



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

MSc in International Development Studies

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies

Title: Women's participation in the Patani Peace Process

A case study of the barriers to women's participation in building peace in Patani

Name: Firdaus Roselena Abdulsomad

Email: firdausabsomad@gmail.com

Student ID number: 11434953

Course: Research Project IDS - Field Work and Thesis

First Supervisor: Dr. Simone Datzberger (S.Datzberger@uva.nl)

Local Supervisor: Shintaro Hara

Second Reader: Dr. Esther Miedema (E.A.J.Miedema@uva.nl)

Word Count: 27,473 words

Date and place of submission 24th November 2017, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PATANI PEACE PROCESS

*A case study of the barriers to women's participation in building
peace in Patani*



Firdaus Roselena Abdulsomad

MSC IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

ABSTRACT

A low level of women's participation in peacebuilding is one of the main challenges of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. The exclusion of women especially in peace negotiations poses a serious threat to a gender equal and peaceful world. As peace processes are opportunities for transformative changes and women's advancement in society, it is critical to highlight the obstacles to gender-inclusive participation. Against this backdrop, this thesis explores barriers to women's participation in the Patani Peace Process (Southern Thailand). Previous research failed to acknowledge both women's overall contributions in the Patani Peace Process and their exclusion from the peace dialogue, and it is therefore the research gap this thesis aims to fill. This study answers why women's groups were engaged in the informal peace process but were hindered from participating in the formal peace talks. Drawing on post-colonial and intersectional feminist theory, it is argued that women's participation is highly intertwined with gender-sensitive peacebuilding. Qualitative data was obtained through interviews with women's groups and female activists. Male perspectives were derived through a focus group discussion with male activists. The division of the formal and informal spheres of the peace process illustrated a gendered process where men and women were assigned different roles and positions. Women's engagement was kept within the boundaries of the gender order, which favoured male leadership and excluded women from decision-making. The findings also revealed that some women played a role in hindering themselves from participating due to their understanding of religion and sociocultural values, which sometimes clashed with Western feminist assumptions. The narrow peacebuilding objective and the immature dialogue also contributed to women's exclusion. Moreover, the militarization in Thailand suppressed the potential of civil society and women to be a critical voice in the peace process. This thesis contributes to the WPS field with new empirical findings about women's participation in an underreported conflict. Furthermore, it advances the post-colonial feminist critique of how increased funding from state actors and international donors impedes the independence of women's groups in setting their own political agenda. Finally, the concluding section stresses the importance of gender-sensitive peacebuilding strategies for the realisation of the WPS Agenda.

Keywords: gender-sensitive peacebuilding, Patani, post-colonial feminism, Southern Thailand, Women, Peace and Security, women's participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I want to extend my deepest gratefulness to my first supervisor Dr. Simone Datzberger, for being a patient and steady supporter in every step in this process. Your expertise, guidance and experiences have been extremely valuable for me from the beginning to the end. Your excellent supervision pushed me to always strive to work harder for the betterment of this piece of work.

Mr. Shintaro Hara, my local supervisor, thank you for time and help you invested in making it easier for me to navigate within the civil society in Patani. In addition to that, your critical insights about Patani were crucial for the outcome of this thesis.

I am greatly indebted to all the research participants and wonderful individuals I met in Patani, without your time and dedication, this thesis would not have existed today. Your stories, struggles and triumphs inspired the writing. This thesis is therefore, dedicated to the women and men who work fearlessly and endlessly for a peaceful and inclusive future of Patani. Especially, to the women who against all odds manage to show the society that they are a force not to be underestimated.

I express my warm thanks to Adam John for taking the time to proofread this thesis.

A special thanks to Ata, for your limitless cheering on me in this journey of wisdom and exploration.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to my beloved parents Asiyoh and Kamaruddin who have always encouraged me to excel in the search of knowledge. I am blessed to have both of you and my siblings Hidayah, Akilah and Ali, nurturing me with unconditional love and kindness every day. I am also thankful for my friends who have supported me along the way.

LIST OF MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND VISUALS:

Map 1: Map of Patani (grey area).

Source: <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRIPP20.pdf>

Photo 1: “Demands to dialogue parties”. Photo taken in Pattani, 11-08-2017.

Photo 2: “PAOW Event”. Photo taken in Pattani, 11-08-2017.

Photo 3: “Women in the informal economy. Photo taken in Ban Palat, Pattani, 06-08-2017.

Photo 4: “Military Vehicle and Check-Point”. Photo taken in Ban Palat, 03-08-2017.

Photo 5: “Military control” Photo taken on the highway to Pattani, 09-08-2017.

Visual 1: “Southern Toon Caricature”. Source: Unknown Line and Facebook account.

Visual 2: Conceptual Scheme.

Visual 3: Women’s activities in the informal peace process in Patani.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN: Association of the Southeast Asian Nations

BRN: Barisan Revolusi Nasional

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

EU: The European Union

FGD: Focus group discussion

HRW: Human Rights Watch

IMF: International Monetary Fund

JICA: Japanese International Cooperation Agency

NAP: National Action Plan

NCPO: National Council for Peace and Order

PAOW: Peace Agenda of Women

PM: Prime Minister

TAF: The Asia Foundation

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WHRD: Women Human Rights Defenders

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction 1
 - 1.1 Research background..... 1
 - 1.2 Research question and sub-questions 4
 - 1.3 Thesis outline..... 5
- 2 Research context and background..... 7
 - 2.1 Research location..... 7
 - 2.2 The situation for women in Thailand 9
 - 2.3 Muslim Malay women..... 10
 - 2.4 Security concerns for women and rights activists 12
 - 2.5 The “gender paradox” and militarised masculinities in Thailand 14
- 3 Theoretical Framework 16
 - 3.1 Post-colonial and intersectional feminism..... 16
 - 3.2 Gender-sensitive peacebuilding..... 18
 - 3.3 Gender-inclusive participation 20
 - 3.4 Barriers for women’s participation..... 22
 - 3.5 Conceptual scheme 24
- 4 Methodology 26
 - 4.1 Epistemology and ontology 26
 - 4.2 Data collection methods 27
 - 4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews..... 27
 - 4.2.2 Focus group discussion 28
 - 4.2.3 Field observations 29
 - 4.3 Data analysis..... 29
 - 4.4 Sampling..... 30
 - 4.5 Quality of research..... 30

4.6	Research limitations and ethical considerations	32
5	Women’s participation in the Patani Peace Process.....	33
5.1	Standing on the threshold of the peace dialogue: Women’s exclusion from the peace table	33
5.1.1	Root causes of the conflict from a gender perspective.....	33
5.1.2	Peace talks	34
5.2	Women’s essential role in the informal sphere	39
5.3	The link between privilege and participation	48
5.4	Discussion.....	50
6	Barriers to gender-inclusive participation	51
6.1	The division within the women’s movement	51
6.1.1	The dilemma of funding	51
6.1.2	The politicisation of the women’s movement	52
6.1.3	Inter-generational power struggles	53
6.2	The unexplored terrain of politics	53
6.3	Contradicting perceptions of women’s role in the peace process.....	55
6.4	The gendered dynamics of the peace process.....	56
6.5	The entangled relationship between religion and culture	58
6.6	The climate of fear.....	59
6.7	Male perspectives of barriers to women’s participation.....	62
6.8	Discussion.....	66
7	Implications of limited women’s participation in the peacebuilding process	68
7.1	Drawbacks for women in the case of a “privileged men’s peace”	68
7.2	Lack of legitimacy of the peace talks	70
7.3	Window of opportunity	71
8	Conclusion.....	73
8.1	Answers to research questions.....	73

8.2	Theoretical reflections	74
8.3	Recommendations for policy and practice	78
8.3.1	Recommendations to the women’s movement and civil society	78
8.3.2	Recommendations to development agencies and donors	78
8.3.3	Recommendations to the government of Thailand.....	79
8.4	Suggestions for future research	79
9	Bibliography.....	81
10	Appendices	94
10.1	Appendix 1 – List of interview/focus group respondents	94
10.2	Apendix 2 - List of attended events	96
10.3	Appendix 3 – Interview guide.....	97

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

“For me peace is not only about ending the conflict, it is about everything in our lives. We cannot wait for peace. We need to work for it every day. If some people want to solve this conflict through peace talks it is ok, but they should include us women too. I think the dialogue parties need to understand the interconnections of issues. People do not only have a single problem, they have a lot of issues at the same time. The people who will understand this aspect best are women because they are really close to both the society and the family.”

- Female peace activist, Pattani

The southernmost provinces of Thailand, Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and four districts of Songkhla, (also referred to as Patani) have been the scene of armed rebellions since its incorporation into Siam (current day Thailand) in 1909¹. In 2004, the conflict between the Thai state and Patani Malay separatist groups re-erupted after years of a certain degree of stability. The ongoing conflict has been labelled the bloodiest in Southeast Asia with daily violent incidents, resulting in a death toll of approximately 7,000 people and leaving more than 12,231 wounded. The violent struggle between the warring parties has posed a serious threat to the human security of civilians in the region. The consequences of over 13 years of fighting include; 6,000 children orphaned; 3,000 widowed women; and an unknown number of people affected by emotional or physical trauma (Crisis Group, 2016; Ramsey, 2016). In 2013, for the first time ever official peace talks were initiated by the government of Prime Minister (PM) Yingluck Shinawatra and Malaysia was appointed as the facilitator. The peace dialogue held in Kuala Lumpur was perceived as a welcomed step towards peace, but critics pointed at its many shortcomings such as deep mistrust between the negotiating parties, the failure to include the main separatist group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) which controls the majority of fighters on the ground, the lack of transparency and its exclusive nature (Nindang, 2017). Most striking from the objective of this research, women were completely excluded from the peace talks -

¹ Read more about the conflict in chapter 5.1.

with one minor exception – the women’s network Peace Agenda of Women’s (PAOW) submission of the “safety zone” proposal to the dialogue parties. However, PAOW’s role was limited and did not translate into meaningful participation². Due to the 2014 coup d’état in Bangkok where the military took power and ousted PM Yingluck Shinawatra, the talks were put on hold while the conflict in Patani continued. In September 2016, the military junta in power, The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO)³, stated that the peace talks were to be resumed and referred to this new phase as “the second round” (Crisis Group, 2016). Only high ranking military officials and assumed leaders from the separatist groups were involved in the formal dialogue, leaving out not only women but also civil-society (Wongcha-um, 2015).

Discrimination against women in decision-making domains is not specific to the Thai context. Historically, women globally have been excluded from the highest levels of political power and their voices have been marginalized in issues related to governance. The field of peacebuilding and conflict resolution is not an exception (Bjarnegard, 2009; Chang et al., 2015). However, the 21st century witnessed the adoption of a range of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) regarding women’s role in peace and security, which was the result of decades of organised lobbying and efforts by feminists and women’s organisations. In 2000, UNSCR 1325 was passed as the first resolution related to the theme and marked an important milestone for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda⁴. The advances made at the international level signalled the long-awaited recognition of women as pivotal active agents in the spheres of conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding. 1325 stipulates that women must be equally involved in the promotion of peace and security and in the maintenance of a peaceful society. The resolution also makes explicit mention of the necessity for a gender perspective in peacebuilding (El-Bushra, 2007; Moosa et al., 2013).

The following years after 2000, several UNSCRs were adopted namely 1820, 1888, 1940, 2106 and 2122. This formed a framework for WPS and the subsequent resolutions’ function was to complement and reinforce 1325 by addressing: sexual violence in conflicts as a weapon of war, protection of women and its implementation by providing a framework with indicators for measuring progress (Labonte & Curry, 2016). The Women, Peace and Security framework is

² Read more about PAOW’s role in chapter 5.

³ NCPO is the official name of the military junta who seized power in the coup in 2014, led by the current head of NCPO, General Prayuth Chan O-Cha.

⁴ WPS and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 are used interchangeably in this thesis. The WPS agenda comprises of UNSC Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122. In addition, other relevant international treaties such as mentioned above, are also included.

supported and strengthened by international treaties concerning women's rights such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)⁵, the Beijing Platform for Action, regional protocols and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (Goal 16). Despite the existing collection of legal international instruments, women's participation and inclusion at the decision-making level remain an unfulfilled goal of the WPS Agenda. Between 1992 and 2011, only 4 per cent of the signatories of peace agreements were women and 9 per cent were peace negotiators. These low numbers manifest the serious issue of women's exclusion in peacebuilding. This study does not dismiss the positive steps done in the field of WPS. For instance, 7 per cent of peace agreements between 1990-2010 managed to include clauses about women's rights and gender (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Evidently, no steady progress has been actualized in terms of women's participation in peacebuilding despite the existence of the WPS framework. Moreover, the participation pillar of the WPS agenda remains the most neglected and difficult part to realize at the local level (Coomaraswamy, 2015; Gardner & El-Bushra, 2013; Goetz & Jenkins, 2017; Moosa et al., 2013). For these reasons more attention is required to address the obstacles of the implementation of WPS.

By drawing on the case study of the peacebuilding process of Patani, this thesis is an attempt to further address the gap between the immense expansion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda⁶, all the way to the highest international institutional level, and the failed implementation on the ground in terms of women's participation (Hudson, 2009; O'Rourke, 2014). Against this backdrop, this thesis explores the barriers which shape women's participation in the peace process in Patani. Women and women's groups active in civil society were interviewed to learn more about their realities and perceptions. A focus group discussion

⁵ CEDAW with general recommendations on thematic issues such as General Recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations.

⁶ The emergence of the [Women Peace and Security Agenda](#) involves a combination of an evolving international framework and treaties but also the formation of a working groups such as [NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security](#). See list below for international treaties linked to the WPS agenda.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and General Recommendation no. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations

Beijing Platform for Action
Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
Security Council resolution 1820 (2008)
Security Council resolution 1888 (2009)
Security Council resolution 1889 (2009)
Security Council resolution 1960 (2010)
Security Council resolution 2106 (2013)
Security Council resolution 2122 (2013)

with men in civil society was also conducted to include male perspectives. In this research, women's groups are identified as women who organize themselves for specific causes and meet regularly to work to achieve social change. Some groups were formally registered organizations while others were informal ones. While the formal peace process has been exclusive by only including the Thai government and representatives from the separatist side, women are active peacebuilders mostly involved in the informal peace process through their engagement at the grassroots level. Thus, there is limited participation of women in the formal peace talks which was discovered due to the complete silence of women's presence in the literature regarding the peace talks. As no previous research has addressed women's participation in relation to this geographical area, this research hopes to fill the existing knowledge gap. A non-inclusive formal peace process has several implications for sustainable peacebuilding and development in the Patani region. Successful peace negotiations are normally a space where important decisions regarding the future take place, which is why women's participation is crucial as they have the chance to advance their rights and elevate their status if they manage to get involved. The intention of this study is to present rich empirical findings that may be useful in assessing policies and practices and to contribute to theory building, in hope that women will be as natural on the negotiation table and in peace processes, as men in Patani and beyond.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

Deriving from the discussion about the implementation of 1325 mentioned in the previous section, this research aims to answer the following main question:

Why are women's groups in Patani mainly involved in the informal peace process but hindered to participate in the formal peace talks?

The Sub-questions:

1. In what ways are women's groups participating in the Patani Peace Process?
2. What are the main barriers to women's participation in the formal and informal Patani Peace Process?
3. How does limited women's participation affect the Patani peacebuilding process?

The first sub-question is of a descriptive nature, namely to emphasize the crucial work women do in the informal peace process something that is often overseen in peacebuilding. The informal peace process is distinguished from the formal realm of the Patani Peace process which

constitutes the formal peace dialogue between the Thai government and Mara Patani.⁷ The informal peace process entails the non-official mechanisms and activities with a peace component which is usually exercised by civil society at the community and grassroots level. Women's exclusion cannot be challenged without knowledge about the main barriers. Both field research and the existing literature revealed that the limited role of women in peacebuilding reflected the numerous hindrances to their inclusion, which is why the main focus in this thesis is on the barriers. The last question discusses the implications the limited women's participation has on the Patani peacebuilding process and identifies windows of opportunities for a more inclusive process.

1.3 THESIS OUTLINE

The first chapter serves as an introduction to the topic of women's participation in the Women Peace and Security Agenda, focusing on the motivation for the research in Patani and arguing for the necessity and relevance of addressing the research questions.

Chapter two provides general information about Thailand and specifically Patani, and some background information regarding gender relations in this area.

Chapter three outlines the theoretical framework. I explain the post-colonial and intersectional feminist underpinnings which guided the research. Furthermore, I critically discuss the two main concepts gender-sensitive peacebuilding and gender-inclusive participation. I argue for the need of gender-sensitive peacebuilding and gender-inclusive participation for peace to be sustainable, transformative and just for both women and men. Lastly, the conceptual scheme offers a visualization of the interlinkages between the concepts.

Chapter four elaborates on the methodology and research methods used. Followed by an outline of the limitations and ethical considerations linked to this study.

Chapters five, six and seven present the empirical findings gathered in the field and the data analysis. Women's participation in the Patani Peace Process was mainly concentrated in the informal sphere and women did not have a role in any decision-making processes in the peace dialogue. The initiatives and work carried out by women were mostly in line with the traditional gender roles in the informal sphere. However, some women challenged the general notions of

⁷ For a further discussion about the informal and formal peace process, see chapter 3.5.

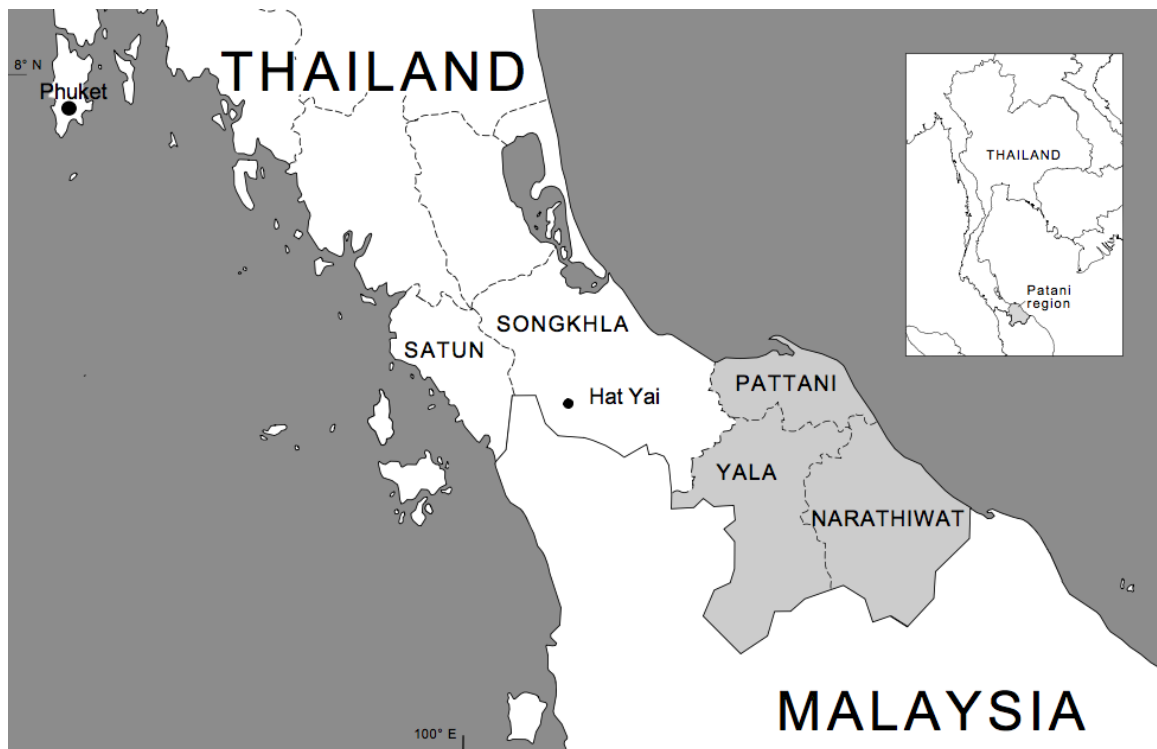
women's position in society by their public involvement in the peacebuilding process and functioned as role models of women's empowerment in Patani. The findings show that the barriers to gender-inclusive participation were multiple and intersected on many levels which affected women differently depending on their social status and environment. Participation was linked to privilege due to the political economy context in Thailand. Male perspectives both confirmed and challenged the findings and highlighted the need for more involvement of men in the work towards gender equality.

