class, and other background indicators do affect and shape immersion. A long and deep immersion into the field is not always an ethical approach, and it should be considered an alternative way of approaching actors in conflict-affected areas, by letting go of the notion that research should be full on participants in the field site, by visiting the sites shorter periods of times or limit the immersion (Krause, 2021). Another benefit of this approach, as full immersion into the field site often can result in the researchers' own sense of what is credible, as the people's perspectives slowly can influence the way in which the research interprets the dynamics (Fujii, 2010).

For my research, and as already reflected upon, I made the decision not to go to the site in which the conflict had unfolded (in Bangsamoro) and stayed in Manila for the whole time. Even though a visit to the region could have provided me with additional insights, this was too huge of a risk to take as the areas under contestation are considered dangerous for foreigners to travel to. The dangerousness of sites is something Krause (2021, p.332) argues is also something that belongs under ethical conduct, as the safety of the researcher is as important to consider as the of the participants of the study. Additionally, it is important to give back to participants who willingly gave their time to do an interview. Besides being explicitly grateful for their time spent talking to me, I will send the finished thesis to those participants who asked for it.

With regards to positionality, characteristics such as gender, age, and race important factors to reflect on as they assumingly affect the way in which interviewees and participants relevant to my study perceive me, which in turn can affect the data collected. By being a young, white female conducting research in a context quite dominated by patriarchic structures, I was prepared for respondents to disregard the importance of the study (especially those with important roles within state apparatus), which could affect the way in which they answered my questions. On the contrary, however, I was met with welcoming and excited participants. It is important to address research participants' positionality also needs to be considered as relational positionality will happen when two people converse (Vogel and Musamba, 2022, p.9). Additionally, it becomes important to reflect on the notions of privilege and power, which affects relational positionality and also challenge, constrain and/or transform the research (Henry et al., 2009, p.468). As the interviewees I talked to all belonged to middle-class in urban areas and were all older than me, I had to conduct sincere politeness and respect towards older people is an important cultural consideration. Seeing me as a younger person would suggest arrogance and disregard for the importance of talking to me, but in virtue by being a foreign researcher, I gained the respect needed for interviewees to voluntarily participate in the study.

Reflecting on this, I would say my affiliation with a Norwegian university (the University of Oslo) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) helped me in reaching legitimacy and acknowledgment amongst the participant, as I got the impression of them thinking my work was relevant and important, providing me with extensive insights and knowledge that certainly added to my analysis. It is however possible that interviewees felt the need to answer my questions about the peace process and its successes in a positive, but maybe not truthful manner. Given the fact that Norway played/is playing a crucial role in the peace process in the role as a facilitator, especially pertaining to the Normalization process, it is plausible to believe that interviewees wanted to show their gratitude towards the country, seeing me as a representative of it – but then limiting their criticism of the process, or avoiding raising it, due to my nationality.

It should also be noted that many of my interviewees were women, and I did not have to handle situations in which gendered dynamics of power might be of concern. It is also important to note how the relations I established during my time in Manila certainly have added to my understanding of the context that I study, however, adds the dimension of treating the people I got to know in line with ethical conduct. All the things I got to learn from people in informal settings,

have not been quoted in the thesis, but still serve as important additions to my understanding of the dynamics at play, especially relating to gender norms. I made all people I met and interacted with aware of the purpose of my stay and strived for full transparency for my intentions and motivations with this study and be as detailed as I could when introducing my research objectives, which is important to transparency (Vogel and Musamba, 2022, p.10).

5.4.2 Data protection and processing

By following guidelines set by SIKT (which approved this study, see Appendix IV) and the University of Oslo, the data collected was always treated with the utmost care, and the confidentiality of interviewees has been obtained in all stages of data collection, given the data collected being characterized as red (sensitive) data. As a first step, it was important to get informed consent (either orally or written) from all interviewees (when the interview was recorded) and to be transparent with all the people I met about what my intentions with the meetings and conversations were. I provided all interviewees with an information letter (Appendix III), which highlighted that their participation was voluntary and stated clearly the respondents' rights to withdraw from the study and end the interview at any time. During the data processing (transcription and analysis) it was important that all documents (recordings and transcripts) were stored in a storage 'hotel' provided by the university. It is important to stress that all interviewees are anonymous, and I have anonymized all transcripts and ensured that it is not possible to identify the interviewees in the final thesis. As a last step of data protection, all recordings and transcribed interviews will be deleted when the thesis is submitted.

6 Empirical analysis

By analyzing the dynamics at play in the Bangsamoro case, this study aims to shed light on female combatants' participation, involvement, and visibility in the peace talks and subsequent implementation phases of the peace process. This is seen in the context of the arguably extensive role that civil society organizations (women's groups) play in the peace process, both during the negotiations and implementation of the peace agreement, thus an indirect understanding of inclusion is applied. Their mobilization and advocacy work has been impressive, proving it interesting to study how these groups, in particular, were able to address the issues and concerns of female combatants in the MILF (the BIWAB), which were highly underrepresented during the peace talks (UN-INSTRAW, 2010, p.10). It is important to note, however, how talks on DDR

(Normalization) inherently are very masculinized and dominated by males, resulting in a sphere challenging for both women's groups and female ex-combatants to enter, which has implications on the extent to which gender-specific issues can be brought up.

To unpack the reality that these BIWAB women faced and are facing and how the exclusionary dynamics played out, I analyze how the four roots of exclusion put forward by Henshaw (2020) are observed in the Bangsamoro case. Firstly, however, I give a brief introduction to how female combatants situate themselves in today's Bangsamoro. This serves the purpose of contextualizing the results of the Comprehensive Agreement on Bangsamoro (CAB), which in turn can be translated to the consideration (or the lack thereof) of BIWAB women during peace talks. Following this, I also elaborate on the advocacy work of CSOs during the peace process, to contextualize further analysis. After this subsection, I problematize the way in which the CSOs were able to address the concerns of BIWAB women, given the observed roots of exclusion. Lastly, and building on the previous analysis, I analyze how roots of exclusion (unintentionally) manifest in women's groups themselves limiting their activities related to the female combatant, arguably contributing to the reinforcement of exclusionary dynamics. I argue that the extensive focus on the WPS agenda (both amongst women's groups but also amongst actors relevant to the peace process) acts as an indirect way of contributing to the disregarding of female combatants, through reinforced notions of victimization and homogenization of women.

6.1 Where do the combatant women find themselves today?

Arguably, BIWAB women's living conditions today are mostly a result of the settlements following the CAB, and an elaboration of it would show the way their exclusion from the peace process has affected their livelihoods in terms of living standards and opportunities[9].

One of the most pressing concerns of BIWAB is the exclusion from Normalization programs, which results in the insufficient amount of their women being decommissioned (Moner, 2022). Most concerning is the fact that only a fraction of their total members of 10 000 is eligible for decommissioning, moreover, only 900 out of 2400 women have received the social economic packages promised by the government (interviews 2 and 10). This affects their livelihood, and

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[9] Other factors are also at play affecting their livelihoods, the general level of development on the national level, and the covid-19 pandemic effects, amongst other things. Nevertheless, it is plausible to argue that dividends of the CAB, implemented in the BOL, do have a great effect on how the region evolves and develops, both politically and socially.

many widowed women are still waiting for economic support, and at this point, they should already be benefitting from health insurance and their children should have been provided scholarships (interview 4). Reports from the region show how these women lack opportunities, and that the support they are given does not differentiate between the need of women and men adequately (OXFAM, 2021, p.28.)

In the sense of their opportunities and living conditions, BIWAB women find themselves in disadvantageous positions compared to the general public in Bangsamoro (Moner, 2022). Arguably, this suggests the insufficiency of including a specific reference to their experiences and needs in the CAB. Looking at the provisions mentioning them in the Annex on Normalization, they are included in the paragraph concerning the Socio-Economic Development Program, where it is written that these programs "will be provided to the decommissioned women auxiliary forces of the MILF" (Annex on Normalization, 2014, p.8). Women are again mentioned in the same document, however, the women are now seen as separate from the military organization: "[…] The Parties agree to adopt criteria for eligible financing schemes, such as priority areas of capacity building, institutional strengthening, impact programs to address imbalances in development and infrastructures, and economic facilitation for return to normal life affecting combatant and noncombatant elements of the MILF, indigenous people, women, children, and internally displaced persons" (Annex on Normalization, 2014, p.8). They do refer to both the combatant and noncombatant elements of the MILF, however, the wording does not explicitly indicate that women are part of the military structure in any way, which subsequently leaves unclear the applicability of financing schemes and economic facilitation to BIWAB women. This arguably results in the lack of possibilities and harder living conditions for these women in the aftermath of conflict.

This is not to argue that BIWAB is not explicitly mentioned in other documents that undertake the specific efforts put forward in the CAB. The women auxiliary forces are mentioned in implementation documents that pertains to the Normalization track. In one document, it says that "The Task force shall create a special team in the social socio-economic and development programs for the decommissioned women auxiliary forced of the MILF" (Task Force for Decommissioned Combatants and their Communities, 2015, p.3). In another implementation document, the definition of MILF which the protocols pertain to, states that "for the purposes of these implementing guidelines, refers to both regular and guerilla members of the Bangsamoro

Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). To ensure that the socio-economic initiatives and the decommissioning process will be gender-sensitive and inclusive, the term shall include Women Auxiliary forces" (Protocol on Implementation of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB), 2015, p.2).

It is important that BIWAB is explicitly mentioned in the documents, but it is put forward an assumption that it is sufficient that the MILF combatant definition shall include the female component of the organization. Furthermore, these documents do not add gender-specific or sensitive guidelines, which for instance could have been made where phases of decommissioning are written. This is problematic as the decommissioning process' initial phase involved that "the MILF shall submit initial lists of validated and registered weapons and combatants […]" (Implementation of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Independent Decommissioning Body (IDB), 2015, p.4), and it has already been established that such a list of female combatants did not exist in the early phases of the process (Arcala-Hall and Hoare, 2015). This has implications for how many women are eligible for the decommissioning and subsequently can benefit from socio-economic development programs. Furthermore, by not stating explicitly the specific needs of the female combatants, through assuming they all benefit from the same provisions as their male counterparts, the result of the programs does not prove beneficial for the women, as recent reports from the region have shown (OXFAM, 2021).

6.2 Women's groups' advocacy work

Relating to the literature that has been written on the role women's groups play in peace processes, their advocacy, and their successes in including women's perspectives and concerns are due to either the pressure put in negotiating parties of including women in their panels, or the lobbying to have certain agenda items included or gender perspective incorporated in the peace talks. The design, planning, and implementation of DDR processes are considered one of the most masculinized aspects of peace talks because any conversation on weapons and the like is highly gendered. It is more likely that talks on DDR will only involve men, presenting a challenging sphere for women's groups. Given this masculinized aspect, it appears interesting to consider and assess the degree to which women's groups addressed issues concerning female combatants in the DDR planning, and to what degree they continue the efforts of advocating for female combatants in the ongoing DDR programs.

In the case of the Bangsamoro peace process, women's groups indeed play quite a substantial role in the peace process overall, as already mentioned in previous sections (4.2). With regards to their advocacy work related to female combatants in the BIWAB, this case proves interesting in exploring the dynamics of the process, which arguably resulted well for women in Bangsamoro overall (with many implemented gender provisions in the CAB and the BOL), however less so for female combatants in the BIWAB.

6.2.1 Interactions between the combatant and the civilian women

Amongst the several representatives of women's groups interviewed for this study, all were aware of the fact that women played a part in the MILF organization. In their capacity of raising awareness and include gender provisions in the Normalization process, they were consulting BIWAB women. One respondent working for an agency that has the mandate to oversee and monitor the implementation of the CAB claimed that the "CSOs have really focused on them [the BIWAB women], to ensure the participation of women in all aspects of Normalization, with more than 1000 consultations" (interview 3). This is echoed by another respondent working for the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority (BTA), saying that: "During the negotiations, all the women - including BIWAB - were consulted and invited to consultations" (Interview 10). At first glance, the awareness of female combatants is present, and women's groups did indeed try to incorporate the voice of the female combatants.

The respondents are mentioning several hindrances in their efforts to substantially involve combatant women. The greatest obstacle was to get permission from the MILF men to meet the BIWAB women, and oftentimes when meetings were set up (especially in the beginning), the women who showed up would either not participate at all, sitting quietly in the back or serving food during the meetings (interview 6). This is corroborated by different sources, saying that for Muslim women (amongst them BIWAB women) participation in these consultative meetings simply involved being physically present to receive information and none reported voicing their own opinions or concerns during the meeting (Kubota and Takashi ,2016, pp. 28-29). Eventually, the women's groups got to meet and speak with the BIWAB women alone, and it was during these talks that they would confess the atrocities they had experienced and their prospects for the future (interview 1). One Bangsamoro-based CSO, in particular, was struggling to have their initiative recognized by the men in MILF, and they found it quite challenging to convince them to have

meetings with the women. Now, as this CSO has a more or less direct dialogue with the women themselves, they try to encourage them to "speak up and communicate with their leaders in the BIAF, voicing their concerns and demands" (interview 10).

Another respondent working for a Manila-based CSO talked about how the notion of war being a 'manly matter' was a hurdle hard to overcome, as the issue of women was not seen as a big concern amongst the MILF men during negotiations. They were saying that if women could not be part of the official decommissioning, they would find other ways for them to normalize their lives. The respondent continues by reflecting on how there was no consciousness regarding the involvement of the BIWAB women at the beginning of the Normalization process. There was for instance no one during the peace talks that suggested that decommissioning should include a certain percentage of women and men. She goes on by saying that the negotiators in the panel might have let this issue go, as they would think that the MILF men would consider their women and their particular needs in the decommissioning – after all BIWAB is part of their structure (interview 4). Also, in terms of their direct participation within their negotiating panel, this notion of 'men making war, thus men making peace' was dominant. Respondents would mention the lack of relevant knowledge, experience, and education as the reason why they were not seen as eligible participants around the negotiating table (interviews 2, 4, and 12).

When raising the issue of the fact that BIWAB women find themselves in disadvantageous situations, respondents know they lack opportunities and are neglected. One respondent working for the monitoring entity confess that they

> "could have focused on the gender perspective in the implementation of the Normalization and put more meat on what is meant by meaningful participation – a term which is already problematic and contested amongst the MILF negotiators. Right now, the responsibility lies with the panels and mechanisms to ensure that we adhere and stay true to what meaningful means. It is not only numbered but substantive participation that matters" (interview 3).

The women groups representatives would often mention their work during the implementation phase, and were talking about the engagement with BIWAB women they have succeeded within the last couple of years. One Bangsamoro-based organization is assisting

BIWAB women in the training and they work extensively to the inclusion of these women in local peace monitoring efforts. The respondent working for this CSO mentioned how a number of the women in BIWAB are already engaged and employed in work, most specifically related to watching (documenting, assisting, and reporting) gender-based violence issues in their communities (interview 10; Cadorniga, 2022).

Some of the Manila-based organizations work extensively on raising awareness of women's rights, not only in Bangsamoro but throughout the country. By conducting focus group discussions (FGDs) with rural women throughout the country they are able to assess the degree to which these women are aware of their rights and ask them what issues they find the most pressing. This serves as the point of departure in their work of drafting the new National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS). One of the 17 action points that were presented during these FGDs was directly addressing the needs of females engaged in war and the issue of them not being fully decommissioned. However, this action point received minimal attention amongst the participants in different communities. As the women behind the work on the new NAP WPS only included action points that women across the country found to be the most important (as became apparent through the FGDs), the point about female combatants was disregarded (participant observation). This could speak to the belief among Filipino women that issues such as the strengthening of the capacity amongst women in conflict transformation and ensuring social reforms to address the basic needs and protect women, children, and marginalized sectors, are the most pressing. The concern of the lack of decommissioning amongst combatant women is thus of lesser importance. However, this could also suggest the general lack of awareness of women being former rebels in need of benefiting from Normalization programs.

The extensive document dated back to 2014 called *Women Speak: Perspectives on Normalization* aims to outline "the perspectives shared by women on their role in Normalization and provides useful steps to ensure women's active participation and consideration in the peace process" (Natividad et al., 2014, p.5). However, not a single word is written about the women in the MILF organization and their role during the conflict, and in the aftermath of it, is not mentioned whatsoever. Considering the fact that this document is almost 10 years old, one can claim with certainty the general lack of awareness and perhaps ignorance of the women engaged in combat only a decade ago – which in turn affects the BIWAB's livelihoods and lack of opportunities today.

Altogether, this speaks to the existence of awareness of BIWAB women, especially amongst CSOs working on gendered issues and other relevant actors in the process. However, the recognition of these women has only recently become apparent, as they have gradually gained acknowledgment from some actors, but certainly not all (if we believe the numbers presented in drafts of the new NAP WPS and the documents pertaining to the women in Normalization). Obstacles had to be overcome, but even when women from CSOs were able to have direct dialogues with the BIWAB women, the consideration of these combatants did not reach the negotiated agreement – if looking at the provisions in the Annex on Normalization and the lack of elaborate language on BIWAB women specifically. Although the efforts in engagement with the BIWAB have increased over the past years and these women are found to be more acknowledged in the implementation phase of the peace process, it is problematic that the CAB and the subsequent BOL have no direct language on how these women should obtain dividends that are set in the goal of Normalization (interview 4).

Several obstacles become apparent when analyzing the interactions between women's groups and female combatants, and it is observed that female combatants did not enjoy full inclusion either in terms of direct involvement in the peace talks or in documents of the Normalization track and the dividends pertaining to it. The core dimensions of this exclusion are arguably a lack of awareness of these women in the organization, by several of the important and influential actors within the peace process in Bangsamoro. Additionally, it becomes evident that hindrances set by men in the organization have led to the disregard of the women in their organization, making it difficult for women's groups to interact with the BIWAB women. To further understand these factors and to be able to assess to which degree they, in fact, have led to the disregard of female combatants, the remaining part of the analysis uses Henshaw's (2020) conceptual framework to analyze the exclusionary dynamics at play.

6.3 Roots of exclusion in Bangsamoro

What explains the inadequate involvement of BIWAB women in peace talks, and how are the four roots of exclusion (agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy) present in the post-conflict efforts in Bangsamoro? In the following section, I discuss the extent to which Henshaw's (2020) roots of exclusion did contribute to the alleged lack of female combatants in the process. Keeping in mind that the discovery of root causes requires a deep understanding of the societal context in

which the phenomena being studied is playing out, the analysis try to make the best out of the data collected while being in the Philippines, drawing from the understanding of the Bangsamoro culture and society that I gained being in contact with people from the region. This data is triangulated with content analysis of primary and secondary sources on the topic.

6.3.1 Agency

There exists little doubt of the fact that BIWAB women played an important role during combat, especially as a supportive auxiliary force. Despite this, the extensive lack of recognition prevailing both on the local and the regional, as well as the national level, speaks to how the myth of women being forced to join the forces and the subordinate role they play in these, putting them into a victimized position, also prevails in the Bangsamoro context. In essence, the simplistic and gendered portrayal of agency often translates to women not being recognized as combatants and hence making them less likely to be included in DDR programs. Added to the tendency of victimizing women in conflict, female combatants fall through the cracks of services they require as a victim of conflict and those they require as individuals seeking reintegration (Henshaw, 2020, p.68).

The misconception and the confusion of the women's role during the war are present in the Bangsamoro case as well. One of the interviewees (a woman from Bangsamoro, working within the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA)) was convinced that the women in the BIWAB were forced to be involved in combat, and subsequently reflects on how women really contribute within these groups. According to her, in conflict-affected areas the language is violence, but women do not speak that language. Moreover, they would not have the incentive to involve themselves voluntarily in the war, as they do not want their children to be affected (interview 2). Another respondent (a regional prosecutor in Bangsamoro) was talking of the reason women take part in BIWAB is that they are following their husbands, fathers, or brothers to the camps, however, not necessarily in a forceful manner (interview 6). This suggests a non-consolidated view of the BIWAB women and the extent to which they can be seen as agents of war.

Added to this, an official list of women members of the BIWAB does not exist, and even the women themselves would hesitate to mention their occupations and engagement during the conflict (Arcala-Hall and Hoare, 2015), something that also became apparent in one of the interviews conducted (interview 10). In addition, one respondent was mentioning how some

civilians express confusion regarding the provisions and why some of the women (the BIWAB) have other provisions pertaining to them, compared to civilians (interview 10), suggesting that civilians themselves do not really acknowledge the females serving in combat and the necessity of them getting special attention with regards to specific provisions different from those of civilians.