This study concludes that women's participation was limited in the peacebuilding process posing serious threats to the overall transformative potential of the process, women's status and the road ahead for a peaceful Patani. The legitimacy of the peace talks also suffered from the exclusion of women and civil society. However, there are some windows of opportunities to realise gender-inclusive participation. The peace dialogue is still in its early stages which allows for some flexibility. However, change would require a political women's movement with a strategy of how to pressure the dialogue parties to consider a more gender-sensitive peacebuilding where women and civil society are represented.

Lastly, the final chapter answers the research questions and conclusions are made tying the empirical findings with relevant literature. Furthermore, future areas of study and recommendations for policy and practice are presented.

2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

2.1 RESEARCH LOCATION



Map 1: Map of Patani (grey area). Source: <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRIIP20.pdf>

The research was conducted in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand, namely, Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. Patani is home to a population of more than 2 million, the majority 80 per cent are ethnic Malays Muslims (Patani Malays) and the rest are mostly Thai Buddhists and Chinese. The Patani Malay community represents just 2 per cent of Thailand's population, where the largest ethnic group is Thai Buddhist. Since 2004 a low-intensity conflict has been active in Patani between the Thai state and Patani Malay rebel groups (Engvall & Andersson, 2014). The violent resistance against the Thai government has been explained as a protest of imposed assimilation and political marginalisation of the Patani Malays by the centralised Thai rule (Burke et al., 2013).

Although Thailand is middle-income country, the Patani region has been neglected by aid agencies and government policies who have been focusing their interventions around the capital (Burke et al., 2013). The three provinces are listed among the poorer parts of Thailand and economic development has been halted by the impact of the conflict. Poverty is widespread, and household income is below the average of rural Thailand. The rural areas are more affected by poverty and a wide economic gap between different groups in Southern Thailand is apparent.

Thai Buddhists and Chinese dominate the economy and public sector, leading to a higher standard of living for this group compared to that of the Patani Malays (Engvall & Andersson, 2014; UNDP, 2017). The area is faced by socio-economic problems such as unemployment, low educational attainment and poor infrastructure (Melvin, 2007).

Limited foreign aid is directly targeted to support the peace process and the Thai state is reluctant to allow foreign involvement out of fear of internationalising the conflict. Most of the aid is allocated at the national level and reaches Patani through Bangkok-based organizations. The aid agencies which assist peacebuilding initiatives need to adopt flexibility in their programming and procedures and be politically conscious to maintain good relations with the Thai government. Therefore, there are many difficulties in advocating for certain types of peacebuilding aims without the consent of the government and many aid agencies must compromise their own policies. Nevertheless, donors see the need for state institutions to transform and encourage policies that will lay the foundation for peace in Patani, especially in addressing the grievances of the people - an approach which is refused by the government. The main international donor agencies include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union (EU), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and The Asia Foundation (TAF) (Burke et al., 2013).

A recent Freedom House report ranked Thailand as "not free". The status of human rights and freedoms is deteriorating and the new military proposed constitution will increase military influence in politics (Freedom House, 2017). According to Amnesty International the military regime in Thailand has increasingly restricted human rights on many levels and the use of military courts and laws to punish dissent among politicians, activists and human rights defenders has resulted in a climate of fear. Human Rights Watch (HRW) even describes the situation in Thailand as a human rights crisis where the ruling military junta is exercising immense power with impunity (Amnesty International, 2017; Human Rights Watch, 2017).

2.2 THE SITUATION FOR WOMEN IN THAILAND

Women in Thailand have been discriminated for centuries which is evident in the sociocultural and economic areas of everyday life but also extends to the political sphere. Due to the dominance of human rights defenders and Muslim Patani women in the sample, special attention will be given to the circumstances of these groups. The situation of Patani Malay Muslim women is distinct from other groups such as Thai Buddhists and Thai Chinese, in terms of religion, culture, ethnicity, language and shared history. The Patani Malays belong to a minority group within Thailand which has been discriminated against by the central government for decades, in addition to that, they are also a part of the same communities and ethnic group as the separatists (seen as an enemy of the state in Thailand). For these reasons, the challenges these women face are unlike other groups’.

Thailand’s rapid economic transformation from a low-income to an upper-income country has been hailed as a success due to massive poverty reduction and improved living standards. Still, 7.1 million are poor and an additional 6.7 million risk falling back into poverty⁸ in a country where unequal distribution of resources has contributed to major income gaps between rural and urban areas (World Bank, 2017⁹). Nationally the provinces of Pattani and Narathiwat rank the lowest in both the education and income indices (UNDP, 2016; UN Women, 2017). The 2015 Gender Inequality Index, a measurement of gender-based inequalities, lists Thailand as number 79 out of 159 countries (UNDP, 2016). Positive development evident in women’s higher education enrolment, literacy rates, participation in the labour market and in income, has elevated women’s socioeconomic status. Iwanaga (2008) concludes that the gap between men and women is not significantly wide in the areas of life expectancy, education and standard of living. For example, the goal of gender parity in secondary education has almost been reached, with 45.8 per cent of men completing education compared to the figure for women which is 40.5 per cent. Having said that, it is important to mention the underrepresentation of women in policy making and decision-making bodies. Men outnumber women in all the political institutions. The members of the ruling junta’s highest level are all men and they are responsible for the appointment of individuals to the executive and legislative bodies. Notably, only 4 per cent of seats in the National Legislative Assembly and 9 per cent in the cabinet are held by women, which shows the exclusion and lack of women’s participation in politics (Iwanaga,

⁸ As of 2014, 7.1 million people were still estimated to be poor, 80% living in rural areas, and over 6.7 million were in the risk group of falling back into poverty (World Bank 2017).

⁹ World Bank Country Page: Thailand. Accessible: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/overview> (2017-08-10)

2008; FIDH et al., 2017). Obstacles to achieve gender equality in Thailand include traditional attitudes, gender stereotypes, gender based violence, discrimination, several types of exploitation and the neglect of ethnic and rural women (UNDP; UN Women, 2017).

Conflicts tend to hinder human development with serious implications on women's lives (see for instance: Moosa et al., 2013; O'Reilly, 2015; Puechguirbal, 2012; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). The conflict in Patani has resulted in thousands of casualties and many women have been widowed, risk poverty and other related vulnerabilities. The responsibility to provide for their families is putting women with few skills and means in a demanding situation. For instance, 50,000 children in Patani are not enrolled in the formal education system which puts a lot pressure on their parents or caretakers to prevent these children from getting involved in drugs and criminal activities (UNDP, 2017).

2.3 MUSLIM MALAY WOMEN

Women from the Malay Muslim communities are marginalized due to their status as women, as well as being part of an ethnic and religious minority and having a lower socioeconomic status compared to the middle-class women from urban Thailand. This group of women are among the most marginalised women in Thailand hence why the shadow report "SITUATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MALAY MUSLIM WOMEN IN SOUTHERN THAILAND" was presented to the CEDAW committee in 2017. Due to the limited literature on this topic in English, findings from my field research will also be added.

The main concerns of the report were the underlying structural barriers for Malay Muslim women's rights to be realised. The report examines how women's rights are affected by living in a conflict zone and also mentioned gender based violence and maternal health. By interviewing women and NGOs working directly and closely with them, this report acts as a testimony of the social realities of many Malay Muslim women.

The report highlights the conflict as one of the game changers in how women experience their daily lives. For instance, violence has caused death, injuries, trauma, a touchable increase in widows and orphans, trouble generating income and violations of human rights. Women and children are the most vulnerable victims in this context, due to weak safety nets and lack of access to justice. Women are also more prone to discrimination and gender based violence which tend to increase in conflict settings. These observations are not unique to the case of

Patani but also supported by other studies regarding the impact of armed conflict on women (see for instance: Chughtai, 2015; Haeri & Puechguirbal, 2010; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). In addition to abuses, the findings in the report show that there is an inadequacy of legal protection and safety for women affected by gender-based violence.

In regard to WPS, the study specifically identifies the lack of women in state institutions such as the Southern Border Provincial Peace Building Council and the Southern Border Provincial Administration and Development Council which are authorized to provide compensation and rehabilitation for conflict victims. Women's political participation and decision making is hindered by factors linked to the understanding of religion, culture, tradition and gender roles. However, the tension between women's new roles such as being the leader in the family and the old paradigm of traditional gender roles, challenges traditional notions of gender (Prachatai, 2014; Win, 2011). Despite the fact that women have gained more leadership roles and received higher education, they are still not being encouraged to be decision makers both at local and national levels. The report's conclusions were reaffirmed by interviewees who mentioned the difficulties of Muslim Malay women being public figures due to traditional and conservative views of gender roles. They also mentioned the difficulty of discussing gender issues because it coincided with many sensitive topics such as culture, religion and authority.¹⁰

This report is emphasised because it is the first study which addresses the issues of gender relations and women's status in Patani. As it was published in 2017, in the midst of the peace process the report is an attempt to amplify women's voices and their experiences. This report serves the important function of outlining critical issues which could be the starting point of much needed discussions in Patani. The lack of previous research on this topic signals the little attention this group of women have received. Furthermore, the report recommends the Thai government to implement the 1325 in Patani by facilitating women's participation and decision making in the peace dialogue. The report emphasizes the necessity of women to be included in the peace process and at the table of negotiations. (PATANI Working Group for Monitoring of International Mechanisms, 2017).

¹⁰ Interviews with Respondent 1, 07-07-2017, Pattani (10-07-2017) Pattani, Skype-interview with Respondent 9 (23-07-2017), Respondent 18 (10-08-2017) Pattani.

2.4 SECURITY CONCERNS FOR WOMEN AND RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Violence by security forces and insurgents in southern Thailand is another factor that affects women in Patani. Women in the South have testified about the low trust in state officials, law-enforcement personnel and the justice system due to widespread impunity linked to human rights violations committed in the area. HRW reports that no security personnel have been prosecuted for killings, torture and other human rights violations against ethnic Malay Muslims (HRW, 2016¹¹). Instead there is a common practice of silencing by offering financial compensation. Women seeking justice for state abuses are often rejected and threatened. In cases of rape and sexual harassment where state officials were involved, women and their families are often silenced, and few cases have been properly investigated (International Commission of Jurists & Justice for Peace Foundation, 2012). Groups on the non-government side have also been involved in brutal killings of civilians including women (HRW, 2016).

The military junta has imposed its rule with impunity and prohibited political activities and freedoms of assembly and expression. Public debate and events on human rights and democracy are strictly censored (HRW, 2007). Violence and threats against human rights organisations and activists are not rare. Martial law continues to be instituted in the South, giving the military extensive power while weakening the rule of law¹² (Frontline Defenders; Chalermripinyorat, 2015).

Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD), a group whose situation has deteriorated since the military junta took power in 2014. New and existing laws and decrees have been utilized to criminalize the work and activism of WHRDs by bringing charges against them to manifest the overreaching power of the authorities. Other methods of intimidation include harassment both online and verbally using gender degrading wording, attacks and killings, which also target the WHRDs families. The Thai government has been unsuccessful in respecting and protecting the rights of WHRDs and when they have been violated there is limited chance for the women to gain access to justice or remedies. Cases of abuses against WHRDs are seldom brought to court

¹¹ HRW (2016) Thailand: Insurgents Target Civilians. Accessible via: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/25/thailand-insurgents-target-civilians-south> (2017-10-30)

¹² Read more about martial law in Patani: International Commission of Jurists (2007) IMPLEMENTATION OF THAILAND'S EMERGENCY DECREE. Access: <https://www.icj.org/thailand-implementation-of-thailand%C2%B4s-emergency-decree/> (2017-11-24); NY Times (2005) Decree on militants 'no license to kill'. Access: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/26/world/asia/decree-on-militants-no-license-to-kill.html> (2017-11-24).

and the officials in charge often neglect to investigate these crimes properly (The Observatory, Protection International & APWLD, 2017).



Visual 1: Southern Toon Caricature. The picture depicts two hands, one represents the people and the other one, the government. The shaking hands illustrate the good relations between these two groups. The fire equals the conflict which is fuelled by “BRNGO” (a combination of Barisan Revolusi Nasional, BRN, the main separatist group in Patani seen as a state enemy, and NGO). The BRNGO are NGOs accused of being in liaison with the BRN and plotting against the state. The portrayed human rights defenders have criticised the government for hard-handed policies. Source: Unknown Line and Facebook account.

The caricature above of two prominent female human rights defenders and a male activist, tells the story of how these individuals are the tools of the separatist movement (BRN). By labelling the individuals as threats to the nation and publishing it online, the person or group behind the caricatures tried to discredit these individuals.

2.5 THE “GENDER PARADOX” AND MILITARISED MASCULINITIES IN THAILAND

The gender¹³ context in Thailand is often labelled a “gender paradox” due to the discrepancy between the wide gender role spectrum and low-level of gender equality. Thai society can be described as fairly tolerant to different notions of gender, but this is not reflected in women’s status in society. Women have made progress in the socioeconomic sphere but not in political spaces. The gender paradox highlights that although women are doing better socioeconomically it does not automatically lead to women’s empowerment. The presence of women in politics is low at all levels, especially at the local and provincial instances. Historically, women’s movements in Thailand have not functioned as a political actor. Some of the groups were more concerned with upholding traditional and cultural values for the sake of the nation. On the other hand, student movements tended to be a more critical element of the women’s movement. Bjarnegard (2009) argues that women’s groups in Thailand have been hindered to exert influence due to the political instability and democracy coupled with the continuous change of governments. Furthermore, the poor representation of women in politics is the result of gendered institutional and political systems in Thailand which exclude women while facilitating men’s entrance to the political field (Bjarnegard, 2009).

Another main factor affecting women’s participation in the political sphere in Thailand is explained by “a culture of militarized masculinity persists which alongside with, and even within, democratic institutions.” (Bjarnegard & Melander 2011:139). Military masculinities and low-level democratic institutions also lead to the spread of political violence in Thailand including in the South. Different Thai governments have practiced a continuous hard-handed policy with a strong influence of militarized masculinity to suppress the conflict. Bjarnegard and Melander (2011) argue that it is necessary to highlight how masculinist norms impact the overall way of doing politics and the connection between democracy and gender equality. An

¹³ As discussed more thoroughly in chapter 3, this thesis understands gender as being constructed through social interaction, embodying existing power relations. In other words, gender is the sociocultural construction of female and male identities. Gender systematizes the social spheres into exclusive categories which is often a binary relationship of sub/super ordination. Confortini (2006) also stresses that simplified and essentialist gender roles do not exist and instead gender should be viewed as a spectrum with a wide range of femininities and masculinities. This vision is more empowering for people and can bring change by dismantling the unjust gender order to achieve a more equal social reality (Confortini, 2006).

important factor to remember is the key role the military plays in Thai politics. As of 2009, 18 military coups have taken place in Thailand (Iwanaga, 2008; Bjarnegard, 2009).

According to feminist constructivist perspectives (Bjarnegard, 2009; Bjarnegrd & Melander, 2011; Sjoberg & Vua, 2010), gender roles such as militarised masculinities are constructed and reproduced in social interactions between people and institutions. A constructed masculinity is reinforced by the creation of an opposite femininity, most commonly as the gentle and nursing counterpart to men who are more prone to function as fighters. Military masculinities are closely connected to unequal power relations, the glorification of violence, dominance of men and subordination of women. It does not only manifest itself by chauvinistic and repressive acts towards women but also against people adhering to other sexualities than the heterosexual norm, ethnic and religious minorities and political opponents. The notion of militaristic masculinities affects both men and women. Firstly, men and boys must prove themselves to fit into role otherwise they will be deemed feminine. Secondly, girls and women shoulder the role of audience and support to men who uphold a character of militarised masculinity. For these reasons, the promotion of a gender spectrum whereby masculinities and femininities are not understood as dichotomies, can help transform unequal gender orders. As Confortini (2006) argues “The dismantling of binary categories also lets us envision avenues for change and empowerment.”. Therefore, in contexts with militarism such as in Thailand, it is important promote femininities and masculinities which contest gender systems with hegemonic militaristic masculinities (Wright, 2014).

There is a growing body of research dedicated to informing that societies with a strong culture of militarism and military masculinities are more likely to accept violence as a tool to exercise dominance (see for instance: Bjarnegrd & Melander, 2011; Kronsell & Svedberg, 2011;). The militaristic element of politics and institutions serve as a key factor to women’s limited political participation (Iwanaga, 2008). In conclusion, the impact of militarised masculinities is important in this thesis because Patani has been a heavy militarised area since 2004, with the deployment of security personnel, the use of martial law and an independence movement which has exerted violent tactics. Furthermore, Thailand has been ruled by a military junta for almost four years which manifested itself in the recent round of the peace dialogue where the government delegation was predominantly composed of male military officials. The male dominance in the talks strongly indicates a problematic gender hierarchy, whereas individuals adhering to militarised masculinities are valued while people deemed to have feminine traits such as women and civilians are excluded.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is embedded in the women, peace and security debate (see for instance: Bell & O'Rourke, 2010; Chughtai, 2015; Hernes, 2014; International Peace Institute, 2013 & 2015; NGO Working Group on WPS, 2017; UN Women, 2012¹⁴; The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2012;) specifically concentrating on the participation pillar of the agenda. In this endeavour, focus is given to the concepts 'gender-sensitive peacebuilding' and 'gender-inclusive participation' from the perspective of post-colonial and intersectional feminism. This includes a review of previous research on the main factors which influence women's participation in peace processes.

3.1 POST-COLONIAL AND INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM

The theoretical underpinnings of this research draw from an intersectional and postcolonial feminist standpoint (Chamber, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991; Mohanty, 1988, 2003 & 2013; Tickner, 2011; Wibben, 2011). Feminism is defined as a combination of social theories, political movements and philosophies critical of gendered relations and the patriarchal¹⁵ hegemony. Feminism is a highly political project with emancipation and social justice as top priorities (Wibben, 2011). Gender is not to be translated to "women" or "feminism" but rather, a social construct of roles and relationships, characteristics, behaviours and power relations which is ascribed to men and women on differential grounds (Chamber, 2008; Strachan & Haider, 2015).

Post-colonial feminism (Mohanty, 2013; Tickner, 2011; Wibben, 2011) is the critique of feminism as a perceived concept influenced by dominantly privileged Western women. The post-colonial perspective focuses on the decolonisation of feminism by diversifying knowledge and deconstructing and uncovering the Western, Eurocentric and capitalist biases which have shaped mainstream feminism (Mohanty, 2003; Tickner, 2011). The theory dismisses assumptions of universality in terms of identity as well as women's needs and aspirations. These anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-colonial voices within the feminist movement rejected simplistic gender constructions and sided with queer, LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Intersexed) and diversity groups (Peet & Hartwick, 2015: 271).

¹⁴ UN Women's 2012 report Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence

¹⁵ Patriarchy is defined as "the ideology by which men constitute the dominant social group and masculinity is the dominant social practice" (Chambers, 2013)

The post-colonial feminist theory is adopted in this thesis because of its significance of being a critical, conscious and diverse movement inspired by the struggles for women's empowerment, solidarity and social justice. But also, to not risk reproducing the discourse of non-Western women as helpless subjects in need of saving from the "civilized" West (Björkdahl & Mannergren Selimovic, 2016; Zakaria, 2017). Mohanty (2003) highlights that privileged scholars from the South (similarly to some Western feminists) tend to apply their cultures and perspectives as the norm resulting in the othering of rural and working-class women. This is an aspect important for me as a Western born and educated woman with Patani Malay roots, to acknowledge as well. It means being conscious and critical of my position throughout the project and recognise the implications it has on the research.

Building on post-colonial feminist theory, intersectionality argues that women are not only disadvantaged because of their sex, gender or race. Crenshaw (1991) emphasizes social categories such as class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, language and disability, as equally valid factors which interplay and cause vulnerabilities for marginalised women. This is the reason why a feminist perspective must consider other dimensions of a person's identity to shape policies and programmes that responds to the needs of all women (Crenshaw, 1991). The intersectionality theory is in close alliance with post-colonial feminism both in theory and practice whereas special interest is put on safeguarding justice and equality of marginalized populations.

The synergy between the theories of post-colonial feminism and intersectionality helps to generate more insights about oppression as multifaceted and the intersecting relationships between different identity markers. This is useful in the analysis of the complex social realities of women and puts emphasis on the differences within the sample group. The theory of intersectionality will generate a rich discussion of the different social factors contributing to the limited women's participation in Patani without working in favour of minimizing the local context or population. The majority of research participants will be women from the Patani Malay community, a group who are marginalised and discriminated on different levels. Importantly, women in Patani are not viewed as a homogenous group and other groups such as the Buddhists and Chinese are also considered in the research.

Another key point to remember is that gender relations involves both masculinities and femininities which is why any serious discussion about transforming a gendered status quo must involve men too. Adopting a gender perspective involves a critical assessment of the roles,

values and behaviours of boys and men. Wright (2014) highlights the importance of including the discussion and promotion of masculinities which promote gender equality and non-violence in conflict prevention and resolution. It is only through the collective efforts and support of both men and women that any transformation can become reality. This section has been heavily influenced by the writings of authors linked to the West due to the limited material available from Thai feminists in English.

3.2 GENDER-SENSITIVE PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding as a concept is relevant in this study because it constitutes the wider context of the thesis. Also, depending on how peacebuilding is conceptualized, women's participation and the overall aims of the peace process differ. Berghof (2012) offers a definition of peacebuilding as the overarching process and activities which promote peace and counter violence. Peacemaking and peacekeeping are part of peacebuilding but have distinct functions. Peacemaking is widely understood as the "diplomatic efforts to end violence between conflict parties and to achieve a peace agreement" (Berghof, 2012: 60) which includes strategies such as negotiation, dialogue, mediation, reconciliation, judicial procedures and economic sanctions. Despite Berghof's straightforward definitions, practice is never that simple. Denskus (2007) critically examines peacebuilding and argues that the concept is too broad and has become depoliticised when the focus is on effectiveness. The root causes are seldom handled correctly and instead most solutions mean increased development interventions. Examples of peacebuilding initiatives proved to be a way of instituting liberal governance in "foreign countries" and fail to have the transformative effect (Denskus, 2007). Peacebuilding is a contested term with both colonial and imperial connotations.

Porter (2003) stresses that peacebuilding should be understood as both informal and formal peace processes so that women's contributions in the informal realm will be valued and not forgotten. However, this is not to be understood as the normalisation of women's role to be exclusively in the informal sphere, but rather as the recognition of the significance informal peace processes play for peace. The thesis will further discuss this dichotomy in the analysis. Furthermore, Hudson (2009) argues that feminist theories have a lot to offer to peacebuilding. A feminist perspective is useful in reconceptualising peacebuilding to embrace inclusivity which is key for the effective and dynamic planning, implementation and institutionalization of peace agreements. Crucial aspects such as gender equality, women's rights and power relations

are considered from a gender perspective which allows for a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding. Hudson (2009) contends a universalist approach of feminism to be used in analysis and suggests a culturally contextual gender analysis instead. There are no homogenous gender groups with the same needs and qualities (Haeri & Puechguirbal, 2010; Hudson, 2009). The emphasis put on context and local solutions also harmonizes well with post-colonial feminist thought as it rejects the ‘one-size fits all’ approach.

As mentioned above, the conceptualisation of peacebuilding has direct implications on peacemaking, women’s participation and future development. The thesis refers to gender-sensitivity as the understanding of how gendered processes impact social norms and power relations in all settings. Thus, gender-sensitive conflict analysis recognizes the different ways women and men are impacted by conflicts and the gendered division of their roles. Consequently, gender-sensitivity advocates for a conscious peacebuilding strategy to avoid harmful outcomes and consequences for men and women and the reproduction of an unequal gender order (Gardner & El-Bushra, 2013). This view is the opposite of a gender-blind approach which does not target women and men differently in their programmes (Strachan & Haider, 2015). The thesis strongly argues against the gender-blind approach to peacebuilding as it risks perpetuating male dominance and unequal gender relations (Puechguirbal, 2012).

The transformative potential of peacebuilding presents an opening to address the root causes of the conflict and reconstruct a society based on the principles of social justice. The traditional notion of peace as the absence of war has defined the rationale of many peacebuilding initiatives. Galtung’s eminent theory of positive and negative peace (absence of direct violence) illustrates the broad spectrum of peace. The objective of peacebuilding is, according to Galtung’s (2015) notion of positive peace, the absence of structural violence and cultural violence where there is no room for social inequalities (Galtung, 2015). It is worth noting that the peace concept has historically neglected women’s needs and experiences of war which is why it is crucial to also include a feminist lens in peacebuilding. Confortini (2006) argues that by neglecting the gendered processes in the discussion about the perpetuation of violence, Galtung risks missing an essential piece in the puzzle which leads to flawed analysis and proposed solutions. The position and meaning of violence within a context is highly linked to gendered power relations which is why this aspect cannot be forgotten (Confortini, 2006). Sjoberg (2013) argues that feminist perspectives on peace must uncover invisible violence (structural) and critically assess concepts which leads to new insights and policy formulations in peacebuilding and development. Gender-sensitive peacebuilding is more than just the end of

violence. It is the radical reconstruction of societal structures and mechanisms which discriminate and oppress women and vulnerable groups.

Gender-sensitive peacebuilding is discussed in this thesis with an emphasis on peacemaking and women's general participation in the Patani Peace Process. The focus will be on the formal peace talks between the Thai government and the Patani separatist groups (peacemaking) and the informal peace process which is linked to activities at the community level. A more elaborate discussion of the formal and informal peace processes can be found in chapter 3.5 and the empirical chapters.

3.3 GENDER-INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Participation is one of the pillars of the WPS agenda along with protection, prevention and relief and recovery (Kirby & Shepard, 2016; Lukatela, 2016). Protection has been the most advanced pillar while participation has lagged behind. This section presents the different ways women participate in peace processes and argues for the importance of gender-inclusive participation for the realization of peace and WPS.

Literature on women's participation in peacebuilding can be parted into two sections, whereby the first period prior to the adoption of Resolution 1325 focused on women's participation in mainly the formal peace process, meaning official negotiations. A clear distinction between informal peace processes were made in the literature although these often overlap in practice. After 2000, studies were concerned with the impact of Resolution 1325 and the importance of women in peacebuilding. The recent calls for increased women's participation must be seen from the perspective of a global feminist project that is "directly targeting and engaging institutions of power" (O'Rourke, 2014: 131). O'Reilly's et al., (2015) study shows that peace is more likely to be sustained and maintained if women are included, especially if they can influence decision making. Women's participation is not only of importance in the Agenda for Women, Peace and Security. O'Rourke (2014) also claims that it is important from a social justice perspective. Women at the negotiation table in peacebuilding have a symbolic meaning because it sets the tone for the reconstruction of a new society (O'Rourke 2014; Porter 2003).

Weight is especially put on formal negotiations due to its function as a strategic entry point for the practical application of 1325. The significance of women's participation at the peace table is due to it being the place where decisions regarding future governance and rebuilding are

taken, which women must be a noticeable part of. Negotiating parties have a key role in shaping and deciding the framework and agenda of the peace talks.

There are different ways for women to participate in formal peace processes and UN Women (2012) emphasize the distinction between women with an official role, representing a party or themselves and women who are participating as the voice of women in civil society. The various roles include; witnesses (criticised for being a superficial role with little actual influence in the process and its outcome); women's civil society representatives with an observer role (most desired role, but not mandated to speak or consult the parties); as gender advisors or experts working closely with the mediators, facilitators, negotiators and delegates (deemed to be one of the most effective tactics for guaranteeing a gender-sensitive peace accord); and an affiliate of a working group or technical committee dedicated to gender specific issues (this role can be very impactful if the result of the work can be reported and adopted by the delegations). Another common strategy for women who have been excluded from formal peace negotiations is to hold parallel peace forums or mobilize movements on their own (UN Women, 2012).

The concept of women's participation must have a clearer conceptual basis to not risk being a vague term (El-Bushra, 2007; O'Rourke, 2014). O'Rourke identifies five arguments for why women's participation in peace and security related decision-making is important. Namely, participation as role models; participation as representation; participation as deliberation; participation as inclusion; and participation as experts (O'Rourke, 2014: 137-144). More attention has been paid to women's organisations working for peace in the last decade. Porter (2003) highlights the necessity of the activities carried out in informal peacebuilding which includes the strengthening and restoring of relationships, healing of trauma and reconciliation. El-Bushra (2007) developed a "Framework for Documentation" which includes five types of activities generally done by women's peace groups in conflict areas:

1. Provision of basic needs
2. Peacebuilding and mediation
3. Advocacy
4. Actively encouraging women's inclusion in decision-making and leadership
5. Community rebuilding and support

Gender-inclusive participation is used in this thesis to argue for a fair and equal peace process in Patani. Participation in both the informal and formal peace process is necessary for peace to be sustainable and for women to have a voice in the development of their future. This thesis

views participation in the maximal sense and not in a minimalistic manner. Participation alone, by only being able to join an event or peace talks is not enough. Participation must translate into both impact and influence and should be meaningful for all. The majority of the women who were interviewed were involved in the informal part of the peace process which is why the empirical chapters will mainly deal with that. However, the formal peace talks will also be assessed. El-Bushra's framework (2007) was used as a template for checking the activities on the ground, but more specific activities have been included based on the research findings.

3.4 BARRIERS FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Women involved in peacebuilding are not always acknowledged despite their enormous contributions (El-Bushra, 2007; Moosa et al., 2013). Several studies (Bell and O'Rourke, 2010; Caprioli 2005; O'Reilly et al. 2015) confirm the exclusion of women at high-level peacebuilding. Peace processes that are non-inclusive and held behind closed doors should be outdated since this method has not proved any longstanding success in solving conflicts. Traditionally, legitimate participants have been governments, conflict-parties and armed groups. A shift in perception regarding legitimate participants is needed for women to have more influence in peace processes (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Correspondingly, research (Domingo et al., 2013; Inclusive Security, 2007; Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011;) point at the importance of women's involvement for sustainable peace. In Patani, women are almost absent in the literature concerning the peace process and are mostly mentioned as victims of the conflict. This does not mean that they are not active peacebuilders. Civil society is a realm of women's groups, student associations, widow networks, journalists and human rights activists and play a vital role in pushing for peace and justice. Due to their exclusion in the formal peace talks, women's groups are for this reason, more active in the informal realms of the peace process.¹⁶

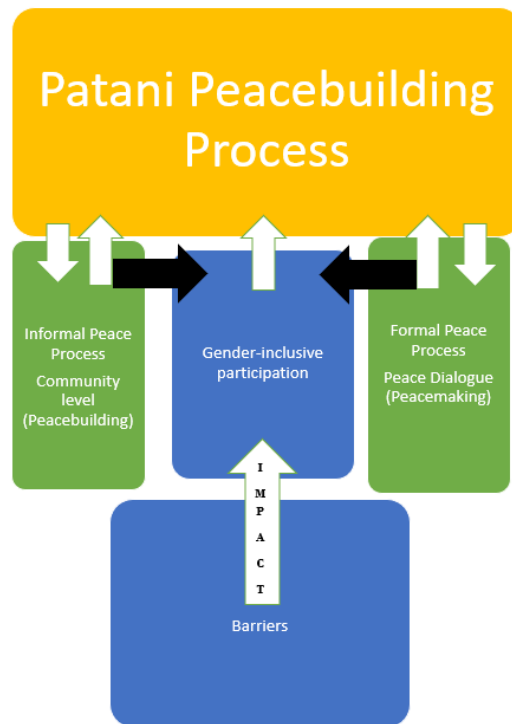
Davies et al. (2014) conclude that the absence of a constant WPS forum in the ASEAN region coupled with the lack of political will, minimizes the chances of actualisation of WPS. ASEAN efforts have focused on the protection pillar which is a sign of the conservative political agenda these countries share (Davies et.al., 2014). This argument is further strengthened with the failure of the international community to push governments to advance the WPS ambitions. These explanations for women's exclusion, further strengthen the need for gender-inclusive

¹⁶ More about women's participation in chapter 5.

participation. A fundamental change in the way participation is viewed, is key to the rearrangement of the decision-making tables.

Contributing factors to women's exclusion include: a slow change of power structures; a focus on state security over human security; a failure of the UN and multilateral organisations in influencing changing structures of peace processes; and an unwillingness of conflict parties to share power (El-Bushra, 2007; O'Reilly et al., 2015). Male resistance against women's involvement manifests itself differently and stereotypical and restrictive gender norms are social constraints for women to fully take part in the peace process. Challenging patriarchal norms and sociocultural prejudices against women is an important step towards realising equal participation and end gender discrimination (McWilliams, 2015; Moosa et al., 2015; Porter, 2003). On the other hand, women are seen as having a powerful impact and the ability to attract international attention, which is not in the interest of governments and other parties (Porter, 2003). Another barrier is the lack of resources and long-term funding and on the individual level women must balance multiple responsibilities which limits their engagement in civil society. Furthermore, women's participation in particularly high-level negotiations is hindered by lack of proper education and training, despite them having valuable experiences and knowledge about the conflict (Moosa et al., 2013).

3.5 CONCEPTUAL SCHEME



Visual 2: Conceptual Scheme.

Summarizing the above sections, the conceptual scheme illustrates the main concepts and their connections. It served as the roadmap for the project to reach its aims by focusing on exploring the main barriers to gender-sensitive participation. These barriers shaped the way women were able to participate within the context of the Patani peacebuilding process. The process was parted into two spheres, the informal and formal, to ease the research and analysis. The term peace process refers to *all societal activities which promote peace and hinder violence*. More specifically *the informal peace process was understood as the non-official peacebuilding activities at the grassroots level initiated by members of civil society without resulting in any formalized legal document. In Patani this sphere encompassed six identified categories where women were active; citizen journalism; rehabilitation, support and provision for conflict victims; women's livelihoods projects; community empowerment and integration; human rights advocacy and protections; and knowledge producing CSOs.*¹⁷ While, *the formal peace process was defined as the high-level peace dialogue between the Thai government and Mara Patani.* Women's participation was concentrated in the informal sphere but also connected to the formal

¹⁷ For a more detailed discussion see chapter 5.

talks by PAOW's involvement in the dialogue¹⁸. However, PAOW as a network of women's groups, operated in both spheres.

As a peace process may transform structures and result in a peace agreement which will set the basis of the so called "post-conflict" society, this important process calls for a gender-inclusive approach. It is important to note that peace agreements are not gender neutral and can act as the reinforcement of discrimination against women in the transitional period (O'Reilly et al., 2015; McWilliams, 2015). Therefore, this thesis argues that women's participation is crucial to lead to gender-sensitive peacebuilding. The Patani Peace Process is assessed from a feminist perspective with a focus on women's role and their challenges.

¹⁸ See more in chapter 5.1.

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the different methodological phases in the research. Firstly, this chapter clarifies the feminist objectives, epistemological and ontological choices. Secondly, it discusses the methods used and data analysis approach. Finally, this part considers the research limitations and ethical considerations.

4.1 EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY

This research is methodologically qualitative because it resonates well with the project's objective of women's empowerment by including women's and men's perspectives. Furthermore, qualitative research aims to answer how and why questions to gain in-depth insights (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, quantitative secondary data from international and regional organisations and institutions were used to complement the primary data. The epistemological position is interpretivist meaning that the world can be grasped by exploring people's understandings of the world. Thus, we can only see the world through the eyes of people who are familiar with a certain place, event or practice. The qualitative methodology takes a constructivist ontological position suggesting that reality is the result of the interaction between individuals as they give meaning to the world (Bryman, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2010). In addition to that, this research is also ontologically embedded in feminist assumptions of gender-sensitive peacebuilding.

Feminist research principles include the respect for women's experiences and knowledge, importance of undermining uneven power relations in research and challenge gender (and other) inequalities (O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012). These principles have guided the choices and methods used in this research to not cause harm to participants and not contribute to tensions. Feminist scholars have been inclined to use qualitative methods with the objective of highlighting voices of women, however this is not completely undebated. O'Shaughnessy & Krogmans (2012) review of feminist methodologies, shows an intense debate about whether qualitative methods are more aligned with the principles of feminism than quantitative. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that this thesis does not view quantitative research as the opposite to feminist research. Quantitative research was not used in this study because the aim was to explore perceptions about gender-inclusive participation, not in the quantifiable sense but in the aspect of experiences. However, descriptive qualitative and quantitative data

published by the World Bank, various UN agencies and research institutes was used to validate findings from the field research. Research participants' subjectivity was not seen as something negative, rather a key factor for diversifying and expanding existing knowledge, which is characterized with being androcentric and exclusive (Hesse-Biber, 2010; O'Shaughnessy & Krogman, 2012).

4.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The research design followed a qualitative research framework, combining methods such as semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 3, for interview guide), focus group discussion, unstructured informal observations and conversations (see Appendix 1 & 2, for an anonymized list of respondents and attended events) (Sumner & Tribe, 2008). These methods were used to understand the complex factors and processes in the Patani context. In addition, secondary data such as reports, publications and visuals were collected from academic institutions and research participants to further strengthen the findings. By involving the participants in the identification of research participants and allowing flexibility in the interviews, the research aimed to be more participatory (Khamis et al., 2009). Participants were also asked to suggest steps and solutions needed for women to become more active in the peace process. Moreover, the study prioritised co-created knowledge, between the participants and the researcher, and solutions anchored in the local context.

4.2.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 women and two men. I prepared an interview guide with the themes that I wanted to talk about. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews because it granted the participants space for explaining reality in their own words in a free way, and assumes that people, unlike natural science objects, can explain, criticise and give meaning to social surroundings and happenings (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

The majority of the participants were women active in civil society and the interviews were conducted in places which were suggested by the respondents. Before starting the interviews, I informed the respondents about myself, my research and how their information would be used.

I assured their anonymity and I asked for their consent to interview them and reminded them about the voluntarily nature of their participation.

The interviews were mainly conducted in the local Malay language (my mother tongue) and English. In cases where respondents were Thai speakers, an interpreter helped us to communicate. Open ended questions were asked, and the interviewees were encouraged to direct the conversation in accordance to his/her priorities (Bryman, 2012). Most of the interviews were recorded with a mobile phone. In other cases, I took notes and wrote a summary after the interviews. The interviews were transcribed and the data was kept in a password protected file. During the fieldwork, the interview guide was revised and sharpened to improve the quality of the questions and to bring up topics which were of high concern.

4.2.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

In the research planning prior to the fieldwork, I aimed to form focus groups of women. This was cancelled once in the field due to various reasons. Firstly, it became clear that forming groups would take a lot of time and consideration about the group set-up. Women's groups in Patani were divided and it would be difficult to form groups without risk of fuelling any tension. To adhere to the "Do no harm" principle (Bryman 2012: 135), I decided to not follow through with my plans.

Instead I attempted to include men's voices in the research. It is often argued that feminist and gender studies tend to concentrate on women, thus unintentionally neglecting men. More scholars emphasize the importance of research to focus on how masculinities affect men and what role it plays in terms of peace and conflict (Bjarnegard et al., 2015; Confortini, 2006; Wright, 2014;). By also researching men's views on this subject, deeper insights were derived and used as a comparison in relation to the rest of the findings.

In the end of the research period, saturation was reached in the interview component of the research (Small 2009). The focus group was a new method and data set which diversified the findings and added something new. The participants were asked about their perceptions of women's participation in the peace process. In the focus group discussion, attention was put not only on what was said but also the interactions, dynamics and the conclusions drawn (Bryman, 2012).

4.2.3 FIELD OBSERVATIONS

Informal unstructured observations and conversations were a continuous part of the research. This was an effective way of getting to know the context and observe social interactions and the local environment. Fieldnotes were taken occasionally under the fieldwork period, as a research journal.