Similar to the arguments presented in some of the contributions in the victimhood vs agency literature, these findings echo the consensus amongst the scholars claiming that women can play roles as perpetrators during the war. This narrative is neglected due to the common notion of all women being peaceful and victimized during the conflict, for instance, as depicted in the WPS agenda itself (Henshaw 2017). In one of the interviews (a woman working for a Bangsamoro-based CSO), it became apparent that there is no perception across the different communities that BIWAB women are perpetrators of war, it is only the men within the MILF that are considered as perpetrators (interview 4). It becomes apparent in the Bangsamoro context that these views are prevailing, and the misconceptions regarding the role women play in combat propose a simplistic and confused portrayal of their agency during the conflict. This is not necessarily to claim that BIWAB women were perpetrators, but the de-securitization of these women (by claiming that did not act as agents of war) does come into effect when their inclusion in peace talks is under concern. Arguably this understanding of their agency contributes to the view of them not being a threat to security – thus not important to DDR processes (MacKenzie, 2009).

6.3.2 Hierarchy

Similar to agency, the root of exclusion that speaks to the hierarchic portrayal of armed groups, also causes exclusionary dynamics in which women find their roles played during combat insignificant and unimportant compared to direct engagement in combat. Subsequently, this excludes them from peace talks. Hierarchy specifically calls into question the stereotypical roles we prescribe women and men to play in violent organizations, which disregards the fluidity of labor conducted during conflict (Henshaw, 2020, p. 68).

The main mission of the BIWAB was to ensure the safety of the combatants by attending to their medical and basic needs and to serve as a reserve force to the armed force of the MILF, the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) (van Hoff et al., 2021). Although the actual depiction of their work during conflict is beyond the scope of this paper, respondents were talking about the direct participation of women in war (interview 10) and the importance of recognizing

the important role women were playing in the force and that one has to realize that without the women the revolution would not have succeeded (interview 7). In interviews with BIWAB women themselves, they do however claim that they were not just auxiliary forces but fought alongside the men in the MILF (Moner, 2022; Bernardo, 2023, 05:07). Despite this, respondents were convinced that women only played supportive/auxiliary roles (interview 1) and that they were serving a supportive role to their male counterparts during the negotiations in the same way as during the revolution (interview 6). In addition, scholarly work on the Bangsamoro peace process mentions that it was not permitted for women to serve as combatants in the MILF and could only provide support (Chang et al., 2015, p.101). These notions run contradictory to each other, suggesting the misconception and confusion regarding the division of labor in conflict.

When planning and designing policies of the Normalization track, this notion in particular has become problematic. BIWAB is an all-female force constituting a total of 10 000 women, where only 10% are found to be eligible for decommissioning (interview 10). In this track, decommissioning is applied to combatants carrying guns similar to other DDR efforts, and something that has been highly criticized is the one-man-one-gun requirements that exclude women who were never armed or shared arms with each other (Tarnalaa, 2016). As one respondent puts it: "Females connected to the MILF felt neglected, they were widowed, and no one would listen to them because they did not carry arms" (interview 2). This is echoed by another interview, saying that "[BIWAB women] feel they are not prioritized, even ignored by the MILF (interview 4). Another respondent would say that in meetings with the BIWAB women, they were all dressed in military uniforms, carrying firearms, however, "they were not combatants, but serving in roles as cooks, and doing laundry. […] They became dependent on the MILF men and stayed in the camp" (interview 1). The dominant view is the notion of women playing a subordinate role to men, and they are disregarded as soldiers as they are not carrying guns and only play a supportive role, as Mazuarana and Cole (2013) argue would be the reason why they are excluded from an understanding of what constitutes a fighting force.

The disruption of expected gender roles plays an important role in why hierarchy serves as a root of exclusion. Also, in Bangsamoro, the BIWAB women arguably experienced the transgressing of gender roles when they were taught to hold and use guns and go through military training, to the big surprise of civilian Bangsamoro women when learning about this (interview

10). These present dynamics speak to how hierarchal dynamics lead to the disregarding of BIWAB women, and the role they play in combat.

Given this analysis, it becomes apparent that both hierarchies as the root of exclusion, as well as the misperception of hierarchies, are at play. It is true that BIWAB women played a subordinate role to the men in the organization, as the military organization of MILF is male-dominated both in the hierarchic structures - men have greater leadership opportunities within the organization and combat is being seen as superior to auxiliary forces (Henshaw, 2020, p.68). However, the fact that women did engage in combat directly, has led to the misreading of their labor during conflict, which plays into exclusionary dynamics in peace talks. Together with the clear gendered hierarchy within the organization and misperception of the role of women amongst actors within the peace process proves problematic when the inclusion of BIWAB in the Normalization track is under concern.

6.3.3 Universalism

The failure of seeing the complex intersecting identities existing within a given society causes exclusionary dynamics as one does not fully comprehend the diversity of women's experiences, especially their differences in terms of race/ethnicity, class, sexual and gender identity, and the like are not accounted for (Henshaw, 2020, pp.70-71).

Prior research in Bangsamoro shows that women face challenges in organizing effectively due to being fragmented along religious, ideological, and class lines (Dwyer and Guiam, 2012, p.8). In Bangsamoro, religiosity strikes as the most important way in which people differentiate, both on a national level, as well as on a local level. Given that the majority of the people in Bangsamoro are Filipino Muslims, this already speaks to an important difference from the rest of the country which is predominantly Roman Catholic. Additionally, the difference among Bangsamoro people in terms of religious orthodoxy is also found to be quite big. The MILF is considered highly conservative, and they have an almost fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (interviews 6 and 10). These differences and their impacts prove to be essential in understanding the Bangsamoro context. One interviewee working for Bangsamoro-based CSO brought up the concern of intersectionality in the region and argued that the MILF's norms are very ingrained, both among men and women. She witnessed how even among the Muslim women in Bangsamoro there are tensions with regard to how gendered norms are viewed. The interviewee said that they

were able to convince some conservative Muslim women, among the very traditional Islamic scholars. Since the peace process, they have opened up and they are more perceptive to listen to the value of gendered issues (interview 4). The mindset of the people has gradually changed in a more progressive and liberal direction, however, women in the BIWAB are still satisfied and content with serving a subordinate role to their husbands (interviews 4 and 8).

Compared to other Bangsamoro women and women based in Manila or other bigger cities in the Philippines, who do not share the same religious convictions and persuasions, it might become harder to realize and acknowledge the differences and how they play out in terms of BIWABs women's needs and concerns. This calls into question the notion of homogenization: why do we assume that civilian (urban and less conservative, Christian or secular) women are able to represent combatant (rural and Muslim) women? Moreover, with their strong advocacy work that takes basis in the WPS agenda, why do we assume that a Western understanding of feminism applies well ina Muslim context where feminism assumingly is viewed and played out differently? This will be further elaborated in section 6.5.3.

6.3.4 Patriarchy

The return of women to the private sphere is perhaps the root of exclusion that is the most ingrained in the Bangsamoro context. The patriarchal dynamics in this society align with Henshaw's conceptualization of patriarchy as the reason female combatants find themselves excluded from peace processes (Henshaw, 2020).

Most of the interviewees were mentioning how the BIWAB women find themselves in the subordinate position of men, how they are content with playing a supportive role, and how they would keep quiet sitting in the back of the room during meetings and consultations (interviews 2 and 6). In many cases, women must ask their men for permission to do things. As with universalism, religion comes into play in these dynamics as well, as one has to understand how the religiosity of people causes or reinforces the patriarchal structure. A Muslim woman from Bangsamoro was telling about how women in Islam, strictly speaking, are supposed to be at home and cannot hold any leadership positions, implying that women should not be part of decision-making activities (interview 10).

However, this is not only related to religion as Filipino women (regardless of their religion) often find themselves having to ask their husbands for permission (interview 1). Interviewees

would also point to how the inclusion of women and their opportunity to participate in the peace process in general, is highly dependent on the national administration and their understanding of inclusivity and substantial influence (interview 9). It is agreed that one of the main reasons for the substantive role that women's groups could play during the peace negotiations was due to the newly appointed President Aquino's rather liberal view of women (Olsson et al., 2022, p.19), but that following administration has made it more challenging for women to participate, and how the peace process, was proceeding and evolving (interviews 7 and 10 and participant observation). When women, in general, found themselves to be excluded, arguably female combatants would do too accordingly.

With regards to the recreation of a patriarchal order after conflict, the BIWAB women who take part in the Normalization track will find employment in stereotypical and low-skilled jobs (interview 9). Even though the fact that they do get employed (and the interviewee was speaking without invoking any problem of women only being able to take up jobs in sectors related to garments and care-taking), BIWAB women find themselves excluded from decision-making positions, despite the efforts of a variety of women groups to introduce them to local authorities, training them for jobs that would put them in leadership positions (interview 10). Moreover, and as reflected in the proposed draft of the 4th generation of the NAP WPS, the language used in the document highlights the need for women to be protected, which according to Henshaw (2020, p.72) contributes to a narrative that reinforces patriarchal systems, as this system at its core is built on male power and dominance being dependent on the existence of something in need of protection.

The patriarchal dynamics observed in the Bangsamoro context, as well as in the overall Filipino society, serve as great obstacles women in general encounter in terms of inclusion in decision-making processes, especially when the process is concerned with the highly masculine matter of war and weapons, such as in DDR design, programming, and planning. Even though the UN has called for more gender-responsive and -sensitive DDR efforts (UN, 2014), the reality of these efforts globally remains highly male-dominated, subsequently leading to DDR processes being negotiated only by men and applying only to men.

6.4 To what extent are women's groups able to address the issues of female ex-combatants?

It has become apparent in the analysis above that the views of people regarding female combatants and their role in the conflict are not consolidated. This has further implications for how women's groups subsequently relate to women in combat, and it is interesting to assess what the interplay between these groups of women is mainly affected by.

Before discussing the issue of women's groups and female combatants' relationships, it is important to note the degree to which women's groups do have access to talks on DDR, and how this, in turn, affects their ability to address the issues of female combatants relating to Normalization. As already established elsewhere in this thesis, talks on DDR are considered highly masculinized and access to these talks in particular is most likely to be decided by male-dominated institutions (Hauge, 2016). It becomes important to keep in mind that DDR negotiations are difficult for women's groups to access. If the assumption that female combatants' views are transmitted to negotiations through women's groups appears to be true, talks on DDR present a particularly challenging environment both for civilian and combatant women's voices to be heard.