I also attended seven forums which dealt with issues related to the conflict. These meetings were initiated by various CSOs and I participated in these forums in the role of a master's student. A lot of information that was presented in the closed-door events gave a more raw and detailed picture of the realities of the conflict compared to published content or what I got from the interviews. Having observed the realities of the women I interviewed, it helped my understanding of the situation and to either confirm or problematize my findings.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis can be described as the process of “segmenting the data into parts and reassembling the parts again into a coherent whole” (Boeije, 2010:76). It is basically to sort all the collected data in a systematic way to ease the researcher's understanding of it. Because of the large amount of data, a good analysis will make the information more manageable to handle for the researcher (Boeije, 2010; Bryman, 2012).

The data was broken into smaller units and then grouped together into categories and linked in order to more clearly identify the relations in the data and the main themes of the research. Atlas.ti, a data analysis software, was used as a tool in the initial coding of the materials. In the beginning, a lot of codes were identified but along the process, the codes became more refined and specific.

4.4 SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was used to find participants since individuals with specific experiences were relevant for the study. My existing network and local supervisor were crucial in the sampling process. Initially, the sample was only to include women's groups, but it became evident that it would exclude important voices from other women. I wanted a diverse pool of participants to generate more representative data (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, the sample scope was expanded to include any woman in civil society with a link to the peace process, however key relevance was given to women's groups. The other two male participants, had links to the civil society and peace talks, deemed to have useful information. Snowball sampling was exercised by asking respondents about individuals suitable for interviews.

Women in civil society encompass a unique and heterogenous group. Not all women in the society can identify with them. The majority of the interviewed women were considered middle-class in Thailand. The access to women from poorer and rural communities who were active in the women's movement was very limited which affected the sample. However, to diversify the sample, women's voices from Buddhist groups, sexual minorities and different age groups were included to avoid skewed findings. However, due to the availability of research participants, most of the respondents were Patani Malay Muslims. Therefore, the findings might resonate mostly to this group.

For the focus group discussion, six men who worked in civil society were chosen. Although the views differed in the FGD, the group was not diverse enough to generate varied data. Despite this, the FGD contributed with perspectives of men in the area which combined with the findings from the interviews, and helped generate more informed conclusions.

4.5 QUALITY OF RESEARCH

Bryman (2012) presents trustworthiness as a criterion for quality assessment of qualitative research and it breaks down into four sub-criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2012).

Credibility was ensured by validating the findings with the research participants and experts. For instance, I checked with the interviewees to affirm the main points addressed and I also conducted informal conversations with experts. In addition, the focus group discussion (FGD) with men was conducted to generate data from another sample. In the triangulation process,

differences and patterns were identified within the different data sets by analysing them together. Moreover, method triangulation was used by combining different methods to generate varied data.

Transferability is whether findings are applicable to other populations and periods. The strength of qualitative research is the nuanced accounts of social realities, which is why the research focused on providing thick and diverse descriptions. To generalise the findings would not be possible since the data was highly dependent on the current situation and sample. However, this study could be valuable for researchers with a specific interest in this topic and for policy-makers to learn more about women's situation in an underreported conflict area. Findings could also be useful in enriching or opposing theories regarding women's participation in peacebuilding.

Dependability refers to the level of transparency in research which was achieved by being clear and explicit in the thesis about the research process including the choices made, limitations and weaknesses.

Confirmability, which means that the researcher conducted objective and ethical research. I am a second generation Patani Malay who grew up in Sweden. My identity was both helpful and at times a constraint. My social status was often something that affected the way I was treated. Although it allowed me to easily melt in the area and gain quick access and trust, I found myself being perceived as both an insider and outsider. For example, my identity might have had an impact on the interviews with women from other ethnic groups due to language barriers or that it made it difficult for them to be open about certain issues (due to the polarization between ethnic groups).

It is important as a researcher to strive to be objective, but it is not completely possible always which is why awareness of one's biases is crucial. People are not free from subjectivity and values, but it should not overshadow the research. For example, feminist research takes a strong stand against patriarchy and choosing to prioritise the voices of women, which can be seen as one sort of bias. This research has been clear about its standpoints and motivations and why certain choices were made. I tried to maintain objectivity by not expressing personal values and to interpret the data as it was presented to me.

4.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were at the core of the entire research process, from the formulation of interview questions to the handling of data and confidentiality. Bryman's (2012) ethical chapter was used as a guideline, whereas the concerns were linked to: not imposing any potential harm to participants, the importance of informed consent, no interfering with the participant's privacy or the use deception in the research.

Doing fieldwork in a conflict affected area must be done in a conscious manner. Having personal links to the area helps a lot in terms of understanding the context, the spoken language and the complexities of the conflict. The choices made in the field were eased by good connections and my local supervisor who was an essential part of the fieldwork. People were more prone to talk to a researcher who had local links. An ongoing conflict sets many limitations which affects the research, some of these are: mobility, security concerns for the researcher and the participants, the researcher seen as taking sides and the importance of not causing any harm. Interviewing people in a conflict area is challenging, since people are afraid of uttering their ideas about certain topics due to fear of retributions etc. This is something which was taken into consideration.

The findings from the focus group discussion is only based on one session and one group which is why it should not be interpreted as representative of a larger population. Despite this limitation, I aimed to offer a more comprehensive analysis by including the result from the FGD.

The principle of not doing any harm was carefully assessed before and during the fieldwork. As mentioned above, a conflict area requires the researcher to be conscious about all the choices which means that before any activity is done, risks and consequences must be calculated and evaluated. I also emphasized that I was a student and not holding any other position.

5 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PATANI PEACE PROCESS

This chapter lays out the ways women participate in the Patani Peace Process. In the upcoming chapters, the term “women’s movement” refers to all the women’s groups as a collective in Patani. Note, this does not mean that all women’s groups are working together with a common goal as a single movement, but rather to have a term to show the existence of various women’s groups in civil society. Due to the respect of the research participants’ request to remain anonymous, no names of individuals or organizations are spelled out in the thesis.

5.1 STANDING ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE PEACE DIALOGUE: WOMEN’S EXCLUSION FROM THE PEACE TABLE

5.1.1 ROOT CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

In 2004, the conflict in Patani re-erupted after almost a decade of stability. The root causes of the conflict between the Thai state and various Patani Malay separatist groups can be traced back to more than a century ago, when the Anglo-Siamese treaty was signed (1909) between British and Siamese leaders (McDermott, 2013). This treaty stipulated what Malay territories were to be parted between the two powers and resulted in the current border between Thailand and Malaysia. Patani, then a sultanate, was given to Thailand without any consideration of the wills of the Patani people. This was followed by an assimilation project of the Patani people, often labelled as “internal colonialization” whereas the government’s policies towards the Malays, aimed to deconstruct their identity. The Thai system weakened the Malay identity in many ways; Malays were denied their history whereas only the narrative of the central government was taught in the education system, the Malay language (mother tongue for the majority in Patani) was replaced with Thai as the official language, Malay culture and Islam were discouraged while Thai customs and Buddhism, were seen as more civilised; and Thai Buddhists were settled in Patani to govern. These historical events laid the foundation of current structures which has resulted in multiplied forms of discrimination against Patani Malays. The national policies reproduced unequal structures and power relations between different ethnic, social and religious groups within Patani. Malay separatist groups contested the government policies throughout the 20th century and fought for independence, but were crushed by military responses from the Thai state. The question about alternative governance for Patani has been an extremely sensitive issue in Thai politics but is at the core of the conflict (Boonpunth &

Rolls, 2016; Hortsmann, 2007; Jory, 2007; Walker, 2009). The abovementioned scholars seemingly agree that exclusion and grievances of the Patani people coupled with limited government response are among the key factors to the continuation of the conflict. However, the literature did not address gender discrimination or the marginalisation of women from decision-making throughout history. The silence in the literature about women's role during the 20th century not only contributes to a flawed analysis but also problematic knowledge gaps in security studies. This also strengthens the feminist critique of general knowledge as heavily influenced by the dominant actors in society (Mohanty, 2013).

5.1.2 PEACE TALKS

A milestone was reached in 2013 when the first-ever formal peace talks was initiated by Yingluck Shinawatra, which acknowledged the need of a political solution to the conflict. This first rounds of peace talks involved only the Thai government and the most powerful separatist group Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) (Crisis Group, 2016). This was followed by a second round in 2015 after the military take-over, this time without the BRN. A new actor was introduced in 2015, namely the MARA Patani (Majlis Syura Patani), the Patani Consultative Council, an umbrella organization of Patani Malay separatist groups (Crisis Group, 2016; The Nation, 2016). Scholars argue that the current da held without BRN is deemed to be meaningless, because the people who are able to control the fighters are not at the table. BRN refuses to join the peace talks unless some conditions are fulfilled. These include the release of political prisoners, amnesty for the BRN delegation and an impartial international third party to mediate the talks. However, the Thai government has not responded positively to the demands.

In 2016, the dialogue parties agreed on a Terms of Reference but the exact details were not shared with the public¹⁹ (Crisis Group, 2013 & 2016; Lamey, 2013; McDermitt, 2013). Mistrust has plagued the process and neither side has showed genuine interest in compromising. The position of the National Council of Peace and Order and preceding Thai governments, has been to avoid the internationalisation of the conflict which could lead to foreign involvement or the separation of Patani from Thailand (Crisis Group, 2016; McDermitt, 2013). The representation

¹⁹ Read more: Al-Hakim, A, H. (2016-05-19) Dissecting the T-O-R, *Prachathai English*. <https://prachatai.com/english/node/6175> (2017-10-31)

of both sides in the peace dialogue was predominately male figures from the military and political elites.

Except from one mention of women's groups engagement in a demonstration in support for safety zones (Crisis Group 2016), women were non-existent in the readings about the Patani peace talks (see for instance: Crisis Group, 2016; Mark, 2017; McCargo, 2014; Nindang, 2017)²⁰. Although, some experts argued for an inclusive process, they referred to a wider range of militant groups and civil society, but they did not explicitly mention women's participation (Bean, 2013; International Crisis Group, 2015; Nindang, 2017). Thus, the above listed scholars failed to acknowledge the exclusion of women at the peace table as one of the main issues. This is a symptom of male dominance in the peace and security field which is further reflected in the peace process in general. The Patani peace talks have been strictly focused on ending and curbing violence, a narrow scope where women and non-warring parties risk being side-lined and excluded throughout the process. The delegations fail to recognize the contributions women's groups can bring to the table and the importance of gender-sensitive peacebuilding. Women's groups have worked closely with local communities affected by conflict and know their needs, issues and wills, which is essential knowledge needed to bring peace in the area. Moreover, through their engagement with women from marginalized groups, they have extensive experience and understanding of gender issues and can add a gender perspective in the negotiations. Gender-inclusive participation also refers to that the dialogue parties should aim for a balanced set-up of their delegation. For instance, Thailand could reach out to the Philippines, which has been hailed a successful case of gender-inclusive participation in relation to the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Chang et al., 2015).

This research project further affirmed that no women participated directly at the dialogue table. However, the findings revealed that women were indirectly involved in the talks, in a very limited and restricted fashion. One of the visible actors was PAOW, a network comprised of 23 women's organizations. Their mission was to advocate for peace, women's inclusion and women to have a seat at the table. PAOW was established by prominent women's leaders with the assistance of both national and international donors and gathered different groups from Chinese, Malay and Thai communities. This expression of multi-ethnic unity, was an important initiative for social cohesion in Patani. The formation of PAOW provided a platform for women to voice their concerns and engage collectively in the peace process. The network has been very

²⁰ See for instance, Mark, E. (2017-07-08) "Roadblocks to peace in Southern Thailand", The Diplomat. Access: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/roadblocks-to-peace-in-southern-thailand/> (2017-10-31)

supportive of the peace dialogue. So far, PAOW's formal engagement through the proposal calling for "safety zones" (limited ceasefire zones) has been the only time women as a collective were engaged in the dialogue. The proposal, which called for the warring parties to end the use of violence in public spaces such as markets, worship places and schools etc., was adopted and discussed in the peace dialogue and now await implementation. Yet, no women were present at the table during the decision-making. This example bared a symbolic meaning to the nature of women's participation in Patani. In many instances of the peace process women contributed behind the scenes but were excluded at the decision-making level. A member from the network mentioned that they were invited by the government to act as observers in the peace dialogue. However, this offer was declined due to no guarantees for their safety.²¹

Despite the positive steps taken by the dialogue parties in including PAOW in the talks, this measure could be counterproductive for the entire women's movement. Firstly, the participation of PAOW has been at the minimal level, granting no decision-making or voting rights which questions the entire motive of the government to include PAOW. Secondly, by having an example of women's inclusion, the dialogue parties could shun away criticism from the male-dominant and exclusive talks. This would further fuel the view of PAOW as a non-independent network, used by powerful actors for their political gains. Within this context, the concept of gender-inclusive participation is highly relevant and functions as a differentiation between participation in the narrow sense and meaningful participation by giving priority to the quality and conditions of women's involvement. As UN Women (2012) argues the level of contact between women's groups and negotiating parties is of key importance for the inclusion of gender issues and women's rights in peace agreements. A government may invite women's groups to act as observers, but still exclude them from decision-making processes and any opportunity to have a genuine impact. Thirdly, representation is another issue, because the other side of the women's movement might be forgotten and neglected when PAOW is perceived as the sole voice of all women, which is very much contested in the movement.

²¹ Interview with Respondent 13, 02-08-2017, Pattani.



Photo 1: “Demands to dialogue parties”. This photo shows a women’s group presenting their demands for peace during a PAOW event. The picture illustrates the practical nature of engaging in the peace process and how these types of events open opportunities for women to learn various skills such as public speaking, advocacy and critical thinking. Photo taken in Pattani, 11-08-2017.



Photo 2: “PAOW Event”. This photo shows that PAOW had the ability to bring together many women and groups and raise awareness about the peace process. Photo taken in Pattani, 11-08-2017.

The PAOW-event named “Building an environment that supports the peace process”, focused at gathering women’s demands to the dialogue parties through participatory methods. Subsequently, the demands were translated into protocols sent to the delegations in the dialogue. Some of the main concerns voiced by women included; safety for civilians; discrimination; more sincerity from both sides in the peace dialogue; and more contact with Mara Patani.

Even though PAOW connected women’s groups, this was far from the majority and many organizations did not want to join. PAOW has been faced by issues involving their legitimacy and independence. For instance, some interviewees were concerned of whether PAOW was a local initiative or an instrument used by its funders. There was also some criticism about the “safety zone” proposal. By addressing direct violence as a problem only in five limited spaces, other forms of “invisible” violence in for example the villages were forgotten and excused. The opposing women’s groups wanted PAOW to propose an end to the use of torture, extrajudicial killings, and the censorship and intimidation of villagers suspected of being a part of the independence movement. An interviewee framed it as follows:

“For the people and the civil society “safety zones” mean both end of violence and human security. Practically, to be free from torture, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. To be able to have the freedom of expression and say what you want without fearing reprisals. Basically, a good life, with no military on the road or knocking at your door 2a.m. to arrest your son with no warrant. That is what people want.”²²

One male interviewee who worked extensively with the peace talks argued that women would have a more meaningful role in the future. The peace dialogue was not mature enough to start including other actors than the warring parties. Furthermore, there were women who were involved in the formal peace process on both sides, operating in the background assisting the delegations.²³ Interestingly, a Mara Patani leader invited civil society as well as women’s groups to join their platform in a statement (Crisis Group, 2016). The nature of the participation these women’s groups would be entitled to was not specified and might be an opening for a diverse spectrum of society to engage in the talk.

²² Interview with Respondent 8, 17-07-2017, Pattani.

²³ Interview with Respondent 3 (male), 10-07-2017, Pattani.

5.2 WOMEN'S ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE INFORMAL SPHERE

Women constitute a vital part of the informal peace process with their initiatives in civil society. *The informal peace process in Patani was characterised by non-official peacebuilding activities and development initiatives at the grassroots level which did not result in any formalized legal document, mostly carried out by civil society.* This realm of the peacebuilding process allowed for women's increased role in the public space with positions as women's leaders, media figures, directors of organizations, representatives of human rights issues at the international level, rights activists, peace advocates, caretakers and influencers.

Nearly 14 years of armed conflict has changed the societal context in Patani and affected the population. Women's groups and WHRDs missions are motivated by the impact protracted violence has had on civilians. Violence affects women both directly and indirectly and women have been killed, injured and traumatised but also suffer from the indirect consequences of violence which many women's groups are trying to mitigate. Women's groups are mostly run by women who engage in the civil society in their free time. The majority of the interviewed women were professionals within other fields to sustain a living. An interviewee described the reality for many women in the peace movement:

“Being involved in civil society equals uncountable unpaid hours. To survive we have to find two other paid jobs. I teach, and work with rubber tapping besides my five days volunteering in the organization. Because in the end we all need to survive.”²⁴

Many women in the peace movement, worked for free because of their dedication to specific causes. However, the prominent groups who were formally registered organizations and had connections with organizations in Bangkok were more prone to be working full-time and even employed staff. The few women who received financial compensation for their work, claimed that it was barely enough.

The presence of women's groups has intensified in the last couple of years due to the growing presence of external donors funding development projects focusing on women's rights and empowerment. This research identifies six main categories (see the illustration below) of peacebuilding activities women were involved in, namely; citizen journalism; rehabilitation, support and provision for conflict victims; women's livelihoods projects, community

²⁴ Interview with Respondent 4, 13-07-2017, Yala.

empowerment and integration; human rights advocacy and protection; and knowledge producing CSOs. However, it is important to note that these categories are not clear-cut distinct groupings. Activities do overlap and some activities were not captured within the scope of this thesis. The categories should neither be seen as activities carried out by only women as in some cases men were involved. The following framework shared many interconnections with El-Bushra’s list²⁵ and can be viewed as more specified sub-categories of the El-Bushra’s activity groupings:



Visual 3: Women’s activities in the informal peace process in Patani.

1. **Citizen journalism.** Many women worked for independent radio stations and alternative media reporting. Social media, specifically Facebook and the mobile phone application Line, were effective tools for activists in their reporting and sharing of important events and news. This phenomenon can also be interpreted as a dissatisfaction with the news coverage in mainstream media due to widespread censorship. During the fieldwork, two incidents of shootings by drunk security officers²⁶ were heavily reported on in social media. Victims and witnesses were interviewed in proximity to locations where events took place and live streams were used to cover confrontations between government officials and civilians and other happenings. Citizen journalism is an important part of peacebuilding since it channels the voices of the local people and

²⁵ See chapter 3.3.

²⁶ See for instance: Prachatai (2017) Pattani students call for justice, safety after shooting by ranger. Access: <https://prachatai.com/english/node/7320> (2017-11-24)

offers alternative narratives compared to mainstream broadcasting. The women also explained that it was liberating to be able to spread awareness about issues affecting the daily lives of the people in the area, on their own terms and without someone from the central region to misinterpret the situation.

- 2. Rehabilitation, support and provision for conflict victims.** This category was the main part of the activities. The prioritised recipients of services were widows and orphans, but also a growing number of torture victims (mostly men) and people who have sustained injuries from the conflict. These activities were to a large extent funded by charities from the goodwill of local people and targeted people who received limited or no help from the government such as families of suspected rebels or detainees linked to national security cases. The government extended its services to victims of violence, but that did not apply to families of suspected insurgents. This had grave implications on families whose sole breadwinner was either killed, detained or nowhere to be found. Families and relatives to people accused of being a part of the separatist movement were not only rejected by the government but often stigmatized in their communities. In a closed-door event which was meant to empower relatives of torture victims, many women recalled being in a very difficult situation after their male relative was detained or jailed. They told stories about harassment from security officers and the isolation they felt from their neighbours and communities due to their fear of being suspected by the state. The imposition of martial laws in Southern Thailand allows for arbitrary detentions for up to 37 days. During this period, the detainee does not have access to a lawyer and no official court warrant is needed for the arrest. For families whose male members was detained under these special laws, the 37 days meant living in limbo and not knowing what went on inside the military camps which put many families in distressing emotional, economic and social difficulties. A wife of one of these detainees, recalled that even after the release of her husband, he suffered from physical and psychological trauma most probably due to torture, making it impossible for him to work.²⁷ There were also groups who focused on supporting widows of the security personnel in the area.