Additionally, is it important to claim that the work of women's groups, particularly in the Bangsamoro Peace Process should not be disregarded as their activities both during the negotiations and implementation phase has led to a substantive improvement for women in Bangsamoro generally, as the section 4.2 highlighted. Most notably their lobbying towards the employment of a female chairperson in the GPH negotiations panel should be praised, in addition to the improvement of the livelihood of several groupings of women throughout the region (Ramachandran and Karon, 2022) which is important not to undermine.

6.4.1 Gradual awareness and acknowledgment – gradual inclusion?

At first glance, it seems like there was a general awareness present amongst women's groups regarding the existence of BIWAB women, as became apparent in section 6.2.1. Still, there exists a contradicting story of how these women were able to be included and the degree to which they actually were considered, both by women's groups active during the process, and also in the overall society.

In all the interviews conducted with women's groups' representatives, and actors working with BIWAB women (entities and offices with a mandate to oversee and monitor the peace agreement), a consensus regarding the many consultations and meetings these women have had

with each other, was present. As I noticed during the interviews, however, the respondents were more inclined towards speaking of the consultations and interactions during the last years (during the implementation phase), and even though my questions specifically concerned their interactions during negotiations (see Appendix I for interview guide), this aspect became unaddressed by several of the respondents. Another respondent (a female regional prosecutor in Bangsamoro) informed me of the lack of awareness of the BIWAB women in several of the local communities also persists today. It was not until several years after the negotiations took place that local authorities were made aware of the existence of BIWAB women in their own barangays (communities) (interview 10). Considering the awareness that other women seem to have of the BIWAB women, it proves interesting to reflect on the reasons why this non-consolidated view in the overall society continues.

As mentioned before, many interviewees spoke about how meetings with BIWAB women were hard to schedule as they needed the permission of the leaders in the MILF to speak and consult the women. Even when such meetings took place, only the men would participate in the conversation, whereas the BIWAB women would sit quietly in the back. This was common in the beginning, but as respondents made me aware of, direct consultations with the BIWAB women now happen without many hindrances, and they are now also engaged in programs and workshops that ensure the interaction between the groups (Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2022; interview 10). They still need the permission of the leadership to hold meetings, but it is considered easier to gain access compared to the beginning of negotiations, as one woman representing a Bangsamoro-based CSO informed me. According to the study conducted by Chang et al. (2015, p. 110) networks of Bangsamoro female religious scholars and leaders, contributed to softening the MILF's resistance towards the inclusion of women in the peace negotiations.

This gradual awareness-raising and acknowledgment of the female combatants leads to the questioning of the reasons why these combatants have not found themselves adequately included in peace talks – is it the due to the barriers set by the men in the organization or due to the lack of awareness amongst that women's groups themselves, that interactions were few in the beginning and only recently has been considered as something important? Given the fact that dynamics resulting from the patriarchal structure in Filipino society are heavily ingrained (as the analysis in section 6.3.4 shows), an immediate conclusion would be that the male-dominated culture of

participation in decision-making served as the greatest obstacle for the interactions between these women.

However, on a second glance it seems puzzling that even though low in numbers, women from Bangsamoro (but not directly affiliated with the MILF) were working in their negotiating panels, as legal advisers, and in monitoring positions (Santiago, 2015, p.10) – apparently, some women gain access and others do not. Some have argued that these women in formalized positions within the MILF negotiation panel only were employed due to their educational and occupational background (Santiago, 2015, p.10; Palik and Marsh, 2021), and female combatants in the BIWAB do not hold this kind of expertise required to be involved in peace talks. In conversation with the chairperson of the MILF negotiating panel it became apparent that there is no injunction in the Qur'an against women taking leadership positions and that the passages in the hadith (Islam's second source of religious and moral guidance) about the warnings against making young women lead is more about their inexperience rather than about their gender (Santiago, 2015, pp.10-11). This statement in particular should make one reflect more carefully on the role that patriarchic mechanisms come into play in the peace process and should make one question whether the exclusionary dynamics present in post-conflict dynamics are mainly driven by social, cultural, and religious gender norms.

Ultimately, there seems to be some truth in the statement that the awareness of female combatants did not become solidified, amongst the general public, but also amongst the women's groups themselves, before later stages in the process. A woman working for a Bangsamoro-based CSO reflected on how it was not only later on that people realized that BIWAB women existed and how it was surprising that this realization took so long, and also how organized they are and the number of women in this brigade (interview 4). Alternatively, this could also signify that women's groups were in fact aware of the female combatants in BIWAB, but due to challenges in advocating for their concerns (e.g. overcoming the barriers set by men), they chose other struggles to focus on.

6.5 How do roots of exclusion manifest in women's groups?
The discussion above has shown how the different roots of exclusion are observed in the Bangsamoro case. It has become apparent that several of the factors are identified to a certain extent, and arguably they all describe reasons why female ex-combatants found their interests and

needs insufficiently included in talks on peace. This section focus on Henshaw's conceptual framework can be used to understand the limitations of women's groups to voice the concerns of female combatants during the initial stages of the peace process (negotiations), as a result of roots of exclusion (subconsciously) manifesting within the women's groups, limiting their advocacy work in the initial stages of the peace process. Arguably, this is due to the deprioritization, lack of awareness, acknowledgment of the existence of the combatant women in BIWAB, and the importance of advocating for their concerns.

In this subchapter, I draw on what was written in the analysis section 6.3 Exclusionary dynamics and address the four different concepts of roots of exclusions, and how these roots affect the ways in which female combatants are excluded from talks on peace. I then discuss the relevance and applicability of these concepts regarding women's groups' advocacy work, which is backed up by collected data (meta-data too) and other sources of data. Table 1 below provides an overview of my findings.

Roots of exclusion	Bangsamoro peace process	Manifested in women's groups	Implications for female combatants
Agency	Lack of awareness of women serving roles as combatants	General belief that these women did not fight/are not perpetrators	FC[10] disregarded as combatants, which has direct effect of their inclusion in talks in DDR Not enough soldier nor civilian
Hierarchy	Female component of MILF considered inferior to the male (just auxiliary force, no combat)	Confusion regarding the role women served in the BIWAB	Not eligible for decommissioning programs
Universalism	The existence of multiple and intersecting identities challenges the women to mobilize effectively	Religion viewed as an obstacle for emancipatory goals Homogenous women's groups	Tensions and blind spots resulting from different understandings of feminism
Patriarchy	Women's groups needed permission from the men to talk to the women (consultation)	Essentializing women, "women in need of protection" reinforces patriarchic societal understanding	Female combatants encounter difficulties to be included in talks on DDR, by virtue of being women Disregard of their transgression of gender norms – going back to status quo

Table 1: Roots of exclusion observed in the Bangsamoro peace process

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[10] FC = Female combatants

6.5.1 Victimhood and agency

The tendency in post-conflict processes is to put actors of war in the dichotomous category of victims and perpetrators. With regards to female combatants, this becomes a difficult matter, as they arguably belong in both groups, but also because their role in the latter role is contested and disregarded. When trying to make sense of this ambiguity, asking the different interviewees about their perceptions with regards to the female combatants being preparations or victims of war, the answers were multiple and contradictory. By assessing the meta-data people were of mixed opinions. When asking about women serving as combatants in war some would deny this, saying that women do not speak the language of violence, implying that all women are peaceful, and also serve as victims during the conflict (interview 2), and one respondent mentioned that the BIAF is the considered perpetrators during the war, not the BIWAB. She continues by claiming that "in the consciousness of people the women are not perpetrators, it is only later when you study the history you see the involvement and relevance of female fighters in the BIWAB" (interview 4).

When asking respondents about the common perception of female combatants in the community, many were talking about how the people in Bangsamoro, in general, acknowledged these women as normal people, and they were affiliated with MILF just because of being someone's sister, wife, or mother in the organization (interview 12), which again speaks to the denial or evasion of talking about these women as perpetrators of war. Others were aware of the role these women served in combat and made it explicitly clear that these women too need to be decommissioned on the same terms as their male counterparts in the organization. When reading secondary resources on the topic, it becomes apparent that women were not permitted to serve as combatants in the MILF (Change et al. 2015, p.101), however in an interview with a former combatant of the BIWAB, it became clear the BIWAB women also served as combatants (Bernardo, 2023, 05:07)

What does all this suggest? When people deny the fact that women serve in combat, while others speak of these women as combatants however only serving auxiliary roles – there is an obvious ambiguity whether these women are victims, agents of war, or both. Assessing this in a greater framework, it is reasonable to consider the backgrounds from which women's groups work. Arguably, in the Bangsamoro context, the UNSCR1325 serves as a great deal of inspiration for several civilian women, and a network of 35 civil society organizations created in 2010, with the aim of helping to implement the first NAP-WPS in the Philippines, and the WPS agenda has

become a template for the promotion of women's inclusion in peace processes and several of the women's groups push the WPS agenda (Maligalig, 2016; interview 7).

Given the important role the WPS agenda serves for several of the active women's groups, it is necessary to reflect on the implications of engaging with this international framework on the peacebuilding work of women's groups in contexts such as Bangsamoro. Recently, the WPS agenda has received attention for its insufficient acknowledgment of the role women play during conflict, and how this affects their opportunities of involvement in post-conflict processes.

Henshaw (2017) argues that the language in the WPS agenda, contributes to the dichotomy between victimhood and agency, as the role women can play (and often do) as combatants, is disregarded, and undermined in the document. This has implications in peace processes, Henshaw argues, as many influential actors advocate for the agenda. Vastapuu (2021, p.231) follows similar reasoning and argues that the WPS agenda frames women either as victims or peacemakers, thus neglecting other identities and roles may have in post-conflict environments, and this is particularly true with women (and girl) perpetrators, as they run against both these perceptions.

Supporting a notion of women only playing roles as victims, reinforces the gendered stereotype of women as peaceful, which in essence excludes the women who neither can be perceived as victims, nor perpetrators of war (which BIWAB women arguably did experience, given the confusion about their role during combat, and also the lack of awareness of these women in many of the local communities across Bangsamoro). Due to the language in the WPS agenda, women's groups (unintentionally) can adopt a similar language in their framing of agenda, which excludes the consideration of female combatants as an effect.

As put forward in the literature review, scholars agree that one of the most plausible reasons for the lack of consideration of female combatants in peace talks is indeed the lack of recognition of the role they played during conflict (Shekawat and Pathak, 2015; Mann, 2015: MacKenzie, 2009), which has become apparent in my analysis as well. In effect, Vastapuu's (2021) notion of 'not enough soldier, not enough victim' applies in the Bangsamoro context, arguably due to the important role the WPS agenda has served during the peace process.

6.5.2 Hierarchy – female combatants at the bottom of the ladder

BIWAB women did arguably experience the exclusionary dynamics as the role they played during combat is misperceived and a source of confusion amongst several relevant stakeholders in the

peace process. Even the though the gendered hierarchy portrayal in military organizations definitely serves as an important explanation as to why female combatants find themselves disregarded in DDR, another aspect of the hierarchic nature of society becomes interesting to consider and assess concerning the interrelation between female combatants and women's groups.

Building on the notion of hierarchy, it becomes apparent that hierarchic structures within the society to some extent exist between the women considered in this study – which arguably have implications for the dividends pertaining to combatant women. This is related to the discussion of the existence of intersectionality, and how the homogenization of women affects the way in which subgroups of the society become underrepresented in peace talks, which is likely when influential actors within the peace process are middle-class, urban women. This suggests that not only do the combatant women find themselves at the bottom of the ladder in the hierarchy of the military structure, but also in the imagined hierarchy that exists within society, where factors such as class, education, race, and ethnicity affect the way in which peace negotiations unfold.

Even though civil society groups are meant to represent the lived realities of people at the community level, the study of the Bangsamoro case has shown that the most active women's groups during the peace process were in fact funded and/or led by women who were considered urban and middle-class (Change et al., 2015). Kirby and Shepherd (2016b, p.384) raise an important point that CSOs need to be included in the development of NAPs, as their exclusion of them can cause separation of the WPS agendas' principles from the experience of individuals in local communities, and a lack of such a consideration can lead to the perception of NAPs as elitist or irrelevant to the lives of the people. Similarly, this argument can apply to peace negotiations and implementation phases, as it has been considered important to consult and involve CSO in talks on peace (UN Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, n.d.). However, it should be problematized in this understanding that CSO themselves can be considered elitist when the concerns they are advocated for are limited to only one subgroup of society – those considered victims of war. Added to the fact that these organizations are led by urban women who arguably have limited knowledge of the lived experience of women in combat, a careful consideration of the extent to which NGOs in fact are representative of the population's lived experience and have a grounded understanding of the community becomes increasingly important. This relates to the next aspect worth considering: universalism.

6.5.3 Are female combatants welcomed in the CSOs? Discussing universalism

The points brought up above certainly serve as relevant to the other root of exclusion that possibly manifests in women's groups. When calling into question universalism, the adoption of the WPS agendas' language in a variety of women's groups also affects the way women's groups perform their advocacy work and who benefits from their activities.

In previous studies conducted on the role women's groups played during the Bangsamoro peace process, Chang et al. (2015, p.109) noted that several of the groups active during the process were funded and/or led by women who were middle-class, urban-based professionals. Despite this, some of these women's groups were successful in mobilizing members from different sectors to create unity from diversity. According to them, this was particularly valuable for the peace negotiations, especially in bringing together players that might not otherwise collaborate (Chang et al., 2015, p.110). This is echoed by one of the interviewees who has been involved and engaged with the women's group's advocacy work both in Bangsamoro and Manila. She claimed that overcoming differences by finding commonalities is one of the main strategies women's groups in the Philippines apply. She highlights the willingness of Filipino women to find shared grounds, regardless of the differences in political and religious standing. They will always find a way to come together and advocate for something they all will benefit from, and she reports no strict opposition between groups of women. In civil society they have a standing principle that conflict resolution always brings with it issues that parties will disagree on, however when this is encountered, they agree to disagree and it does not stop them from working together. This is the prevailing thought in civil society – for the greater good, they will do that (interview 4).

From the outset, this seems like a positive attitude and results in the inclusiveness of all members of society, regardless of their position in society (class), religious persuasions, or race. It is however worth noting that in neither of the statements mentioned above, female combatants were not mentioned explicitly. Adding to this, in the opinion of one interviewee, a woman working in of the monitoring entities of the peace agreement (interview 5), women's groups were not conscious of the female combatants and not really associating them with the war, they would tend to focus more on internally displaced women. One respondent working for a Bangsamoro-based CSO elaborated on the extensive interaction they have had with BIWAB women over the last couple of years, and how they now include them in their peacebuilding activities. However, this respondent also addressed, was an opinion that female combatants of BIWAB should be able to

address their concerns directly with their leadership, implying that they should not always rely on the advocacy work of their CSO. "It is up to them, not us" she claimed (interview 10).

Studying post-conflict transition in South Asia, Manchanda (2020, p.76) argues that policies and prescriptive norms derived from the neoliberal WPS template of peacemaking, run the risk of homogenizing and essentializing women, as studies of the diversity and complexity of the gendered experiences of the conflict-peace continuum show. According to her, categories of women need to be re-imagined, should the WPS discourse be of relevance to the multitude of women living in conflict zones (Manchanda, 2020, p.63). As the Bangsamoro case has shown many identities are to be found within the same context, most notably the difference in people's religiosity/degree of Muslim orthodoxy. Many respondents agreed that people in MILF are conservative, and this pertains to the BIWAB women as well. By homogenizing women through applying a language similar to the one in the WPS agenda, CSOs run the risk of unintentionally disregarding the multiple identities existing within the Bangsamoro region, which in turn affects their advocacy work. By disregarding the religious component of the BIWAB, imposing a quite liberal and progressive agenda on women's participation and emancipation can run the risk of creating tension between these groups.

One of the respondents working for a women's group mentioned the importance of contextualizing the WPS agenda and argues that the agenda cannot just be imposed on them, especially when the existence of different degrees of religious orthodoxy amongst women in the region induces the Western understanding of feminism as alienating (interview 4). This understanding is valuable, however, neglected, if judging by the fact that intersectionality is not adequately considered, neither in documents pertaining to Normalization nor within the women's groups that arguably disregard the importance of the role religion played for many of the women in BIWAB.

6.5.4 Patriarchal structures

It has already been elaborated on how patriarchic structures are one of the roots of exclusion that contributed the most to the exclusionary dynamics in the Bangsamoro case. Given this, it is plausible to believe that patriarchy indeed makes its way into women's groups, on a subconscious level.

As argued by Henshaw (2020, p.72), from a feminist perspective an institutionalization of (male) power depends on the existence of something in need of protection, drawing on a Weberian vision of state formation (which post-conflict processes arguably are) that links violence, power, legitimacy, and masculinity – according to Weber family patriarchy is the template of the modern state, where males become the legitimate leaders. Henshaw further argues that patriarchal power dynamics on a subconscious level are present in policy and programs that present themselves as gender neutral, in instances where post-conflict should return back to the status quo ante. Drawing on an androcentric perspective, programs tend to exclude women from decision-making positions and offer them stereotypical, low-skilled, and low-waged jobs, amongst other things. Even though the UNSCR 1325 is meant to counter the trends of gender inequality, scholars argue that the WPS agenda directs more attention and resources to the protection of women and girls than to their elevation and emancipation (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016b). In their article, Kirby and Shepherd (2016b, p.383) argue that the elements of the WPS agenda that relate to the creation of meaningful opportunities for women's political and social empowerment through their participation in peace and security governance are diminished as the tendency has been to narrow the WPS agenda to a sole focus on the prevention of violence and the protection of women from violence.

7 Discussion

In what follows, I provide a discussion of the analysis of empirical data and how the data can be used to understand the specific dynamics in the Bangsamoro peace process. The discussion is threefold. Firstly, and building on the previous chapters, I extend the understanding of Henshaw's conceptual framework, emphasizing how roots of exclusion can manifest within actors relevant to peace processes, reinforcing exclusionary dynamics. Secondly, I assess why the manifestation of the roots of exclusion happen in the case of women's groups, suggesting that their adherence to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda unconsciously affects how they advocate for female combatants. Thirdly, I answer the research question, discuss this study's limitations, and what future research should bring into focus.

7.1 Extending the understanding of roots of exclusion

It has become apparent in the analysis that roots of exclusion as understood by Henshaw (2020) do apply in the Bangsamoro case, and that exclusionary dynamics emerging from notions of agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy explain why female combatants encountered challenges to enter talks on DDR and having their issues considered within the provisions of the

program. Moreover, the analysis has shown that despite the extensive efforts women's groups put in the promotion of gender sensitivity and advocacy for women's rights and empowerment in the peace talks, the voices of female combatants were not adequately incorporated – at least not until the more recent years.

In this part, I use insights drawn from the analysis to gain a better understanding of how exclusionary dynamics play out in post-conflict processes. I argue that Henshaw's conceptualization could be extended by including a more detailed exploration of how the roots of exclusion existing within a given context, can manifest in different actors relevant to the peace process. Arguably, this unintentionally reinforces exclusionary dynamics and affects the ways in which female combatants indirectly are included in peace talks.

Given that Henshaw's framework is already well-developed, this section is not aimed at posing any critique against her concepts and contribution to the notion of exclusionary in the field of feminist security studies. On the contrary, I argue that her concepts correctly capture the different factors at play when the exclusion of these women is observed, and the study has shown that the four concepts of roots of exclusion are relevant in the Bangsamoro peace process. I build on this understanding of exclusionary dynamics, adding to the conceptual framework and the understanding of the roots of exclusion with insights from the Bangsamoro case.

Henshaw (2020, p.66) understands the roots of exclusion as a metaphor to describe exclusionary factors as core problems that affect how gender is portrayed in post-conflict processes, which in effect turn into exclusionary practices. She argues that post-conflict processes "reproduce exclusionary practices and produce incomplete and formulaic interventions resulting in negative outcomes for women" and aims to "create a more complete understanding of the experiences of female combatants" (Henshaw, 2020, p.64). However, she does not explicitly address how the roots of exclusion become apparent in different actors across society and what implications this entails. For the understanding of the roots of exclusion to be more comprehensive, I argue that one has to take into account the different actors relevant to the post-conflict process, that in fact reinforce exclusionary dynamics – amongst these women's groups, but arguably also other relevant stakeholders during peace negotiants and implementation phases, for instance, international actors.