²⁷ Informal conversation in event 2017-07-26.

3. **Women's livelihoods projects.** Due to the increase of external funders more women's groups and CSOs directed their projects to encompass women's livelihood projects. A strong precedence of livelihoods projects for the further realization of women's rights was evident in the interviews. Thus, manifesting a liberal understanding of development and the fulfilment of human rights. These projects were also more accepted by the government, which wanted to solve the conflict through economic development initiatives (Timberman, 2013). The plight of women in Patani who faced the task of heavier financial responsibilities when their men were no longer capable of financially supporting them, called for livelihoods projects. Women in the southern border provinces were at a great risk of falling into poverty when losing family members who used to sustain their living. By transferring knowledge and skills about social entrepreneurship the aim was that economic empowerment would result in confidence as well as spill over effects to other rights aspects. This is the view of many women's groups who worked in organizations backed by external donors. An interviewee working with livelihood programmes for a local branch of an international NGO expressed the following²⁸:

“To be politically active you need to have at least a good economic status. After a few years of involvement in our projects, we can see that women are more interested in politics. Before (being financially stable) they did not care about what happens in politics. Rather, their main concern was to bring economic prosperity to their family, and later they will struggle for political goals.”

Thus, economic stability was a pre-requisite for women's political engagement, this reconfirmed the intersectional claim that women are not only disadvantaged due to their sex, but also as shown in this example, other factors such as class and economic status. Although these projects were helpful in contributing to women's economic independency it is important to address the problematic underlying rationale. The liberal standpoint was that there is an entrepreneur within each of us but not all women strived to become entrepreneurs and far from all socioeconomic issues can be handled within a business model framework. But as the internationally backed women's groups mostly

²⁸ Interview with Respondent 1, 07-07-2017, Pattani City.

offered trainings and programmes connected to entrepreneurship little choice was left for woman who needed to survive. Many of these livelihood projects were focused on helping local women to work with sustainable production of local products which would generate a constant income. Women in Patani were not new actors in the private sector. They were the majority of the sellers in the markets, street vendors, food stalls and restaurants. The photo below illustrates the strong presence of women in the informal economy.



Photo 3: “Women in the informal economy”. This photo shows that the majority of market vendors were women, a common tendency observed. Photo taken at the weekend market in Ban Palat, Pattani. 06-08-2017.

The existing projects helped women to meet and discuss about taboo matters plaguing their societies such as drug addiction, gender based violence and security, and through these meetings women’s networks were created. Although, these projects were not directly addressing peace, their impact on women’s lives and communities strengthened the peacebuilding process.

4. Community empowerment and integration. Patani is a diverse area in terms of its demography. Patani Malay, Thai Buddhist and Thai Chinese communities have lived side by side and were interconnected at many societal levels. However, tensions grew due to the conflict and government policies such as the provision of weapons to villagers²⁹ and insurgents targeting Buddhists and Chinese individuals. The hardened relations between the groups and the violence from both the warring parties acted as push factors for many Thai Buddhists and Chinese to flee to other parts of Thailand (Internal Displacement, 2011). Creative activities have been initiated by women's groups to foster social cohesion. I will term these projects as "peace spaces" due to their shared objective of being a peaceful space for people in the midst of the conflict. These "peace spaces" were meant to bring people from different communities and social groups together through simple means such as over a cup of coffee or by playing a soccer game. A female café owner described her initiative:

"I saw divisions in the society and I wanted to open a Peace Café where we can share a coffee and talk about issues. It may not be the grandest gesture but at least it is something. We never know when violence will end. But the café is for everyone to visit and be friends."³⁰

The interviewee noted her small contribution in comparison to well-funded peacebuilding projects. Nonetheless, these kinds of initiatives were important to strengthening the sense of local ownership of the peace process. As Mohanty wrote "It also means being attentive to small as well as large struggles and processes that lead to radical change - not just working (or waiting) for a revolution." (Mohanty, 2003:4). These modest activities were crucial in rebuilding trust and social ties between people and bringing normality back to Patani. The ideas behind the "peace spaces" were embedded in visions of a peaceful and prosperous Patani where people can live in harmony, therefore these should not be underestimated.

Other activities within this category included environmental conservation, land rights, food safety, and informal education such as tadika and pondoks. Many male Tadika

²⁹ See for instance; Henton, G., (2014 November 7) Thai army hands out weapons to civilians in Southern conflict. *Vice*. Access: <https://news.vice.com/article/thai-army-hands-out-weapons-to-civilians-in-southern-conflict> (2017-10-15)

³⁰ Interview with Respondent 5, 14-07-2017, Yarang.

(Islamic school) teachers were hindered to work due to their vulnerability of being targeted by security officers, which resulted in the increase in female Tadika teachers. Semi-formal and informal education was entrenched in the Patani societal structure, where many pondoks (religious boarding schools) offered Islamic studies and taught the history of Patani. These schools were prominent due to their legacy of being historical Islamic teaching institutions and highly valued by the locals. However, the pondoks were also viewed as a threat by the Thai state who exercised tight control and raids of pondoks and its staff and students. Non-formal education (NFE) has the potential to drive social transformation and peacebuilding by challenging “multiple forms of structural and indirect forms of violence” (Datzberger, 2017: 344). However, a stable and functioning political economy in an area is a pre-requisite for NFE to have a beneficial role in peacebuilding processes.

5. **Human rights advocacy and protection.** As discussed in chapter two, Thailand’s human rights situation is worsening, and has intensified in Patani due to the conflict and counter-insurgency tactics exercised by the government. Women’s groups and many activists worked to tackle the consequences of more than a decade of military impunity and violent tactics from both sides. Human rights groups were advocating and safeguarding the rights of communities in an area where the rule of law was the exception. One interviewee expressed her concern over the rising cases of human rights violations:

“There is a stark increase in human rights violations, mostly torture and extrajudicial killings. I have been working here for 5 years. The abuses peaked during Thaksin’s time, then it cooled down a bit under Yingluck but now it is on the increase again with no tendency to decrease. I do see a correlation between that and the military government.”³¹

In the view of many local organizations³², the special laws imposed in the South since 2004, was the main human rights concern, and it is the Malay population which is

³¹ Interview Respondent 17, 10-08-2017, Pattani.

³² Interview Respondents 4, 7, 15, 17. See Appendix 1 for details.

predominantly affected by this law. The special laws extended the powers of security officials and have been criticised for being draconian laws. These laws are closely linked to counter-insurgency operations but have strongly been opposed by the locals due to its suppressive practices. Many arrests and detentions under the special laws leave little manoeuvring space for families and lawyers to ensure the well-being of the detainee and the rule of law. The arbitrary nature of these detentions makes it impossible for lawyers to access the individual for the 37 first days of detention, which in turn increases the risk of torture and mistreatment³³. Therefore, the main attention of human rights activists in the area was to work on issues regarding extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture and other inhuman treatment. The women who worked with these issues were much aware of the limited outreach they had helping all the people that needed their help due to stringent resources. To cope with the piling cases of human rights violations and the limited capacity these groups focused on empowering communities and villages. In practical terms this meant building networks of people knowledgeable of the justice system and human rights to empower villagers by learning about their rights and fighting for them. For instance, basic knowledge about rights was crucial for the villagers to stand up against ill-treatment by state officials.

“Some locals are not aware of their rights, because they have been so accustomed to the unjust treatments from the government. When they see uniformed people, they think these people are powerful and can do anything they want. Who are they to fight against the state officials? Human rights for them seem far away.”³⁴

The growing need for women’s groups was due to the majority who came to the offices to file complaints or report misconduct were women on behalf of their male family members in detention or deceased. They felt more comfortable talking to women in the local language than to men. Legal services free of charge and legal information about

³³ See for instance: Amnesty (2016) “Make him speak by tomorrow” <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/4747/2016/en/> and Duay Jai Group et al. (2016) “Torture and ill treatment in The Deep South Documented in 2014-2015.” <https://voicefromthais.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/torture-report-english-as-of-10-feb-2016-released-version.pdf>

³⁴ Interview with Respondent 4, 13-07-2017, Yala City.

what national and international law says about human rights was offered. Many justice related issues have fuelled the conflict and the impunity of the government forces has been a major grievance for the local people.³⁵ This part of peacebuilding was very important in order to address structural problems and conduct hindering a peaceful and just society.

6. **Knowledge producing CSOs.** The last category of peacebuilding activities was knowledge producing CSOs, often linked to academia. The main activity of these groups was to generate data and produce knowledge on the conflict in the form of statistics, witness accounts, academic reports and project evaluations. For instance, statistics on conflict victims, fatalities, orphans and widows were collected which could help inform policy-makers and the general population. The objective behind the establishments of these CSOs was to spread awareness and knowledge about the conflict to internationalize the issue and initiate quality discussion. A newly founded local organization was dedicated to creating a database where all available data about Patani would be easily accessible for the public. Prominent CSOs in this category collaborated with international researchers and donors in different research areas such as gender issues, conflict resolution and counter violent extremism etc. Women as researchers was a socially accepted role and this type of work did not challenge the norms.

Lastly, a prominent activist emphasized that women were doing more than what was counted as “important” work in building peace. They kept families together amidst difficulties. For many women, peace started in the home and a lot of attention was therefore paid to their family life. The quote below shows that for some women, the “traditional” role of women as caretakers and nurturing mothers was valued:

“I see that most of the women here are building peace by taking care of their families and their homes. What women do every day is also a part of the peace process. The female representatives formally working with peace, they are a minority. Most of the women here do not even feel linked to the peace process. Their realities are so far away from what they (people involved in the peace process) are talking about.”³⁶

³⁵ Read for instance about the The Tak Bai Massacre and Krue Se Mosque Raid.

³⁶ Interview with Respondent 5, 14-07-2017, Yarang.

Women were the main caretaker of families, especially in the absence of men. This is a role often overshadowed by other contributions seen as more important both in the WPS Agenda and research. This thesis recognizes the important part women had in supporting children and family members and their struggle to provide some normalcy in difficult times. Their contribution was extremely important for families and entire communities to function and not collapse, thus it cannot go unrecognised.

5.3 THE LINK BETWEEN PRIVILEGE AND PARTICIPATION

Most of the interviewed women linked to women's groups shared a similar socioeconomic status, often coming from middle-class families, university graduates from prominent educational institutions and well-connected with Bangkok and international organizations. These women tended to be the leaders of the organizations or well-known female activists. However, they were closely in touch with the local people. Thus, a link between privilege and high positioned women in the women's movement was evident.

The majority of women who were interviewed explained that their activism started when the conflict affected their families or someone in their social circle. The differences between the rural and more urban areas in Patani in terms of impacts of the conflict can also be observed in how women's groups are working. For instance, the head offices of the organizations were located in the cities of Pattani or Yala which are the main commercial areas in the Patani region. However, participants or beneficiaries of the projects were from villages outside of the cities. Although many of the women's groups claimed to be working on the grassroots level there was still a distance between the leading figures in the movement and the rural women. These two social groups shared similar challenges such as being a woman in a conflict situation, but their status and conditions were remarkably different which affected their opportunities to participate in the peacebuilding process.

An interesting observation was that women with high positions within the peace movement and who grew up outside of Patani, had a remarkably different view on women's role in society. These women were more prone to challenge gender norms and criticise the gender order in Patani. Although, they would not call themselves feminists, their motivations for their work and objectives for their projects were often in line with feminism. One interviewee, director of a CSO and not a local, described how the attitudes of some women in Patani were distinct to her

own views although they shared the same religion. Due to her upbringing in a different context, she had difficulties accepting so called “traditional” attitudes:

“In my family, education and confidence are important for women. For some women here, they grew up in a certain cultural and religious environment which set boundaries in their minds. I don’t have a gender lens. Sometimes I’m a feminist and sometimes not. I respect both women and men. But I cannot respect women who say, “I am a woman, I cannot do this and that”. We can do anything!”³⁷

The respondent’s reluctance to call herself a feminist illustrated the tension between feminism, seen as a Western ideology, and women in the global South. Although, it was clear that the respondent’s views were in line with feminist principles and the emancipation of women, she did not recognize herself as a feminist. The findings informed that not all interviewees wanted to associate themselves with feminism. The reasons for this can obviously be multiple, but it can be argued that women in the global South, had trouble identifying themselves with mainstream feminism. Consequently, the negative attitude towards feminism is an impeding factor to the advancement of feminist projects such as the WPS Agenda and gender-sensitive peacebuilding. Mohanty (2003:17) argues for post-colonial feminism to focus on two projects “the internal critique of hegemonic “Western” feminisms and the formulation of autonomous feminist concerns and strategies that are geographically, historically, and culturally grounded”. Thus, post-colonial feminism identifies and deconstructs gaps in feminist discourse, in order to diversify and open the feminist movement for all women. Furthermore, the second aim highlights the importance of cultural and contextual sensitivity in feminist analysis and practice. This is an approach which could challenge the notion of feminism as something imposed and unfamiliar in Patani. This also entails the exploration of alternative feminisms rooted in generations of Patani women’s struggles to tackle patriarchy and other injustices.

³⁷ Interview with Respondent 8, 17-07-2017, Pattani.

5.4 DISCUSSION

Drawing on the empirical findings, women were to a larger extent involved in the informal peace process but excluded in the formal peace talks. In the absence of men, more women were required to take on some responsibilities for families and communities to function. Women's presence in the informal peace process was also encouraged by international donors who supported their work.

The division between women's participation in the formal and informal peace process is linked to the public/private dichotomy. Historically, women have been linked to the private sphere while men's presence in the public have been normalized and valued (Moosa et al., 2013), which also applies to this peacebuilding context, leading to a gendered division of labour, whereby women and men were assigned separate tasks and roles. Women's work linked to the general view of women as "nurturing maternal figures" which is one explanation for their involvement with orphans and widows. This presents an issue in the women's movement where few groups such as PAOW advocated for women to be at the peace table. The depoliticised nature of women's groups confined their potential for influence. An interviewee even described the women's groups as charity groups helping women, children and victims³⁸. Although, this point should not be viewed negatively because it is crucial work, it evidently manifests the boundaries of the women's movement. Men's activities differed and were more political according to interviewees. The informal and formal dichotomy not only cemented women's and men's assumed spaces in society but also reinforced a gender hierarchy in the peacebuilding process.

Privilege was another dimension regulating who could be involved in the peace movement whereby women with higher status in society were more prone to good positions in women's groups. Thus, economic empowerment was a prerequisite for women's political involvement. Davies et al. (2014) conclusion that women are often confined to "informal or logistical support roles in peace processes" connects well with the Patani case. This study identified how women have stepped in to help their families, communities and villages, to function in a trying context.

³⁸ Skype-interview with Respondent 28, 24-09-2017.

6 BARRIERS TO GENDER-INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

This chapter explores the factors behind the exclusion of women's full participation in the peacebuilding processes.

6.1 THE DIVISION WITHIN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

One of the main barriers to women's meaningful participation was the lack of unity within the women's movement. In the past five years, the area has witnessed a steady growth of numerous women's groups and the rise of prominent female figures within the movement³⁹. Prior to this period, the presence of local women's organizations was extremely limited, and the ones that existed were mainly dedicated to issues regarding the environment and land rights. However, the conflict changed the lives of many women in Patani. They lost loved ones, women were injured, their communities were not safe and they lived in a highly militarized society, which pushed women to act and address the difficulties they faced.

6.1.1 THE DILEMMA OF FUNDING

International and national donors have recently, been actively funding the establishment of women's groups. Funding for gender issues and women's rights suited the objective of many donors, and more women started to jump on the train once the opportunity was available. This development has had both negative and positive effects. As revealed by interviewees, civil society is divided and so are women's groups. According an interviewee with years of experience of working with women in Patani, women's organizations are competing for both funding and recognition⁴⁰. The competition is fierce as women's groups usually do not receive direct funding from the international donors. Instead they must find well-established project partners in Bangkok who will allocate a sum to them. The groups worked with different projects and organized separate events in accordance to who their donors were. The presence of international donors with a clear gender and human rights agenda also led to another issue - the undermining of the legitimacy of the women's groups who chose to adopt the same objectives as their donors. These groups were seen as the tool of foreign actors interested in changing the

³⁹ Interview with Respondent 2, 10-07-2017, Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus, Pattani.

⁴⁰ Skype-interview with Respondent 9, 23-07-2017.

social setting, thus not independent. Another problematic aspect is linked to the military regime as a donor. Women's groups who accepted funding from the military regime were regarded as an extension of the government, and therefore lost their neutral position. Military funded groups were also seen as a direct threat by organizations who focused on exposing the wrongdoings of government agencies. Hence, collaborations between the different groups were no longer possible. Furthermore, dependence on external funding contributed to the view of women's organizations as non-independent and supported by powerful actors.

6.1.2 THE POLITICISATION OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The funding issue was one of the leading causes of division within civil society, but many other factors also played a role. For instance, the conflict has resulted in a polarization of the civil society landscape with some groups seen as loyal to the government whereas organizations close to the Patani Malay population were rumoured as having ties to the independence movement. These two camps can be seen as standing in opposition to each other. The government invested a lot of money in winning the hearts and minds of the local population as which was one of the tactics in their counter-insurgency programmes⁴¹. For this reason, women's groups who were not clearly working together with the government were often met with suspicion and intimidated by state agents. The division and politicisation of civil society can be viewed as the reflection of a likewise segmented society due to the conflict. Different ethnic, social and political groups seldom worked together, other than in some initiatives backed by international donors. Furthermore, the question of leadership was not addressed, and prominent female leaders were not able to unite women on a wider scale. There seemed to be no connecting point between the two camps of women's groups, and the communication between them was poor. These factors combined diminished the potential of a united coalition negotiating for women's inclusion. Women's groups have also failed to formulate any clear overarching strategy and vision for advocating for gender-inclusive participation.

⁴¹ See for instance: Pathan, D. (2012) Hearts and minds not won in Thailand's deep South, The Nation. Access: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Hearts-and-minds-not-won-in-Thailands-deep-South-30180615.html> (07-11-2017)

6.1.3 INTER-GENERATIONAL POWER STRUGGLES

“In the women’s movement here, the older women have more power. They need to give opportunities for the younger generation to also get involved. This kind of hierarchal structure will become a problem in the movement. They must open up for fresh ideas and the new generation. I started many years ago, and today I still see the same faces at the top.”⁴²

The words above illustrate one of the challenges within the movement itself. Other social conflicts included the exclusive hierarchy of older middle-class women at the top, separation between different ethnic groups, an urban and rural divide and the lack of solidarity between the women’s groups. For example, sexual minorities and marginalized women were often underrepresented and did not feel comfortable in the movement. This is a worrying finding, because a women’s movement where marginalized sections of society are excluded, defies the core principles of human rights, social justice and gender equality. On the practical level, the excluding tendency is a loss for the movement, which could make use of the diverse spectrum of women’s groups to become a collective force facing the numerous challenges together.

6.2 THE UNEXPLORED TERRAIN OF POLITICS

“We need a political strategy to succeed. Many women I know, they do not talk about politics. They are working in civil society in a conflict area but are not aware of politics. Sadly, when I want to talk about the political situation I have no other option than to talk to the men’s groups. Why don’t we have political women’s groups? Instead women are only talking about their events, forums, reports and general work. I think it is a shame.”⁴³

The quote above demonstrates the frustration of a respondent regarding the lack of political awareness and involvement within the women’s movement. The lack of political literacy was one of the factors which made it difficult for women to gain political space. A large majority of the interviewed women mentioned that politics was an unexplored terrain, but expressed their willingness and interest in engaging in political affairs. As one of the respondents expressed it:

“I think that it is important for women to participate in the talks. We want to bring women’s issues to the table. The way it is now only men benefit from the talks and that

⁴² Interview with Respondent 10, 25-07-2017, Pattanion Café, Pattani.