As I have postulated throughout this paper, advocacy work of civil society groups (which has become more prevalent in a number of different post-conflict processes across the world after

the UNSCR1325 and the WPS agenda), has the potential to actually reinforce exclusionary dynamics - both because 1) these groups often based their work on the assumption that women are victims of war, and also through 2) the issue of intersectionality: often, the women's groups are led by middle-class urban women, which ultimately brings up the question whether these are women who can promote and advocate for female combatants concerns.

This suggests a careful reflection surrounding whether the adherence to the international framework of the WPS agenda actually reinforces the dynamics presented above. Even though it is not the thesis' main objective to conduct a thorough examination of how the WPS agenda (indirectly) affect exclusionary dynamics within the peace process, it becomes relevant to assess and discuss how women's groups' adherence to this agenda actually influences how they address the issue of female combatants. This discussion is what I now turn to, using insights gained from the Bangsamoro case.

7.2 The victimization and homogenization of women in peace processes

Although increased attention has been given to female combatants, and they have gained overall acknowledgment and awareness across the Bangsamoro communities, the challenges of this obtained acknowledgment should be reflected upon. Arguably, their circumstances today might have been different if the provisions of the CAB, especially in the Annex on Normalization (2014), were more tailored to the needs of the female combatants (Moner, 2022; OXFAM, 2021, p.28). Given the analysis of the data, it is reasonable to believe that women's groups do not necessarily exclude female combatants on purpose (as it has become apparent all respondents were aware of their existence and also realized the importance of their voices being heard in the peace process).

One of the interviewees claimed that civil society works as the advocate to amplify the voices of all women, they have the tools and the agenda (interview 4), and this is certainly not wrong. The women's groups' work most commonly follows action points put forward in the WPS agenda, and their advocacy is arguably inspired by this extensive framework (interviews 4 and 7; Chang et al., 2015; Magalig, 2016). During one of the meetings among several women's groups in the Philippines, where they were discussing a proposed list of action points for the new NAP on WPS in the Philippines, I observed how they were actively following the statutes put forward in this document. Their engagement with and commitment to the WPS agenda was also apparent during the negotiations, and several networks of CSOs collaborated with the government to

implement the NAP on WPS and brought it to areas where women were affected by conflict (Chang et al., 2015, p.107). The extensive use of the WPS agenda in their advocacy work is in many ways beneficial, as this agenda encourages and demands the participation of women in decision-making processes and brings up highly pressing issues of women as victims of gender-based and sexual violence and the important role women serve in peacebuilding – ensuring women's agency and protection (USIP, n.d.).

I have noted earlier in this thesis, however, that the WPS agenda contains language that has been critiqued by scholars of feminist thought. Bouvier (2016) claims the realities of women are far more complex than have been acknowledged by the WPS agenda. Henshaw (2017) argues that implementation efforts of the WPS agenda have generally focused on a vision of women as victims and that the narrative overlooks the reality that women can be agents of political violence, acting as supporters or combatants in many armed groups. None of the WPS resolutions mention women combatants explicitly as a group to be consulted or included in DDR negotiations or peace negotiations. The WPS agenda has a broad language saying that women's different needs need to be considered and that they need to be protected in cantonment sites especially. Manchanda (2020, p. 76) argues that only if the WPS agendas' global prescriptive norms and priorities are mediated by sensitivity to contextual differences and diversities, it could achieve sustained relevance to the lived realities of women in conflict zones. This sensitivity would certainly improve the tools that women's groups have at hand, resulting in advocacy work that is able to better consider diversity and contextual reality.

The analysis has shown a lack of awareness and confusion with regard to the role female combatants played during the conflict. Many respondents, amongst them representatives of the women's group were surprised when I put forward the line of thought that some women (the female combatants) are neither seen as perpetrators nor victims of war. As a result, they fall through the crack of programs relating both to combatants and victims. Some interviewees admitted that they had not thought about it this way before (interviews 4, 5, and 6). In addition, during the participant observation of the meeting between the different women CSOs that were working on proposing agenda items for the development of the new NAP on WPS, no discussion or mention of female combatants and no language on these women were included in the draft of the proposal[11].

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[11] I do not, however, have access to the final document, and the Philippine NAP WPS is still in the making – and items pertaining female combatants could already be in place.

This suggests that the extensive adherence to the WPS agenda through the reinforcement of notions of victimization and homogenization of women arguably limits the work of women's groups. For Bangsamoro specifically, this might have been an important factor, as it has become apparent that female combatants were not adequately made aware of (at the beginning of the peace process) due to factors related to patriarchal structures, the existence of multiple identities, the hierarchy that female combatants found themselves to be on the bottom of the ladder of, and the neglect/confusion regarding their agency during the conflict. Due to religion being an important component both to the conflict itself but also to the dynamics playing out in the Bangsamoro context, it is interesting to discuss how religion comes into play when the relationship between women's groups and female combatants, and how adherence to the WPS agenda means seen in the context of conservative societies mean for the exclusion and inclusion of female combatants.

As I have problematized in the analysis, the difference in religious belonging becomes an issue in a context where religion plays a crucial role and is an important identity marker for the Bangsamoro people. Homogenization in this context becomes increasingly problematic, as not only is the concern of women, in general, to be included in the peace talks but more so which women and what agendas have become relevant. Keeping in mind that BIWAB women are perceived as being religiously conservative, it is plausible to believe that their needs and experiences do not necessarily align with the needs and experiences of women with different religious beliefs. CSOs in the Philippines are, as argued elsewhere, often led by urban, middle-class women, that are less conservative than MILF members. This differentiation can arguably create tensions and disagreements, affecting the relationship between conservative and liberal women/less conservative Christian or Muslim women.

More specifically, these tensions can relate to how the perception of many liberal women engaging with the WPS agenda perceive religion as an obstacle to gender equality and they often argue that religious actors often block interventions aimed at enhancing the position of women (Scheffer and Kwakkenbos, 2020, p.3). It became apparent during the interviews too, that the CSOs' chief objective in their advocacy work is to ensure gender equality and the rights of women, making sure that a gender perspective was incorporated in the BOL, and these efforts are prioritized. According to one interviewee, many of the concerns during the drafting and campaigning period of the BOL were that the legal framework would be male-centric and too conservative because of their religion (interview 3). Other respondents would also point at the

conservativeness of the MILF people created difficulties in consulting the BIWAB women and also the fact that Muslim women are not supposed to hold leadership positions, which is mainly due to the mindset of both women and men (interview 4, 5, and 9). These aspects arguably become problematic when women's groups are pushing an agenda that arguably is quite contrary to the beliefs of the Muslim people – amongst them the female combatants.

One of the interviewees working for one of the CSOs informed me that their take on this issue was to persuade and convince the BIWAB women of the importance of gendered issues (interview 4). One could argue that the ultimate effect of this imposing was indeed beneficial, as views on women's participation in the peace process became acknowledged by the leadership of MILF and the BIWAB women themselves. Today, the Muslim people of Bangsamoro have become more open-minded, progressive and accepting of women (interview 4 and 9). It is plausible to believe that the religious and conservative component of the MILF created difficulties for women's groups to adequately interact with the BIWAB women in the initial stages of the peace process. However, it is important to note that religion is not inherently bad or good for the position of women and their peace and security needs. Scheffer and Kwakkenbos (2020, p.15) argue that religion has the potential to advance the WPS agenda by localizing it and by enabling adaptation to local circumstances. Taking this into consideration would perhaps helped the women's groups active during the peace process to interact with BIWAB women, ensuring that their voices were adequately represented in peace talks.

7.3 Roots of exclusion and CSOs – answering the research question

Considering the roots of exclusion, the reinforcement of exclusionary dynamics as a result of the notion of universalism, the confusion in distinguishing between agency and victimization, the difficulties in prescribing the exact role women played in the military structure, as well as the ingrained patriarchal structure, are arguably solidified in the Bangsamoro context. As a result, this affects female combatants' opportunities to be involved in talks on Normalization and peace.

When answering *how did Philippine women's groups address the inclusion of female ex-combatants (fighting for the MILF) in talks on DDR in the Bangsamoro Peace Process*, one should first and foremost acknowledge the fact that the CSOs of the Philippines, both based in Manila and Bangsamoro and their extensive advocacy work resulting in a gender-sensitive peace agreement and subsequent BOL, has improved the livelihood of the women in the conflict-affected area of

Bangsamoro. At the same time, in addressing the issues of female combatants, however, it has become apparent that several obstacles were encountered in the experience of the women's groups themselves, mainly relating to the patriarchal root of exclusion and the religious component of the MILF. By exploring exclusionary dynamics in this case, it became evident that several of the roots of exclusion subsequently manifest within the women's groups themselves, affecting the ways they were able to address the issues and concerns of female combatants during peace talks. It has been argued that their point of departure is the WPS agenda which contributes to the observed exclusionary dynamics.

These findings contribute to an overall debate on the problems pertaining to the WPS agenda, a debate which has been increasingly voiced in the field of International Relations. As this study shows, the WPS agenda can, under certain circumstances, indirectly reinforce patriarchal structures - which not only limits the participation of female combatants in peace processes but also undermines the opportunity of women in general to hold decision-making positions, the emancipation of women and the acknowledgment of them being more than just victims of war.

7.4 Limitations and future research

This study has contributed with an illustrative understanding pertaining to the exclusionary dynamics of the peace process in Bangsamoro, establishing that Henshaw's (2020) four roots of exclusion are to be found also in this context. Additionally, the study suggests that exclusionary dynamics are arguably reinforced by the manifestation of the roots within influential actors. In this process, adherences to the WPS agenda can unintentionally contribute to the sidelining of female combatants specifically in talks about DDR. This study lays the groundwork for more elaborate studies of exclusionary dynamics within post-conflict processes and further research could build on the knowledge obtained in the analysis to establish a causal relationship between women's groups' advocacy work and the inclusion of female combatants' voices during peace processes (in terms of indirect inclusion, that is acknowledgment of that their needs should be included in DDR provisions, and in processes related to DDR).

As noted earlier, casual inferences would be possible to draw only if more perspectives were included in the study. As challenges pertaining to interviewing BIWAB women arose during my fieldwork, this study is not able to represent all necessary voices and perspectives relevant to the inclusionary and exclusionary dynamics in the Bangsamoro peace process. The view of female

combatants is however not neglected, on the contrary, I deliberately strived for the consideration of this subgroups of women by adding secondary resources where these women addressed their views on the topic, and through interviewing people considered neutral about the experiences and concerns of BIWAB women during the peace process[12].

Would future research incorporate more distinct voices and representative data, and compare it to other similar/dissimilar cases, inferences beyond the case of Bangsamoro could also be drawn, as this study has no aim of doing so. To produce generalizable insights, future studies can apply a comparative or statistical approach by focusing on a larger sample of peace- and DDR processes. The descriptive nature of this study will certainly benefit further research on the topic of exclusionary dynamics in the peace process and the relationship between civil society organizations and female combatants. This case study has served the purpose of giving a comprehensive in-depth understanding of the roots of exclusion in one particular case, by showing how exactly the roots manifest, and how actors involved in peace processes (women's groups) can be implicated in exclusionary processes. These findings contribute to the overall literature by developing existing theory in the field, which proves beneficial in the ultimate goal of drawing causal inferences on the topic of inclusiveness within peace processes.

Additionally, the analysis gives insights into how the WPS agenda indirectly reinforces exclusionary dynamics. Further research should give this particular aspect consideration and more elaborately attempt to examine how adherence to the WPS agenda limits actors within the peace process to address the concerns of diverse identities existing in the conflict-affected areas – especially pertaining to the different portrayals of feminism that exist throughout the world. Arguably, Western (neoliberal) understanding of feminism[13] (which the WPS agenda arguably builds upon), is not always transferable to contexts beyond the West, and this should be problematized given the important role the WPS agenda plays both during peace processes, but also in the development of national actions plans (NAP) aiming to enforce gender-sensitivity in foreign, defense and security policy.

Lastly, the field of security studies, most specifically feminist security studies would benefit from further research on the overall dynamics in peace processes related to the role of civil

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[12] More elaborately discussed in section 5.2.1
[13] It is, however, worth mentioning that scholars argue that the WPS agenda does not only contain a Western understanding of feminism, as the global South also has had a say in the creation of the agenda, see for example Basu, 2016.

society organizations in DDR talks specifically. As stipulated by the UN in their operational guideline for integrated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration standards (IDDRS), civil society organizations should play a vital role in the assessment of DDR programs. By giving NGOs a greater space in the planning of DDR, the programs will be more tailored to the lived experience on the community level – which is certainly important for DDR to be successful (UN IDDRS, 2014).

Nevertheless, as this study has shown, the involvement of CSOs in formal processes of peace and DDR, should not be at the expense of any subgroup existing within the local communities. It has become apparent that the consideration of female combatants should be given at a much earlier stage should their concerns and issues be incorporated in the official provision of DDR programs – more thorough and gender-specific provisions are needed to be included in the programs, as female and male combatants certainly have different needs in post-conflict settings. This is something local actors, such as women's groups, need to be aware of, however, this requires that they do acknowledge the role these women played in conflict (not only in auxiliary forces but also directly engaged in combat), be aware of the extensive number of women who are directly or indirectly engaged in combat, broaden the understanding of their agency beyond the notion of victimization, and most importantly be considerate of how the patriarchic structures ingrained within the society affect the inclusivity in peace processes. This is not to say that only civil society groups are responsible for these aspects to be visible, other (more) influential actors within peace processes do also play a role in advocating these concerns. However, given the devotion several women's groups give to the empowerment and emancipation of (all) women, this is an issue worth considering.

8 Conclusion

By exploring the exclusionary dynamics at play in the Bangsamoro peace process (1997-2023), this thesis aimed at gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the reasons female combatants find themselves inadequately included, involved, or visible during talks on peace in general, and in DDR in particular, by asking *How did Philippine women's groups address the inclusion of female ex-combatants (fighting for the MILF) in talks on DDR in the Bangsamoro Peace Process*? This has been explored through the conceptual framework of Henshaw (2020), where notions of agency, hierarchy, universalism, and patriarchy all play a fair share in explaining why female combatants are disregarded or deprioritized during processes of peace. Ultimately this results in

inadequate inclusion of these women's needs and interests, as these women are not included in a direct nor an indirect manner. In the case of Bangsamoro, this is particularly concerning given the role that BIWAB, part of the structure of the armed forces of the MILF, played during combat, but not adequately represented during peace talks (UN-INSTRAW, 2010). By focusing on the extensive role that civil society organizations (women's groups) played during the negotiations and implementation phase in Bangsamoro, this thesis has explored the relationships between the civilian women represented by women's groups and the combatant women of the BIWAB, and how dynamics of inclusion and exclusion unfolded.

I approach the study through a qualitative in-depth study of the Bangsamoro peace process, which serves purposefully in research of descriptive manner (Gerring, 2017). Through data collected doing semi-structured interviews in Manila and online, being a participant observer in various settings in the field, and additionally through content analysis of primary and secondary sources from and about the region, enabled me to draw descriptive inferences and gain extensive and encompassing understanding of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion at play in the Bangsamoro peace process.

First, I find that the four roots of exclusion put forward in Henshaw's framework are observed in the Bangsamoro context, causing exclusionary dynamics. Secondly, the roots of exclusion are also manifest in the women's groups active in the peace process, thus limiting their advocacy work in a variety of ways. Still, the patriarchal structures existing in Bangsamoro (and in the Philippines overall) do pose difficulties and limitations for women, in general, to participate in the peace process, and it has been established that talks on Normalization (DDR) in particular have been challenging in term of inclusiveness and gender sensitivity, given the common associations of guns and fighting with masculinity. Third, I found that women's groups, through their adherence to the WPS agenda, encountered an added layer of difficulties in their advocacy work relating to combatant women, as the understanding put forward in the WPS agenda does not explicitly recognize the multiple roles that women can play during the conflict, especially concerning the role they can play as combatants. Moreover, as the religious component becomes important in the context of Bangsamoro, the WPS agenda does not view religion and the following conservativeness amongst the religious population as positive to the emancipation of the women which also adds to the understanding of the WPS agenda reinforcing the notions of homogenization of women.

This study provides a descriptive exploration of the dynamics at play in Bangsamoro, but it also enhances our understanding of the relationships between women's groups and female combatants beyond this particular case. In the universe of similar peace- and DDR processes, the extended understanding of Henshaw's (2020) framework put forward in this thesis can help to establish causes of exclusionary dynamics more accurately, by directing attention to how roots of exclusion also manifest in influential actors within these processes. Future studies explicitly comparative or statistical approaches can benefit from building on the insights of this study, trying to establish more generalizable outcomes.

The findings of this study and its implications speak to scholarly and policy debates. The comprehensive understanding of the dynamics that results from women's group's advocacy work, and how this affects the inclusion of female ex-combatants, is important to consider going forward – arguably the disregard of these women can cause destabilized post-conflict scenarios (Henshaw, 2020) and the importance of gender-sensitive DDR is crucial, as voiced by the UN (2014) in their Operational guide to Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards. Contributing to the literature on DDR, peace processes, civil society peacebuilding, and feminist security studies, I have argued that manifestation of the four roots of exclusion within important actors becomes apparent, but is arguably not limited to, women's groups. My findings may also apply to other (arguably more important and influential) actors within the peace process, for instance, international actors, that similarly to women's groups adhere to and promote the WPS agenda, which can contribute to exclusionary dynamics.

Altogether, the extensive work of women's groups in the Bangsamoro peace process should not be disregarded or undermined, as they certainly have contributed to better the livelihood for women across the region. Their advocacy work continues, and the interaction between them and female ex-combatants in the BIWAB suggests the increased acknowledgment and awareness, will eventually lead to better prospects for these women too. It is in the virtue of the ultimate goal of assuring the emancipation and empowerment of *all* women that adds pressure on the inclusion of female ex-combatants in peace processes - through the tools of women's groups this is certainly achievable, as long as roots of exclusion and their implications are made visible and accounted for.

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Appendix I: Interview guides

Bold questions: Initial questions, also the questions informants received if they asked for seeing questions beforehand.
Italic questions: possible follow-up questions.

Actors relevant to the process

What was/is your role in the peace process? How did/do you work with women's participation in the peace process?
- *Were you engaged from the beginning?*

What are your overall perceptions about the peace negotiations in general, and talks on Normalization in particular?
- *What are the successes and failures of the negotiations?*
- *What makes successful negotiations on your opinion?*

What were women's opportunities to participate in the peace process in the Philippines, as you see it?
- *How are/were women involved?*
- *What are important issues concerning women during the process?*
- *Why should women be included? With what do they contribute?*
- *What has been achieved for women in peace processes, and what have nor (failures)?*

Have you observed that it is difficult for women to participate in the peace process?
- *Have you observed any resistance to the inclusion of women in the peace process?*
- *How do you respond?*
- *Why were women not included?*
- *Any women in particular?*

What was the overall attitude amongst the actors within the process regarding the inclusion of women? How does the MILF perceive female ex-combatants?
- *Were people on both sides of the panel perceptive to include women in their panels?*
- *Were gendered issues on the agenda and discussed?*

What are your thoughts on the participation/involvement of female ex-combatants in negotiations of peace in general, and Normalization in particular?
- *Were they adequately represented by the women in the negotiations?*
- *Did you engage with these women throughout the process?*
- *Did they have the same opportunity to involve themselves in women's groups?*

In your experience, what is the relevance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Philippines?
- *What is your familiarity with the agenda?*
- *Are there some elements of the resolution that are more or less relevant to the Philippines?*
- *What are your thoughts on the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes?*

What views on gender equality dominated prior to the conflict and peace negotiations in the Philippines?
- *In your experience, were you considered equal to your male counterparts in work-life/family-life etc? Have these changed after the conflict?*

How do you view the participation of women in public life in the Philippines?
- *What role do women play in the society?*
- *What are your thoughts on women's situation today?*
- *On which topics/issues do women's groups mobilize?*

Is there anything else you would like to clarify or share with me?
- *Any other issues or questions I should look at?*
- *Anyone else to talk to?*
- *Any important report or document you think I should read?*

Women's groups representatives
What were your organization's priorities/ the priorities of your organization with respect to the peace negotiations in the Philippines?
- *Were you engaged from the beginning?*
- *Easy to gain members in the group?*
- *Which women were the most engaged?*

What do you do in your work? How do you work with women's participation in the peace process (normalization track)?
- *What are the characteristics of your position and responsibilities?*
- *How long has the work went on for?*
- *What are the activities and programs you CSO is engaged in?*
- *What are your goals and achievements?*
- *Are you part of a bigger network?*