⁴³ Interview with Respondent 12, 01-08-2017, TK Park, Yala.

is not fair. Men cannot talk about our issues and experiences. We need to empower the women in this society. If we look at the Patani society, women are leading. They take care of everything but when it comes to decision-making it always falls on men. We do everything from earning money to taking care of the children, but we cannot make our own decisions. Men do not see women as capable of deciding. So, we have to work on the perception of the society about women's role in decision-making.”⁴⁴

The rationale behind women's strive towards more political space and involvement in decision-making processes, was the aim to acquire necessary skills and recognition. With that said, many donors have mainly been focusing on economic empowerment leading to the neglect of political empowerment. However, most respondents felt that increased attention should be paid to building much needed political awareness and confidence within the women's movement. This study recognizes the importance of economic empowerment, but challenges the view of women's economic progress automatically leading to inclusion into the political sphere. This has not been the case in Thailand, where a higher economic status for women has failed to translate into more political participation. This implies that for women to be taking part in political life, more than economic empowerment is needed, for instance, education and skills useful in the politics. Moreover, there is a need for a change in the attitudes that masculine traits are more valued than feminine ones in the political sphere, as this further excludes women.

Politics was expressed as the domain of men. The women's role in the public sphere in Patani has not been strong which is the result of both the political economy context and sociocultural norms in the area. Since most of the women were involved in peacebuilding at the grassroots level, the high-level politics surrounding the dialogue was a distant activity which they knew little about. Political literacy and experience also played an important role for women's groups to be viewed as serious actors. Furthermore, voices within women's organizations explicitly mentioned political activism as one of the ways to also raise women's status in society and challenge persistent gender norms.

However, a few respondents argued that they were more comfortable with working on “softer issues” that were indirectly political such as education, development, economics and management. This finding highlights the stand of post-colonial feminism to avoid any given assumptions about all women because it is far from a homogenous group so needs and aspirations vary. The WPS Agenda has clear aspirations and assumptions about what women

⁴⁴ Interview with Respondent 4, 13-07-2017, City Centre of Yala.

should be entitled to which may or may not relate to women in Patani. Most importantly, for those women who wanted to participate, the WPS Agenda could act as a tool in advancing their objective. CEDAW and the WPS resolutions were rarely referred to in the interviews (except women in academia and NGOs working with international partners) which further implied the disconnect between the international frameworks and the local realities.

The findings regarding women's lack of political awareness and space was reconfirmed by TAF's report "Democracy and conflict in Southern Thailand". The attitudes of the locals in Patani and in Thailand in general towards women in politics is an impeding factor affecting women's participation in the formal peace process. Nationally, 78% of Thais think that political leadership positions should mostly be for men, compared to a merely 8% that think that women should be as equally involved as men. The figures for Patani do not differ remarkably in this aspect, however among the Malay Muslim population, 74% prefer male dominance in political leadership which is higher than within the Buddhist group. 43 % of Buddhists in the South responded that they believed women should be as active as men in politics (Klein et al., 2010).

6.3 CONTRADICTING PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS

Surprisingly, many women claimed that they were not interested in direct participation in the peace talks. This was also reconfirmed in the informal conversations and in the focus group discussion. Rather, influence such as being able to voice their issues and impact the agenda was deemed enough. One respondent argued that women in civil society were not a stakeholder in the conflict and that they were not prepared for a participant role. By contrast, a second opinion countered the former position and firmly stated that women must have an active participant role in the peace talks because it concerns their future as well. Furthermore, this camp would also argue for the need of more confidence- and capacity-building specifically oriented towards preparing women for a role in the formal peace dialogue. Some women's own perception of their aspirations and status in society coincided well with the traditional gender stereotypes. They believed that women had specific roles in society and would therefore not try to break these norms. There were also voices who stressed that the topic of gender issues was taboo and difficult to discuss in a conservative and patriarchal environment. Thus, the views differed remarkably within the women's movement and it was also clear that women who worked with international donors were more prone to adopt a gender lens and feminist standpoint. Gender-

inclusive participation was therefore valued from different aspects, where some women only needed their issues to be on the peace table while other women emphasised the necessity of women in the decision-making processes in the talks. Another key point to remember, is that being a feminist in Patani might not be expressed in ways which are commonly known in Western discourse. The feminist battles in Patani included challenging militarization within their communities, protecting their families from falling apart in the conflict, earning enough money to sustain a living and in the meantime also rejecting sexism and patriarchy, through means women themselves deemed appropriate in their specific context.

6.4 THE GENDERED DYNAMICS OF THE PEACE PROCESS

The gendered structure in society was explicitly the main factor for male dominance in the peace process and a catalyst which exaggerated other barriers. Traditional gender roles hampered women's involvement in decision-making forums and the peace process especially in the formal sphere while enhancing male leadership. These structures based on gendered ideas affected both men and women. Not surprisingly, the role of women in Patani has traditionally been linked to being a good mother, wife and daughter. Women were expected to take care of the domestic realms and look after the family while men were perceived as the leaders of the families based on their role of being the main breadwinner. In order for men to exercise their leadership role, women had to become their counterpart, thus they were the followers. It should also be emphasized that the conflict reinforced these ideas by exaggerating militarism in society but at the same time also deconstructed traditional gender roles due to the changed social context. For instance, more women were forced to take up the role as the main breadwinner and leader in the families when their men were no longer able to.

Women were aware of what was expected of them and they also emphasized that challenging norms needed to be done in a sensitive manner.⁴⁵ Female research participants did not necessarily always see their roles as subordinate, rather they perceived their role as a supportive one.⁴⁶ A number of women were critical of the gender roles and expressed it by saying that women can do anything as long as it does not go against the religion.⁴⁷ With more and more people travelling outside of the country, ideas and views from other parts of the world

⁴⁵ Interview with Respondent 2, 10-07-2017, Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus, Pattani.

⁴⁶ Interview with Respondents 6 & 7, 15-07-2017, Ice-Cream Café, Yala.

⁴⁷ Interview with Respondent 1, 07-07-2017, City Centre of Pattani.

challenged the local dynamics. This reaffirms Connell's (2005) idea of gender as a social construct affected by global historical, economic and political dynamics. To only analyse gender as something local would be insufficient because of the globalised context.

Furthermore, a Thai Buddhist activist explained that traditional gender norms was not only the issue but also heteronormativity as another dimension of strong and controlling norms in Thailand and the women's movement:

“Going against social norms and especially gender roles is a big thing. Thai society is very strict on gender roles within the family. If you are a woman you are a wife, daughter, sister and mother. You have to do everything accordingly to the gender norms. A good mother cannot be lesbian or bisexual. A good mother needs to follow the norms of society. But it is not me.”⁴⁸

This finding implied that women who did not fit in the accepted social frame were disadvantaged not only in society but also in the women's movement. This reconfirms the intersectional claim that any analysis of exclusion must have a holistic approach that also focuses on sexuality, and other social indicators. The intersecting relations of these social indicators affected their opportunities to engage in social contexts. The above quote also disguised fundamental issues of acceptance, openness and tolerance in the women's movement. This is an issue which must be tackled to embrace more diversity in Patani and civil society. This is also an important point in post-colonial feminism, which seeks to strengthen the solidarity between women from different communities where “Diversity and difference are central values ... to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances” (Mohanty, 2003: 7).

Gender norms constituted the golden thread in analysing all the findings. The way society and people perceived women and men also structured the peace process and assumptions of what people were capable of and how they were to be treated. This pointed to the overreaching impact gender and other social identity markers had on people's lives and the chances of fulfilling their goals. Although, norms change and should not be viewed as static, this study argues that transformation does require incentives and cautious steering. Depending on only automatic and natural processes would risk the course of change to take unwanted turns, which is why it is important to keep the conversation alive and to be conscious of threats to equality.

⁴⁸ Interview with Respondent 10, 25-07-2017, Pattanion Café, Pattani.

6.5 THE ENTANGLED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE

Once a norm or a rule was deemed religious, it became difficult to challenge it because that would also mean that you were directly challenging the religion. Many interviewees recognized the strong interconnections between religion and culture in the area, which sometimes made it difficult to separate the two things. The intertwined relationship between religion and culture has profound implications on how women and men perceive themselves and their role in society. A Muslim activist and director of a local organization concluded that Islam and culture had been so entangled and leads many women and men to live their lives in accordance to what they thought was religious teachings but sometimes it was culture with patriarchal features. She criticised the way patriarchal structures and stereotypical gender norms were imposed in the name of Islam, which is a religion she knew was neither inherently misogynist or discriminative. The issue was people's perceptions and practices of it:

“Muslim women should conduct themselves in an Islamic way and respect the Quran. That does not mean to blindly respect men, but to respect the teachings of the Quran. People say this and that is Islamic law but in fact it is men's law and what they want women to be. We need to analyse Islamic law and discuss these issues further to get a clearer picture.”⁴⁹

A clearer distinction between religion and culture would be helpful for many women who found themselves confused about where to draw the line. The women were all clear that they would refuse any form of participation or involvement in the peacebuilding process which conflicted with their religious standpoints. In other words, doing anything regarded religiously unlawful was out of the question for most interviewees. On the other hand, culture was not something they had to strictly adhere to, which is why it was important to distinguish between the two. Worth noting is that culture was not seen as something static, but rather something that was slowly changing in the meeting with other cultures and being shaped by new generations. The cultural and religious setting in Patani was also a manifestation of the tension between moderate voices and more conservative factions of society, which is also evident in the women's movement. In many aspects, this tension was also an inter-generational issue, and linked to age hierarchy which is deeply rooted in Patani structures. Even if the younger generations were eager to push for more flexible and progressive views of religion, culture and social values,

⁴⁹ Interview with Respondent 8, 17-07-2017, Pattani.

they would be hindered by the fear of falling into conflict with respected senior figures. Finally, the issue was also a question about male dominance in religious institutions. For instance, the Islamic Committee, the religious court situated in each province with the mandate to oversee Islamic Family Law, did not employ a single woman (PATANI Working Group for Monitoring of International Mechanisms, 2017). Issues linked to marriage, divorce and inheritance were exclusively only dealt with by men. Unfortunately, I did not come across any figures of the sex-ratio in other religious institutions. The male-dominance in important institutions such as religious and public ones, impeded on women’s rights and their opportunities to change gender and social structures.

6.6 THE CLIMATE OF FEAR



Photo 4: “Military Vehicle and Check-Point”. Photo of military road-block taken in Ban Palat, 03-08-2017.



Photo 5: “Military control” Photo taken on the highway to Pattani, 09-08-2017.

The over decade long armed struggle between the military regime and separatist groups has militarized the society. A state of emergency has been invoked in Patani since 2004 and thousands of military personnel have been deployed to the area. Roadblocks, armed attacks, nightly raids, shootings and the sight of heavily armed soldiers constituted the daily lives of the population in Patani (see photos). The government’s response to the conflict has been increased securitization but ironically most of the interviewed women did not feel safer. Instead, women testified of an unfriendly environment for human rights defenders and peace activists where even the slightest criticism of the government had consequences.

The findings revealed that systematic harassment and intimidation by security personnel contributed to a climate of fear. However, the violence carried out by separatists also contributed to this unfriendly environment. Some organizations were forced to stop their activities out of fear of retributions. The tactics used varied but bared the same message, that the CSOs should stop their activities or face difficulties. Men tended to receive more serious threats and consequences while women were more often psychologically intimidated. For example, security forces often visited their offices and homes, asked them about their job and

even tried to discredit them online⁵⁰. It became clear that working for peace in a way which was not accepted by the government was risky business.⁵¹ A prominent female activist described one the practices of intimidation:

“I receive calls from the military asking me out to have tea. I have no other choice than to say yes, because if I do not agree it signals that I am against them which will cause issues for me. They said it was just a tea session as friends, but once we sat down, they started asking questions about my work, about the people who reports human rights violations and about other NGOs. They even asked about my opinions on certain things. Honestly, it felt more like an interrogation than a friendly dinner.”⁵²

This aspect highlighted the gendered nature of the discriminative security practices whereby women were not seen as a threat and the tactics used on them were therefore not as harsh as for the men. The fact that women were considered not as threatening allowed women to access places easier and their mobility was not as restricted compared to their male counterparts. The women were not only concerned about their own safety, as they were regularly being watched, but also that of their family's and project participants'. The climate of fear was a real challenge for women's participation due to many reasons. Firstly, the widespread impunity of security personnel in Patani legitimized their worries since there were no real boundaries for what the authorities were capable of. Secondly, the worrying fact that state agents who were meant to protect citizens were instead involved in harming them left little hope for the security of these women. Thirdly, the special laws in place in Patani, have been misused and abused by security forces for years without any legal consequences. Finally, the international coverage and interest of the conflict was limited, and Thailand did not receive much pressure about the human rights situation in the South. Women who worked for local organizations with no links to international or Bangkok-based actors were in a more vulnerable situation. However, it was stressed that these types of intimidation were targeting groups and individuals who worked with highly sensitive issues which risked the image of the state. Women's groups with good relations with the government did not experience the same issues.

⁵⁰ See chapter 2.4.

⁵¹ Interview with; Respondent 4, 13-07-2017, Yala; Respondent 5, 14-07-2017, Yarang, Pattani; Respondent 10, 25-07-2017, Pattanion Café, Pattani; Respondent 11, 26-07-2017, CS Hotel, Pattani; Respondent 12, 01-08-2017, TK Park, Yala; and Respondent 18, 10-08-2017, Owl Café, Pattani.

⁵² Interview with Respondent 17, 10-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

Another aspect of the climate of fear was the social pressure within and outside of the women's movement which made it difficult for people not to adhere to the norm in order to feel comfortable and safe. The women who were interviewed were certain that their work was too important to continue and saw it as a moral obligation not to stop. Controversial issues such as alternative governance, criticism of government brutality and abuse of power, rape and demands for accountability etc. could not be aired in the public which sometimes led to censorship and the shutting down of activities by the government. However, the militarization deepened the unequal power dynamics the soldiers, a group embodying militaristic masculinities and a masculine state, and women, especially minority and marginalized women's groups. On the other hand, the resistance from the women's groups, identified as the unwillingness to stop their work, against the oppressive methods of the security forces functioned as an important role model for other women. This also demonstrated power from the women, who were not going to submit to any unjust demands from the military. There was a clear intersectionality aspect of the intimidations as most of the affected women were from the Patani Malay (minority) communities and the soldiers were often Thai Buddhists. Several rights activists claimed that rural women were extremely vulnerable to misconduct from the military due to their limited knowledge of their own rights, which conforms with the theory of intersectionality's argument that oppression works on many levels and that the combined set of social indicators such as age, social class, ethnicity and gender shapes unique vulnerabilities for different women. The crackdown on civil society groups critical of the government did not only delegitimize the peace talks but also obstructed sustainable peacebuilding efforts seeking to transform the society.

6.7 MALE PERSPECTIVES OF BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

A growing recognition of gender inequality as a concern for both men and women has evolved in the last decades⁵³. To succeed in deconstructing patriarchal gender orders both female and male perspectives are valuable and needed to better inform policy and practice. Masculinities are important to discuss in conflict affected areas because of its link to violence, militarism and the continuation of war. Men are often seen as the "gatekeepers" of gender inequality which is why is it important to engage men in the challenge of creating a just society (Flood, 2007). This

⁵³ See for instance: Chant & Guntmann 2000; Connell 2005; Ertürk 2004; Flood 2007; Sudhakar & Kuehnast, 2011.

section presents the findings from the focus group discussion with male activists regarding women's role in the peacebuilding process.

The group agreed on the importance of women's contributions in peacebuilding efforts as well as the increased visibility of women in public. One participant credited a local women's group for the success of his own project:

“Since the early start of our organization, we have been benefitting a lot from a local women's group. They assisted us and taught us a lot. We often use their hall as the venue for our activities and even borrow their chairs.”

Examples of great achievements by women were brought up, such as widows' strong fight against state authorities in human rights cases, women's bravery in challenging gender norms and their ability to juggle activism and other duties. Although, they acknowledged women's status in the peace process, they reckoned that women did not have the power to reach the high-level talks in Kuala Lumpur. A participant asked the group:

“The big question is, how can women break the glass ceiling as a collective? When they fight in individual cases of human rights violations it is viewed as strong efforts. But when women mobilize, somehow, it gets stuck and do not go all the way. For example, when guys like us say something, the impact is strong. Why not for women?”⁵⁴

The participants discussed the question by implying that women as a collective lacked the legitimacy to participate because: firstly, women's groups were not united which caused them to lose momentum in their advancement towards increased participation, secondly, their work was not focused on peace and conflict resolution but rather dispersed and not seen as bearing political weight, and thirdly, women's groups were perceived as being backed up by powerful actors such as the state or the international community which affected their credibility and independence. Furthermore, the participants saw that sponsoring women's groups and highlighting gender issues was “good PR and sexy”⁵⁵ for international organizations. This further hurt the image of women's groups as being instructed and trained by foreign actors and not framing their own vision. Linking this to the post-colonial feminist critique, it is therefore,

⁵⁴ Focus group participant, 14-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

⁵⁵ Focus group participant, 14-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

vital for women's groups to identify their own goals and ambitions to avoid being hijacked by the grand objectives of international players.

The social context in Patani was also pinned by the participants as one of the main barriers for women's participation in the peacebuilding process. A participant explained "Women need to think about the consequences of their actions more because society judges them a lot. Not only for themselves but also for their parents and family"⁵⁶. The generational differences in the attitudes to women's role in society was another issue which affected women's opportunities to be visible in public space. Both women and men in the younger generations were bound to respect the elders by not going against their wishes. The focus group expressed their full support for women to be more active in the peace process but highlighted the issue of women victimizing themselves by adhering to the gender norms and upholding them. A male focus group participant informed that when one of his female relatives ran for a political position, she was often discouraged by other women who told her that "politics is dirty and not something for women to engage in"⁵⁷. According to one male participant, women set limitations by saying that they are not able to do certain things. The general view in the focus group discussion was that women needed to challenge the norms by being more outspoken and claim their space. This finding was contrasted with the perceptions of women who felt excluded and side-lined in the peace process. For instance, a female interviewee expressed this tension as follows:

"If we talk about gender issues, men feel like they have already granted us women space. But in the reality, is not really like that. That is why women do not dare to challenge the norms too much. It will cause conflicts."⁵⁸

In the perspective of intersectionality, it could be argued that views differed because of the stark differences in men's and women's lived realities and experiences. Men were not subjected to the same social constraints and regulation like women thus, some forms of oppression were not visible for men. However, the understandings of men added to a more holistic view of the issue and uncovered tensions between men and women in civil society. For example, the interviewed men were not in favour of a quota system to include more women in the peace dialogue or any other spaces. Merits not gender were to determine who would be participating according to

⁵⁶ Focus group participant, 14-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

⁵⁷ Focus group discussion participant 21, 14-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

⁵⁸ Interview with Respondent 17, 10-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

them (for a more elaborate discussion on gender quotas, see for instance Baldez, 2006; Mansbridge, 2005).

The norms of engagement between men and women also hindered some women's groups to work alongside male dominated organizations out of fear of negative social reaction. One male director of a local NGO concluded:

“Our organization has we never partnered with any women's groups. I was actually surprised when I realized this. We know each other privately but not professionally. In my hometown it is very difficult to work together in a mixed-sex context. People will talk and think it is more than work leading to gossip. So, it is very difficult in this society. Outside this area, it is acceptable.”⁵⁹

All men recognized the potential of more collaboration with women's groups as they could strengthen each other and fulfil common goals. A few participants even argued for men's involvement in raising issues of gender and women's inclusion in politics and the peacebuilding process. A female interviewee, with extensive knowledge of conflict resolution in Southeast Asia and over seven years of experience of working in Patani, said:

“I am a big believer of partnership. We need men and women to be agents of change. We need feminist men to go through the difficulties with us. During my time working with women I see this point as increasingly important.”⁶⁰

Furthermore, the interviewee also mentioned that international organizations and donor countries have neglected men in their gender programmes and projects. These findings showed the importance of incorporating both boys, men, girls and women in the struggle for fruitful changes in gender relations. As argued in the chapters 2.3 and 4.2.2, highlighting masculinities in favour of gender equality as an alternative to militaristic and other hegemonic masculinities is key in transforming gender norms.

⁵⁹ Focus group participant, 14-08-2017, Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani.