In your experience, what is the relevance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Philippines?
- *What is your familiarity with the agenda?*
- *Are there some elements of the resolution that are more or less relevant to the Philippines?*
- *What are your thoughts on the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes?*

How do you view the participation of women in public life in the Philippines?
- *What role do women play in the society?*
- *What are your thoughts on women's situation today?*
- *On which topics/issues do women's groups mobilize?*

What were women's opportunities to participate in the peace process in Philippines, as you see it?
- *How are/were women involved?*
- *What are important issues concerning women during the process?*
- *Why should women be included? With what do they contribute?*
- *What has been achieved for women in peace processes, and what have nor (failures)?*

What views on gender equality dominated prior to the conflict and peace negotiations in the Philippines?
- *In your experience, were you considered equal to your male counterparts in work-life/family-life etc?*
- *Have these changed after the conflict?*

Have you observed that it is difficult for women to participate in the peace process?
- *Have you observed any resistance to the inclusion of women in the peace process?*
- *How do you respond?*
- *Why were women not included?*
- *Any women in particular?*

What are your thoughts on the absence of female ex-combatants in negotiations on normalization in particular, and in the peace process in general?
- *Were they adequately represented by the women in the negotiations?*
- *Did you engage with these women throughout the process?*
- *Did they have the same opportunity to involve themselves in the women's groups?*

Has your organization worked with female ex-combatants in any way?
- *If yes, what did this work concern?*
- *If no, why not?*

Is there anything else you would like to clarify or share with me?
- *Any other issues or questions I should look at?*
- *Anyone else to talk to?*
- *Any important report or document you think I should read?*

Experts on the peace process and Bangsamoro matters

What are your overall perceptions about the peace negotiations in general, and talks on Normalization in particular?
- *What are the successes and failures of the negotiations?*
- *What makes successful negotiations on your opinion*

What were women's opportunities to participate in the peace process in the Philippines, as you see it?
- *How are/were women involved?*
- *What are important issues concerning women during the process?*

- *Why should women be included? With what do they contribute?*
- *What has been achieved for women in peace processes, and what have nor (failures)?*

Have you observed that it is difficult for women to participate in the peace process?
- *Have you observed any resistance to the inclusion of women in the peace process?*
- *How do you respond?*
- *Why were women not included?*
- *Any women in particular?*

What was the overall attitude amongst the actors within the process regarding the inclusion of women? How does the MILF perceive female ex-combatants?
- *Were people on both sides of the panel perceptive to include women in their panels?*
- *Were gendered issues on the agenda and discussed?*

What are your thoughts on the participation/involvement of female ex-combatants in negotiations of peace in general, and Normalization in particular?
- *Were they adequately represented by the women in the negotiations?*
- *Did you engage with these women throughout the process?*
- *Did they have the same opportunity to involve themselves in women's groups?*

In your experience, what is the relevance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the Philippines?
- *What is your familiarity with the agenda?*
- *Are there some elements of the resolution that are more or less relevant to the Philippines?*
- *What are your thoughts on the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes?*

What views on gender equality dominated prior to the conflict and peace negotiations in the Philippines?
- *In your experience, were you considered equal to your male counterparts in work-life/family-life etc? Have these changed after the conflict?*

How do you view the participation of women in public life in the Philippines?
- *What role do women play in the society?*
- *What are your thoughts on women's situation today?*
- *On which topics/issues do women's groups mobilize?*

Is there anything else you would like to clarify or share with me?
- *Any other issues or questions I should look at?*
- *Anyone else to talk to?*
- *Any important report or document you think I should read?*

Appendix II: Overview interviewees

Interviewee	Occupation	Geographic area	Gender
1.Actor relevant to PP[14]	Negotiation panel, GPH	Manila	Female
2.Actor relevant to PP	Lawyer, BTA[15]	Manila/Bangsamoro	Female
3.Expert (2 persons)	Presidential office	Manila	Female
4.WG[16] representative	Peacebuilding activities	Bangsamoro	Female
5.Expert	Monitoring the PP	Manila	Female
6.Expert	Regional prosecutor	Bangsamoro	Female
7.WG representative	Peacebuilding activities	Manila	Female
8.Expert	Professor	Bangsamoro	Female
9.Actor relevant to PP	International diplomat	Manila	Male
10.WG representative	Peacebuilding activities	Bangsamoro	Female
11.Actor relevant to PP	BTA	Bangsamoro	Female
12.Actor relevant to PP	Lawyer	Manila/Bangsamoro	Female

Appendix III: Information letter and consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project
The gendered dimension of the Bangsamoro Peace Process – how were the female combatants fighting for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) included from talks on peace?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to analyze the dynamics at play during negotiations on normalization in Bangsamoro. In this letter, we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
This master's thesis will focus on the inclusion of female ex-combatants in the peace process in the Bangsamoro (government of the Philippines and the MILF) and to what extent they meaningfully influence and participate in these. In particular, the thesis will focus on the role women's groups play in overcoming the barriers of exclusion for former female combatants - and whether their work contributes to a more inclusive peace process.

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[14] PP = Peace process
[15] BTA = Bangsamoro Transition Authority
[16] WG = Women's group

The project's objectives are to contribute to the knowledge of why female ex-combatants are excluded from negotiations on normalization in particular, and peace processes in general. This will be studied by asking: *How did the Philippine women's groups address the inclusion of female ex-combatants (fighting for the MILF) in talks on normalization in the Bangsamoro Peace Process*?

Who is responsible for the research project?
I, Vera Lind, MPhil Candidate at the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Oslo, am conducting the project. The University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project. The project is also conducted in affiliation with the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

What does participation involve for you?
If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve you will meet me for a 30 min-1-hour long interview. The interview will include questions about your involvement and work during the Bangsamoro Peace process, and the questions can be sent out in advance if desired. The interview will be recorded electronically. However, if there are any objections to this, note-taking during the interview is also an alternative.

Participation is voluntary
Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. Absolute anonymity will be guaranteed. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw, and the data will not be used furthermore.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). Only my supervisor, Anne-Kathrin Kreft, and I will have access to the personal data collected.
In order to ensure that no unauthorized persons are able to access the data I will replace your name and contact details with a code during the processing of the data. The list of names, contact details, and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.
You will not be recognizable in the final work, as all statements will be anonymized. Only your occupation during the peace process and your gender will be included in the work, but all other characteristics such as name, age, ethnicity, etc will not be included.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end in June 2023. The personal data, including digital recordings, will be deleted at the end of the project.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data be deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you be corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and

- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?
We will process your personal data based on your consent.
Based on an agreement with the University of Oslo, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
- The University of Oslo via project leader Anne-Kathrin Kreft (a.k.kreft@stv.uio) or the student Vera Lind Hansen (veralha@uio.no)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Roger Markgraf-Bye (personvernombud@uio.no)
- Data Protection Services (personverntjenester@sikt.no, telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

(Researcher/supervisor)

Vera Lind Hansen

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project *Women's Inclusion in the Philippine Negotiations on Decommissioning* and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

☐ to participate in an interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. June 2023

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix IV: Approval letter from SIKT

Sikt

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Referansenummer	**Vurderingstype**	**Dato**
584724	Standard	08.12.2022

Prosjekttittel
Inclusion of Women in the Philippine Negotiations on Decommissioning

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Universitetet i Oslo / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for statsvitenskap

Prosjektansvarlig
Anne-Kathrin Kreft

Student
Vera Lind Hansen

Prosjektperiode
01.09.2022 - 01.06.2023

Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige
Særlige

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)
Uttrykkelig samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 9 nr. 2 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 01.06.2023.

Meldeskjema ☑

Kommentar
OM VURDERINGEN
Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG
Du må lagre, sende og sikre dataene i tråd med retningslinjene til din institusjon. Dette betyr at du må bruke leverandører for spørreskjema, skylagring, videosamtale o.l. som institusjonen din har avtale med. Vi gir generelle råd rundt dette, men det er institusjonens egne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet som gjelder.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET
Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige personopplysninger og særlige kategorier av personopplysninger om etnisitet, religion, politisk oppfatning og filosofisk overbevisning frem til 01.06.2023.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 nr. 11 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse, som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

For alminnelige personopplysninger vil lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a.

Behandlingen av særlige kategorier av personopplysninger er basert på uttrykkelig samtykke fra den registrerte, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 a og art. 9 nr. 2 a.

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PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen:

- om lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet.

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Vi vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18) og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring, videosamtale o.l.) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må prosjektansvarlig følge interne retningslinjer/rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilken type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:

https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Vi vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson hos oss: Simon Gogl
Lykke til med prosjektet!

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Code	Description
Female combatants	Indicating things that are specifically mentioned about female combatants in BIWAB
Opportunities of involvement	Interviewees perceptions about female combatants' involvement
Perceptions about	Interviewees perceptions about the BIWAB
Gender equality	How gender equality is perceived by the informants
In Bangsamoro	Gender equality in Bangsamoro
In the Philippines	Gender equality in the Philippines, generally
Interactions WG and FC[17]	Mention of any interaction WGs' representative had with the BIWAB women
Consultations	Meetings, conversations with the BIWAB women
Frictions	Discussion or debates appearing during the interactions
No interaction	No possibility of/not considering to interacting/talking to BIWAB
International actors	International actors involved in PP: INGOs, facilitators etc
MILF	Mention of the MILF
Normalization track	Mention of the Normalization track
Progress	How the track has evolved during the last couple of years
Women involved	Women included in design, planning and implementation of the track
Religion	How religion become apparent as a component in the exclusionary dynamics
Role played during PP	How actors perceived religiosity, how it affected peace talks and subsequent implementation phase
Role playing in the region	Degree of religious orthodoxy in the region
Roots of exclusion	Henshaws (2020) conceptual framework
Agency	As put forward by Henshaw (2020)
Hierarchy	As put forward by Henshaw (2020)
Universalism	As put forward by Henshaw (2020)
Patriarchy	As put forward by Henshaw (2020)
Women's groups	Civil society organization concerned with the issues of women's rights, empowerment and emancipation
Activity	Their activities during the peace processes: lobbying, consultation etc
Agenda and priorities	Their agendas and priorities during their advocacy work
Women's participation	In the peace process
Direct	Formal participation, around negotiation table
Indirect	Informal participation, being consulted

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[17] FC = Female combatants

Appendix VI: Map of the Philippines and Bangsamoro

Figure 1: Map of the Philippines, Bangsamoro region highlighted. https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Bangsamoro