⁶⁰ Skype-interview with Respondent 27, 24-09-2017.

6.8 DISCUSSION

This section showed just a fraction of barriers to women's inclusion in the peace process. The pattern in the results highlighted gender norms as a consistent barrier which further impacted other factors as well. Norms coupled with the political economy context actively acted as limitations to women's participation in the peace process. Gendered structures in society did not only determine the "suitable" roles and tasks for women and men but also affected women's own attitudes of their position. For instance, the male participants emphasised that women set boundaries for themselves in taking an active part and conversations with female activists revealed that not all women in the peace movement were in favour of direct participation in the peace talks. The general conception of a gender order where men were "natural leaders" and women the followers, persisted in the women's movement as well. The sometimes-inadequate understandings of norms and culture as religious teachings impeded many women's visibility in the public sphere. However, this did not mean that the gender order was not challenged as some women questioned male dominance and called for greater autonomy.

The tense social environment due to the conflict also extended to the women's movement. Divisions within the movement were evident for both insiders and for the male activists who had observed many issues affecting the women's groups. Differences within the movement led to politicisation and power struggles. Women argued that their roles as peacebuilders by holding families together and working in the informal realm was just as important as being present in the formal peace process. This view is overshadowed by the focus on direct participation in the formal sphere. Moreover, gender norms also extended to the different ways female and male activists were treated by the militarised state which impeded differently on their freedoms and rights.

Concepts such as feminism were taboo and only a few interviewed women recognized themselves and their work as feminist in nature. Most women's groups did not discuss gender and feminism as neither a concept or a theoretical tool and the ones that did were influenced by international donors. Therefore, to assume all women's groups as having feminist objectives (mainstream understanding of feminism) proved wrong, because some of the interviewed groups functioned to support patriarchal structures such as the military and prevalent gender hierarchies. This thesis also attempted to include some male perspectives to allow for a more comprehensive study. Tensions between women's and men's perceptions were identified in relation to gender norms and how to challenge them effectively. For women it was a hard task

and almost impossible at times, while the men argued that women were stopping themselves and should push for change in a more active manner.

An interesting aspect of conflicts is that they shake the normalcy in society and social relations. Gender roles and women's status are among the things which change in conflicts. The challenge lay in maintaining the positive gains even after the conflict (Puechguirbal, 2010). Women in Patani have faced many difficulties and their experiences and changed status must therefore not be forgotten and neglected in neither the peace process nor in post-conflict reconstruction. The difficulty in moving towards alternative gender norms and social structures lies in the fundamental changes that must be made in society, between people, groups and on the individual level. It involves the end of practices deemed as not gender equal and unjust to other social groups. The struggle also lies in questioning and the dismantling of discriminative power concentrations to allow for other actors to benefit from economic, cultural, social and political gains.

7 IMPLICATIONS OF LIMITED WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACEBUILDING PROCESS

7.1 DRAWBACKS FOR WOMEN IN THE CASE OF A "PRIVILEGED MEN'S PEACE"

The potential failure of realizing gender-inclusive participation not only risks neglecting women's experiences, needs and priorities of the conflict, but also a peaceful future for all social groups in Patani. The issue of women's own perceptions and unwillingness to participate poses a serious challenge to including women in the Patani Peace Process. Many practical issues also stopped the women such as their lower economic status compared to men and their inexperience of politics. In addition to these factors, the local social environment mostly encouraged men to be at the forefront of politics and in the public sphere, thus creating an environment which did not enable women to be active participants in the peace process. A female interviewee expressed the hopelessness many women felt in struggling against gender norms:

"Some women do not want to talk about this issue (gender issues), even if they know about it. Because what's next? If men know and society knows, so what?"⁶¹

This attitude should not be interpreted as representative of all women who were interviewed, but rather to show that some women were not ready or eager to fight for change. The peace process presents an incredible opportunity for women to advance their concerns and claim more space in the public sphere. Thus, the essential task of the women's movement is to welcome and mobilize more people who believe in the cause of working for increased women's participation in decision-making.

As Labonte and Curry (2016) emphasize, security, stability and peace will not be realized without the full participation of women. Peace negotiations with limited women's participation will have little chance of succeeding in bringing transformative changes. By neglecting core issues of the conflict, tensions could be maintained and exaggerated, leading to deeper conflicts in Patani. The lack of women's engagement in the peace dialogue means that there is nobody to champion for women's rights and equal status. This jeopardizes the positive gains and women's increased status in society achieved during the conflict⁶². Importantly, exclusive peacemaking hinders any prospects of positive peace from a gender-sensitive perspective. If

⁶¹ Interview with Respondent 2, 10-07-2017, Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus, Pattani.

⁶² See chapter 5, specifically 5.1.4.

the peace dialogue succeeds and negotiations start, the aim is to agree upon a peace accord. The potential agreement would most probably be gender-blind due to limited women's participation at the formal level. Even if women would be invited for some form of engagement, such as submission of proposals or an observer role etc., they would still be rendered to exert minimal influence in the negotiations of vital issues for their existence.

Peace brokered by the current set-up of delegations would be a peace best described as a "privileged men's peace". This peace will most likely be a peace in favour of men to the detriment of women, rural populations, sexual minorities and other marginalized groups. This has direct implications on the legitimacy of a potential peace accord, which may be difficult to implement if local people would not recognize it. Furthermore, gender inequality is argued to be a contributing factor to heightened chances of re-emergence and continuation of conflict (Caprioli, 2005). Other priorities which might even lead to the undermining of women's status can be proposed and agreed upon. These are only a few reasons for why this thesis argues for the importance of gender-sensitive peacebuilding, which not only includes women in the process but also other marginalized groups and moreover, make sure that their interests are considered and realised. Past grievances which have caused much harm to the local population cannot be forgotten if peace is to be sustainable. Gender-sensitive peacebuilding has social justice and gender-equality as its core principles and any initiative must be assessed to ensure that it does not cause further harm and that it supports the deconstruction of patriarchy. For this reason, to extend the scope of the concept of peacebuilding, the women's movement and the society at large in Patani should engage in a discussion of these pressing issues. Otherwise, there is a slim chance of achieving gender-sensitive peacebuilding and gender-inclusive participation in this peace process.

From the aspect of WPS, the Patani case illustrates the tremendous efforts needed to implement the agenda. However, as Puechguirbal (2012) claims, the international system is based on patriarchal norms which exclude women from being active participants in many political spaces. For the WPS goals to be realised patriarchal structures at both the international and local level need to be deconstructed.

7.2 LACK OF LEGITIMACY OF THE PEACE TALKS

The peace dialogue has been characterised by mistrust from the local population in Patani. Many women's groups were critical of the talks and questioned the sincerity of the parties. Some even believed that the whole process was just a public relations stunt and that peace was not the real aim of the government. Locals and women's groups confirmed this point by describing the problematic context of the government's peace efforts which not only excluded women but also civil society at large, which is seen as the voice of the people.

“The real peace talks should be between the people in the area and villagers. Not only academics and politicians from the Thai side. Right now, we have a military government and their thinking is very narrow. If you talk to the military, it is different from a civilian government.”⁶³

The interviewees argued that if the parties genuinely wanted peace, it would be felt on the ground. Instead, the respondents pointed at the stark contrast between the harsh reality in Patani, where repressive counter-insurgency policies such as special laws and limitations of freedoms were used, and the lofty ambitions and promises of the peace dialogue. The steady increase in the state's defence budget since the military take-over (Parameswaran, 2017; Thai PBS, 2017), reconfirmed the scepticism of the government's real intentions. A local female activist claimed:

“There is a long way to peace. Justice is something that is essential for peace. No justice, no peace. As it is today, there is no justice for the people. If we are going to talk about peace we must talk about justice first. We need to have a look at the entire situation here in Patani and see if it's in line with peace.”⁶⁴

The little support and negative attitudes towards the peace process was reconfirmed in many informal conversations in the field. Evidently, there was a strong disconnect between the politics in Kuala Lumpur and local people who felt excluded from the peace talks. This fact will make it difficult for a peace accord to be legitimate in the eyes of the local population. In the worst case, it will give rise to a more complex conflict situation. The reflections of a female activist showed little support of the peace talks:

“Maybe in future peace talks, if things change, I would like to talk about women, torture and children. But from my point of view, from what I have seen in the

⁶³ Interview with Respondent 12, 01-08-2017, TK Park, Yala.

⁶⁴ Interview with Respondent 4, 13-07-2017, City Centre of Yala.

previous years of talks, the involved parties do not really know that much about peace processes. They do not have explicit knowledge about the creation of sustainable peace. The Thai government is only interested in sustaining violence or ending it while the Patani people wants more. The other party, Mara Patani do not know about everything that is going on at the ground level and lack control of the fighters. Their power is limited, and they will not be able to sign a good agreement.”⁶⁵

These findings further emphasize the importance of steering the peace dialogue towards a more gender-inclusive approach where the people in Patani both men and women feel they have a say in decisions regarding their future. For hope and confidence to be restored in the peace process, all sides must commit and compromise for peacemaking efforts to succeed. A good start would be to explore different mechanisms and opportunities to allow for a more gender-inclusive process.

7.3 WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Despite the barriers to gender-inclusive participation, this thesis identifies windows of opportunities for change. No processes or structures are constant and locked. There are openings for new ways of perceiving and doing things. But it requires bold moves as Labonte and Curry (2016) argue the “business as usual approach” of many states and actors will not lead to remarkable change and the fulfilment of the WPS Agenda.

In Thailand, the National Council for Peace and Order addressed the possibility of upcoming general elections in 2018.⁶⁶ A possible outcome could be the end of a four-year era of military and male dominated rule in Thailand and consequently the election of a civil government. A political transition from authoritarian rule to a prospective democratic system is an important factor both for the course of the peace talks and for gender-inclusive participation. For instance, Kabonesa (2005) argues that peace cannot be built in an undemocratic environment, where people do not have a voice in the decisions of their future and participation is exclusively reserved for power elites. This has been evident in the exclusive Patani Peace Process where restrictions on freedoms and rights blocked civil society and other actors from taking a critical

⁶⁵ Interview with Respondent 8, 17-07-2017, Pattani.

⁶⁶ BBC (2017-10-10) Thailand announces 2018 general election. Access: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41563661> (2017-11-08)

monitoring role in the dialogue and holding the parties accountable. Instead, women's groups were mainly providing services which the government failed to deliver to its citizens. However, women's access to higher education and a secure economic status could lead to increased women's political activism in the coming years.

The peace talks between the Thai government and Mara Patani have been criticised for not generating any concrete results after almost four years of dialogue. The peace dialogue is in its early trust building phase, but has already been associated with controversies and turbulent political events in Bangkok which have obstructed the process. Many question the legitimacy and credibility of the participants (Pathan & Tuansiri, 2014)⁶⁷. The frustration in civil society circles in Patani was hard to miss when talking about the peace talks. Not only were CSOs excluded but their role in the process was very unclear.⁶⁸

From the perspective of this research, the stalemate in the peace dialogue could serve as a window of opportunity for the realization of gender-inclusive participation. The ToR has been signed but lack substance and is vague in its formulations. For instance, there was no mention of either women or civil society.⁶⁹ The vague nature of the ToR opens for the possibility of both civil society and women's groups to change the direction of the peace talks and the entire peacebuilding process. With more knowledge about the current ToR, women's groups and the peace movement in Patani could look for loopholes and grey areas and lobby for their inclusion and increased involvement in future peace talks. Before this can happen, civil society and women's groups have the daunting task of uniting by accepting their differences, to be able to assert enough pressure for the dialogue parties to listen.

In a statement earlier this year, the Thai government announced the finalisation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Women, Peace and Security. However, no timeline or budget has specifically been allocated to the NAP (PeaceWomen, 2017)⁷⁰. The NAP could also open up for more equal participation in the Patani Peace Process depending on the scope and depth of the document.

⁶⁷ See for instance: Pathan, D., & Tuansiri, E. (2012) Negotiating a Peaceful Coexistence between the Malays of Patani and the Thai State & (2014) Negotiating the Future of Patani.

⁶⁸ Informal conversations in the field, at attended events and focus group discussion, Pattani.

⁶⁹ Informal interview with a source with access to links within the government delegation of the peace talks.

⁷⁰ PeaceWomen, (2017) Access: <http://peacewomen.org/action-plan/national-action-plan-thailand> (10-11-2017)

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Women's groups were involved in the informal peace process due to a need for them to serve as caregivers, educators, leaders and providers of various services. The social realities changed by the conflict left women caught in between their old roles and new responsibilities in the absence of men. Women's role in the informal sphere was less provocative because the nature of their activities overlapped with the prevalent gender roles. Furthermore, women had more mobility and easier access to certain places than men, which facilitated their presence in the informal sphere. In contrast, women were hindered to take a meaningful role in the peace talks because it actively challenged the gender norms of women as the supporters of male leaders. The dialogue was seen as a political sphere where women did not participate. The gender order in Thailand favoured male leadership which affected women's position in the peacebuilding process by excluding them from decision-making roles. Thus, women's engagement in the peace process was kept within the boundaries of the gender order. The PAOW case informed that the boundaries were drawn by influential men and that women were involved in the capacity of a supportive role rather than actors with decision-making powers - a role reserved for men.

The narrow scope of the peacebuilding objective and the immaturity of the peace dialogue also contributed to the exclusion of women. Only the warring parties were invited based on their assumed power to stop violence, thus the official position of the Thai state implied the preference of negative peace. The exclusion of women in the Patani Peace Process was an expression of patriarchal power structures reinforcing norms that created an unpleasant environment for women to operate in, which stresses the need for emphasising the feminist objective of deconstructing patriarchy for a more equal and socially just society. Women also played a role in hindering themselves to take active roles in the peace process because of their understanding of religion, sociocultural norms and conflicts within the movement. The absence of a united women's coalition hindered a collective and strategic effort to call for inclusive and gender-sensitive peacebuilding. Moreover, the overall political and economic situation in Thailand with a military junta in power, suppressed the potential of civil society and women to be critical actors in the peace process.

Limited women's participation undermined the dialogue and weakened the peacebuilding process by excluding civil voices. The exclusion of both women and civil society in the dialogue

left a bitter aftertaste, which could lead to difficulties in future implementation of any peace accord. The disconnect between the high-level negotiations and the Patani people was repeatedly expressed in the field. Women's groups pointed at the low trust in the sincerity of parties and lack of local ownership in relation to the formal peace process. Consequently, women's exclusion from the peace talks risk side-lining core issues, which is important to settle for sparking transformative changes. However, the women's movement should not lose sight of their goal to participate in the talks. Rather, the unstable phase of the dialogue could be a window of opportunity for increasing inclusivity. That would require civil society to build a strong common position to pressure the dialogue parties about democratizing the talks.

Furthermore, realization of gender-inclusive participation was dependent on the objective of the peacebuilding process. There was no space for inclusive participation in peacebuilding where the aim was not to change discriminative structures and systems. Thus, the challenge to create a peacebuilding process, which holds transformation and equality as core aspirations, remains for people in Patani.

8.2 THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

The concept of gender-sensitive peacebuilding served as an important theoretical example which was essential in the analysis. As discussed in chapter 3.2, Hudson (2009) stresses that peacebuilding from a feminist perspective would prioritise inclusivity and social injustices and inequalities, thus, not solely the end of violence. This thesis, argues for a post-colonial feminist perspective to be applied for the sake of gender-inclusiveness and to highlight problematic aspects of "liberal" peacebuilding. The exclusion of women in the dialogue was blatant without any indications of change. Only a few male figures linked to politics and military groups, typical male dominated realms in Thailand, were welcomed to negotiate in a dialogue which more resembled an "exclusive gentlemen's club". The restricted talks signalled that the priority of the Thai government, the initiator of the peace dialogue, was not to engage in a transformative peacebuilding process but rather to maintain its power and control. These insights showed how the peacebuilding objective is a crucial matter because it affects the prospects of peace, and more importantly, what kind of peace that will be created. If the objective is to only end direct violence, only individuals viewed as capable of doing that will sit on the negotiation table. However, if the goals are to transform unequal structures and initiate social progress in society (Gardner & El-Bushra, 2013), a diverse range of people is needed. Furthermore, the

peacebuilding efforts in Patani were far from gender-sensitive because it did not consider the gendered aspects of building peace. Nevertheless, some women's groups pushed for a gender lens in peacebuilding with assistance from international donors. But not all women's groups adopted it or even accepted the idea of gender as something problematic. The difficulty in addressing gender-sensitive peacebuilding in Patani had to do with the limited internal discussion about gendered processes in peace and conflict. This conversation must be initiated by the local population themselves and not outsiders. The Patani case also showed that peacebuilding works both top down and bottom-up, emphasizing the need for an enabling environment at the grassroots level to enhance the chances of peace.

The notion of peace promoted by the government was hollow which was reconfirmed by the practice of intimidating activists who are critical of the peace process. This signalled that the military junta was not genuinely interested making peace or that they only accepted a depoliticised notion of peace lacking substance. Galtung's (2015) negative peace was strongly adhered to by the government side causing tensions between the different forms of peace imagined in gender-sensitive peacebuilding. Since the start of the conflict, the government has tried to reconnect with the people of Patani by grand socioeconomic development projects to show its good intentions (Timberman, 2013). However, this type of peacebuilding is exactly what Denskus (2007) argue against, because it fails to solve the root causes. Instead the magic solutions preferred by the governments are development initiatives. The opportunities for the current peacebuilding phase to bring change and transformation has seemingly, lost its momentum. The political environment in Thailand with a repressive ruling military suppressed the opportunities of people to have a voice and agency in the peace process. Instead, gender-blind peacebuilding is underway which might cause unwanted outcomes and reinforce unequal gender and social orders (Gardner & El-Bushra, 2013). The role of women's groups is to resist a peacebuilding process which sidelines more than half of the population in Patani. What was missing in the conceptualisation of gender-sensitive peacebuilding was how to realise it in a context with lack of political will from the government and an ongoing conflict which disabled civil society.

Drawing from the empirical findings, gender-sensitive participation in Patani was limited. Not surprisingly, the likelihood of realising gender-inclusive participation in a gender-blind peacebuilding context is small. Thus, this study highlights the interconnected relation between these two concepts and that without a transformative peacebuilding objective, power elites dominate the peace negotiations.

Gender-inclusive participation was explored in terms of visibility of women in the dialogue and their opportunities to have an impact in the peace process. An assumption, which was challenged by some female interviewees who claimed that they were participating in the peace process but not in the way which the WPS discourse conceptualised participation. The definition of gender-sensitive participation thus, failed to capture the discreet efforts of women in more informal capacities such as influencing in the background and in the private domains through fostering a new generation. These efforts became invisible, in the hope of focusing exclusively on the direct participation in the talks, but were valued by women in Patani, and thus concluding that both indirect participation and public activism might strengthen women's impact and influence. Influence and engagement is exercised on multiple levels while the WPS Agenda and feminist discourse focus on measurable and apparent types of participation. To make women's role and power more visible, there is a need of rethinking participation to encompass a broader spectrum of activities.

The feminist project of increasing women's participation in decision-making spheres (O'Rourke, 2014) was not agreed upon by all women in Patani. The WPS Agenda and feminist discourse are based on the assumption that all women strive for direct political participation. The contradiction between the normative WPS framework and the social realities in Patani, reconfirmed post-colonial feminism's emphasis on not assuming or essentialising the wills and needs of women because the variety is too great. Struggles fought by Western feminists may not be applicable to women's groups facing patriarchal oppression through intimidations by state agencies. Patriarchy comes in many forms and the impact of contexts and historical background is key to understanding the plight of women (Mohanty, 2013). However, the idea of gender-inclusive participation is that women who are eager to participate should have a chance in doing so.

Gender-inclusivity was only applied in a minimal sense in the dialogue and best described as conditional participation for women. In other words, women's groups were hindered to participate on their own terms but rather on the benevolence of powerful men. This conclusion further strengthens the claim of many feminist authors saying that patriarchy in all its shapes must be addressed and deconstructed for women to enjoy their full rights and opportunities (McWilliams, 2015; Moosa et al., 2015; Porter, 2003). The PAOW example also raised the necessity of developing frameworks or mechanisms to ensure certain standards in the implementation of gender-inclusivity. This is to avoid the misuse of the concept and to stress that it involves more than having good relations to women's groups. This view of participation

embraces the meaningful involvement of women in all instances of the peace process. A thin understanding or application of gender-inclusive participation risks further alienating women from decision-making processes.

As discussed in chapter five, the political economy of Thailand created a strong interconnected relationship between privilege and participation. For example, many educated women with good merits were hindered from taking an active role due to their domestic duties - a great loss for the women's movement. A general advancement of women's rights and status would therefore enhance gender-inclusive participation. Furthermore, this implies that only focusing on gender parity in peacebuilding contexts, may lead to the domination of privileged women, which is not in accordance to the aim of gender-inclusivity. Post-colonial and intersectional feminism, serves the purpose of stressing the importance of diversifying any effort to build a women's coalition. Gender-inclusivity must also address men and masculinities (Flood, 2007) and support the collaboration between men and women. This peace process illustrated the missed opportunities for transformative changes at the grassroots level due to restricted partnerships between men and women.

The dichotomy of informal and formal peacebuilding was helpful to emphasize women's activities which would normally go unseen (Porter, 2003). But it was also problematic because it reinforced the gendered idea of public and private spheres and that somehow the informal sphere became of secondary importance compared to the formal process. A re-evaluation and clearer definitions of the different spheres of peacebuilding would ease this tension and add clarity to these terms. The informal peace process from the Patani case study, was defined as *spaces and processes of non-official peacebuilding initiatives at the grassroots level carried out by civil society without resulting in any legal or formalized document.*

Post-colonial and intersectional feminism raised awareness about uneven power relations and questioned the relationship between knowledge and domination. Furthermore, women's vulnerabilities were explored by looking beyond gender. The implementation of WPS in the South could benefit from these critical perspectives due to their emphasis on the cultural, historical and contextual specificities of every place. These theories also open for dissecting the biases of the agenda, to connect more people to the implementation without risking reproducing Western imperialism.

Most importantly, in this thesis, the idea of solidarity put forward by Mohanty (2013) reflected the current issues in the women's movement and offers tools for women's leaders to bring unity in the movement.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

8.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The chance of interacting with both men and women in this research project, exposed hidden insights. For instance, the lack of communication and division within civil society and the women's movement hindered both parties to play a strong role in the peace process. Women's groups could benefit from joining forces with men in civil society in their struggles towards a gender equal society. Regional partnerships would further enrich the women's movement. As post-colonial feminism emphasizes, solidarity is possible between the different groups. The key is to unite around a common mission. This also extends to welcoming marginalised and stigmatized groups to the women's movement and creating space for them to voice their concerns. To address the issue of limited political literacy and space, a locally initiated platform for women to acquire political skills and knowledge could build necessary confidence, but most importantly future leaders.

8.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AND DONORS

The lack of awareness about the WPS Agenda in civil society circles presents the opportunity for donors and policy makers to increase efforts in informing about the framework and its tools. Thailand's NAP could serve as a good entry point to start the discussion about WPS in Patani. Women's groups specifically called for more funding in the area of political empowerment. Donors should assess the possibilities of involving men in programmes addressing gender issues. Special attention must be paid to women and communities in the margins.

This study emphasizes the importance of any conflict analysis or risk analysis to also adopt a gender-sensitive approach to better guide the suitability and planning of projects. It is essential for donors to remember the sensitive context and that any intervention should not risk fuelling any more tension between different social groups. The post-colonial and intersectional feminist

perspectives helped to uncover the interaction of women's multiple disadvantages and consider hard to reach groups. Foreign actors should prioritise balancing their own objectives and the actual needs and will of the women in the projects.

8.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND

The positive steps of the government to open for PAOW's participation and the finalisation of the NAP are welcomed steps towards gender equality. However, more engagement with the women's movement and civil society would enhance the peace efforts. The government of Thailand should evaluate the opportunities to implement mechanisms for sustained and meaningful involvement of these groups. Since Thailand is party to several international human rights treaties and bound to follow these, more effort is needed to engage women in the political sphere and in the peace talks. Furthermore, the worrying findings about intimidation of human rights activists in Patani suggests that the government should immediately oversee the policies and code of conduct of the security agencies and investigate any wrongdoing.

8.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

With the background of this study, I would like to suggest some fields for future research to hopefully contribute more insights to enhance women's chances of participating in peacebuilding efforts.

This thesis included male perspectives into the discussion about women's participation. The method of working with both women and men in gender studies not only results in added knowledge but also the involvement of men into the work of realising gender equality. The lack of studies on men's attitudes and behaviour in relation to masculinities is evident in the peace and conflict discipline which opens up for more future research.

The inspiration of this research project stemmed from the lack of information and data about women's role in the Patani Peace Process. I further found that the implementation of the WPS Agenda also faced the issue of lack of reliable data and consistent indicators for monitoring progress. Against this backdrop, research about effective methodologies for measuring and assessing WPS goals is crucial.

This thesis focused on the barriers but it is equally important to engage in more in-depth research about entry points for women's participation. For instance, this includes research about the relationship between economic empowerment and women's political agency and how these could be realised simultaneously. Post-colonial feminism emphasized the problematic term of peacebuilding and sparked an interest in alternative conflict resolution and local processes which could be more effective and open for participation from non-traditional political actors. With the growing challenge of new wars and intra-state conflicts, more critical perspectives are needed regarding paths towards democratizing the peacebuilding processes.

The research did not include the voices of government officials or individuals from the separatist side. However, their views about the exclusion of women in their delegations are essential. Future research could focus on these two actors and international organisations involved in Thailand to see how they are working with the WPS agenda. This could be linked to the broader field of WPS research about gaps in the implementation at the local level.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amnesty International (2017) Thailand Country Page. Access: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/thailand/> (2017-10-31)

Andre, V. (2008) Southern Thailand: A cosmic war? In S. Khatab, M. Bakashmar, & E. Ogru (Eds.), *Radicalisation crossing borders: New directions in Islamist and jihadist political, intellectual and theological thought and practice, refereed proceedings from the international conference, 26-27 November 2008, Parliament House, Melbourne Victoria*. Caulfield: Global Terrorism Research Centre, Monash University.

Bean, J. (2013) "Thailand's little-known peace process", *The Diplomat*, July 2013. Access: <http://thediplomat.com/2013/07/thailands-little-known-peace-process/> (2017-10-31)

Bell C. and O'Rourke C. (2010) "Peace agreements or pieces of paper? The impact of UNSC Resolution 1325 on peace processes and their agreements." *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 59(4): 941-980.

Berghof Foundation (ed.) (2012) *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation. 20 notions for theory and practice*. Berlin

Bjarnegard, E. (2009) *Men in Politics. Revisiting Patterns of Gendered Parliamentary Representation in Thailand and Beyond*. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Government, Uppsala University.

Bjarnegrđ E, & Melander, E. (2011) Disentangling gender, peace and democratization: the negative effects of militarized masculinity, *Journal of Gender Studies*, 20(2):139-154.

Bjarnegard, E., Melander, E., Bardall, G., Brounéus, K., Forsberg, E., Johansson, K., Sellström, M. A., & Olsson, L. (2015) Gender, peace, and armed conflict. In: *SIPRI Yearbook 2015*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 101–109.

Björkdahl A., Selimovic J.M. (2016) Gender: The Missing Piece in the Peace Puzzle. In Richmond O.P., Pogodda S., Ramović J. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Disciplinary and Regional Approaches to Peace*. Palgrave Macmillan, London

Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Boonpunn, K. C., & Rolls, M. G. (2016). The role of civil society in peacebuilding in southern Thailand. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 16(4), 376-383.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods*, 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University.

Burke, A., Tweedie, P & Poocharoen, O. (2013) *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance. The Case of Southern Thailand*. The Asia Foundation.

Caprioli M. (2005) “Primed for violence: the role of gender inequality in predicting internal conflict,” *International Studies Quarterly* 49(2): 161–178.

Chalermripinyorat, R. (2015) How to End Thailand's Southern Insurgency. *The Diplomat*. Access: <http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/how-to-end-thailands-southern-insurgency/> (2017-10-09).

Chambers, C. (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies: **Feminism***. (Eds) Freedon, M. & Stears, M. Oxford. UK.

Chang P., Alam M., Warren R., Bhatia R., Turkington E. (2015) *Women leading peace: A close examination of women's political participation in peace processes in Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Kenya, and the Philippines*. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

Chant, S. H., & Gutmann, M. C. (2000). *Mainstreaming men into gender and development: Debates, reflections, and experiences*. Oxfam.

Chughtai, S. (2015). Women, Peace and Security: Keeping the promise. How to revitalize the agenda 15 years after UNSCR 1325. Access: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/women-peace-and-security-keeping-promise> (2017-10-05)

Coomaraswamy, R. (2015). *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: A global study on the implementation of United Nations security council resolution 1325*. UN Women.

Confortini, C. C. (2006). Galtung, violence, and gender: The case for a peace studies/feminism alliance. *Peace & Change*, 31(3), 333-367.

Connell, R. (2005). Change among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities, and Gender Equality in the Global Arena. *Signs*, 30(3), 1801-1825.

Crenshaw K. (1991) Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*. 43(6): 1241-1299.

Crisis Group (2016) *Southern Thailand's Peace Dialogue: No Traction*, Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°148. Access: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/southern-thailand-s-peace-dialogue-no-traction> (2017-10-09).

Crisis Group (2015) *Southern Thailand: Dialogue in doubt*, Report Asia n°270. Access: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/270-southern-thailand-dialogue-in-doubt.pdf> (2017-11-22).

Davies, E., S, Nackers, K & Teitt, S. (2014) Women, Peace and Security as an ASEAN priority, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 68:3, 333-355.

Denskus, T. (2007) Peacebuilding does not build peace, *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5): 656-662.

Domingo, P.; Holmes, R.; Rocha Menocal, A.; Jones, N.; Bhuvanendra, D.; Wood, J. (2013) *Assessment of the evidence of links between gender equality, peacebuilding and statebuilding*. Literature review. ODI, London, UK.

El-Bushra, J. (2007) Feminism, Gender, Women's Peace Activism. *Development and Change*. 38(1): 131–147.

Engvall, A & Andersson, M. (2014) The Dynamics of Conflict in Southern Thailand. *Stockholm School of Economics Asia Working Paper Series*. No.2014-33.

Ertürk, Y. (2004). Considering the Role of Men in Gender Agenda Setting: Conceptual and Policy Issues. *Feminist Review*, (78), 3-21

FIDH, Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Protection International (PI), and the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD). (2017). In Harm's Way. Access: <http://protectioninternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Thailande694aweb.pdf> (2017-10-09).

Flood, M. (2007). Involving men in gender policy and practice. *Critical Half: Bi-Annual Journal of Women for Women International*, 5(1), 9-13.

Freedom House (2017) Thailand Country Page. Access: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/thailand> (2017-10-09).

Frontline defenders (2017) Thailand Country Page. Access.
<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/profile/anchana-heemmina> (2017-10-09).

Galtung, J. (2015) Peace. In: Wright ed. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (Second Edition) Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp.618-623.

Gardner, J., & El-Bushra, J. (2013). From the forefront of peace and reconciliation: testimonies from women building peace. 2013, *Accord Insight*, Women building peace special edition, 10.

Goetz., A.M. & Jenkins, R. (2016) Gender, security, and governance: the case of Sustainable Development Goal 16, *Gender & Development*, 24(1):127-137.

Haeri, M & Puechguirbal, N. (2010) From helplessness to agency: examining the plurality of women's experiences in armed conflict. *International Review of the Red Cross*. 92(877):103-122.

Henton, G. (2014) Thai Army hands out weapons to civilians in Southern conflict. VICE News. Access: <https://news.vice.com/article/thai-army-hands-out-weapons-to-civilians-in-southern-conflict> (2017-10-09).

Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6), 455-468.

Hernes, H. (2014) Global Aspects of Women's Participation, PRIO Policy Brief, 7. Oslo: PRIO.

Horstmann, A. (2008). Approaching peace in Patani, Southern Thailand—some anthropological considerations. *Asia Europe Journal*, 6(1), 57-67.

Hudson, H. (2009) Peacebuilding Through a Gender Lens and the Challenges of Implementation in Rwanda and Côte d'Ivoire, *Security Studies*, 18(2): 287-318.

Hudson, H. (2012) A Double-edged Sword of Peace? Reflections on the Tension between Representation and Protection in Gendering Liberal Peacebuilding, *International Peacekeeping*, 19(4): 443-460.

Human Rights Watch (2007) “It Was Like Suddenly My Son No Longer Existed,” Enforced Disappearances in Thailand’s Southern Border Provinces. New York.

Human Rights Watch (2014) Southern Separatist target women. Access: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/04/thailand-southern-separatists-target-women>

HRW (2016) Thailand: Insurgents Target Civilians. Accessible via: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/25/thailand-insurgents-target-civilians-south> (2017-10-30)

HRW (2017) Thailand: Rights Crisis Deepens Under Dictatorship. Accessible via: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/12/thailand-rights-crisis-deepens-under-dictatorship> (2017-10-30)

Human Rights Watch (2017) World Report: Thailand. New York.

Inclusive Security (2007) (2nd version) INCLUSIVE SECURITY, SUSTAINABLE PEACE: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action. UK.

Internal Displacement Organization (2011) Buddhist minority declines the ‘Deep South’ due to protracted armed conflict. Access: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-south-east-asia/thailand/2011/buddhist-minority-declines-the-deep-south-due-to-protracted-armed-conflict> (2017-10-30)

International Commission of Jurists & Justice for Peace Foundation (2012) *Women’s Access to Justice: Identifying the Obstacles & Need for Change - Thailand*. Access:

<http://icj.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/ICJ-JPF-Report-Thailand-Womens-Access-to-Justice-English.pdf> (2017-10-30)

Iwanaga, K. (Ed.). (2008). *Women and politics in Thailand: continuity and change* (No. 1). NIAS Press.

Jory, P. (2007). From Melayu Patani to Thai Muslim: The spectre of ethnic identity in southern Thailand. *South East Asia Research*, 15(2), 255-279.

Kabonesa, C. (2005). 'Gender Mainstreaming and Implications for Peace', in Dina Rodriguez and Natukunda-Togboa (eds). *Gender and Peacebuilding in Africa*, University for Peace, San Jose.

Khamis, M., Plush, T., & Zelaya, C. S. (2009). Women's rights in climate change: using video as a tool for empowerment in Nepal. *Gender & Development*, 17(1): 125-135.

Kirby, P. & Shepard, L. J. (2016), The futures past of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. *International Affairs*, 92: 373–392

Klein, J., McQuay, K., Meisburger, T., Tweedie, P., Alvord, D., Pichaikul, R., & Lelahuta, A. (2010). *Democracy and conflict in Southern Thailand*. Bangkok: The Asia Foundation.

Kronsell, A., & Svedberg, E. (Eds.) (2011). *Making Gender, Making War: violence, military and peacekeeping practices*. (Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality). Routledge.

Labonte, M., & Curry, G. (2016). Women, Peace, and Security: Are We There Yet?. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 22(3): 311-319.

Lamey, J. (2013) Peace in Patani? The Prospect of a Settlement in Southern Thailand. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 2(2): 1-17.

Lukatela, A. (2016) Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the OSCE: The Power of Middle Management Norms in the Policy Process. *Security and human rights*, 27: 45-58.

Mark, E. (2017) Roadblocks to Peace in Southern Thailand. *The Diplomat*. Access: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/roadblocks-to-peace-in-southern-thailand/> (2017-10-25).

McCargo, D. (2014) Southern Thailand: From conflict to negotiations? *Lowy Institute for International Policy*. Access: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/mccargo_southern-thailand_0_0.pdf

McDermott, G. B. (2013). Barriers Toward Peace in Southern Thailand. *Peace Review*, 25(1): 120-128.

McWilliams, M. (2015) Women at the Peace Table: The Gender Dynamics of Peace Negotiations. in Maureen Flaherty (ed.), *Gender and Peacebuilding*, Lexington Press.

Melvin, N. J. (2007) Conflict in Southern Thailand Islamism, Violence and the State in the Patani Insurgency. *SIPRI Policy Paper No. 20*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Moosa Z., Rahmani M. and Webste, L. (2013) From the private to the public sphere: new research on women's participation in peace-building, *Gender & Development*, 21(3):453-472.

Mohanty, C. T. (1988). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review*, 0(30), 61.

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Zubaan.

Mohanty, C. T. (2013). Transnational Feminist Crossings: On Neoliberalism and Radical Critique. *Signs, Intersectionality: Theorizing Power, Empowering Theory*,38(4): 967-991

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (2017) Mapping Women, Peace and Security in the UN Security Council: 2016. Policy Brief. New York.

O'Shaughnessy, S., & Krogman, N. T. (2012) A revolution reconsidered? Examining the practice of qualitative research in feminist scholarship. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 37(2): 493-520.

O'Reilly, M. (2015) Why Women? Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies. *Inclusive Security*. Access: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Why-Women-Inclusive-Security-and-Peaceful-Societies.pdf>

O'Reilly M., Súilleabháin O A. and Paffenholz T. (2015) “Reimagining Peacemaking: Women’s Roles in Peace Processes,” New York: International Peace Institute.

O'Rourke, C. (2014) 'Walk[ing] the Halls of Power'? Understanding Women's Participation in International Peace and Security. *Melbourne Journal of International Law*, 15 (1): 128-154.

Parameswaran, P. (2017). *The Truth About Thailand’s 2017 Defense Budget ‘Hike’*. The Diplomat. Access: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/the-truth-about-thailands-2017-defense-budget-hike/> (2017-11-12)

PATANI Working Group for Monitoring of International Mechanisms (2017) SITUATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MALAY MUSLIM WOMEN IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. JOINT CEDAW SHADOW REPORT. Access: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/THA/INT_CEDAW_NGO_THA_27699_E.pdf (2017-09-10)

Pathan, D. (2012) Hearts and minds not won in Thailand's deep South, *The Nation*. Access: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/opinion/Hearts-and-minds-not-won-in-Thailands-deep-South-30180615.html> (2017-09-10)

Pathan, D., & Tuansiri, E. (2012). *Negotiating a Peaceful Coexistence between the Malays of Patani and the Thai State*. Pattani: Patani Forum.

Peet, R. & Hartwick, E.R. (2015). *Theories of development: contentions, arguments, alternatives*. (Third edition.)

Porter, E. (2003) Women, Political Decision-Making, and Peace-Building, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 15(3): 245-262.

Prachatai (2014) Iron flowers of the Deep South: The story of female paramilitaries and identity conflict. <https://prachatai.org/english/node/4313> (2017-10-05)

Pratt, N. & Richter-Devroe, S. (2011) Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 13(4): 489-503.

Puechguirbal, N. (2012) The Cost of Ignoring Gender in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations: *A Feminist Perspective*, *Amsterdam Law Forum* 4:4-19

Ramsey, A. (2016 June 25) South Thailand's battle against the trauma of conflict, Al Jazeera. Access: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/06/south-thailand-battle-mental-trauma-160606073411685.html> (2017-09-10)

Rehn, E. & Sirleaf, J. E. (2002) *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*. New York. UNIFEM.

Nindang, S. (2017) *Breaking the Deadlocks to Peace in Southern Thailand*. Asia Foundation

Access: <http://asiafoundation.org/2017/01/11/breaking-deadlocks-peace-southern-thailand/>
(2017-09-10)

Sjoberg, L. & Via, S. (eds.) (2010). *Gender, war, and militarism: feminist perspectives*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger.

Sjoberg, L. (2013) Viewing Peace Through Gender Lenses. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 27(2): 175-187.

Small, M. L. (2009) How many cases do I need?: on science and the logic of case selection in field-based research *Ethnography* 10:5-38.

Sudhakar, N., & Kuehnast, K. R. (2011). *The other side of gender: Including masculinity concerns in conflict and peacebuilding*. United States Institute of Peace.

Sumner, A., & Tribe, M. (2008) 'What is 'Rigour' in Development Studies?' In *International Development Studies. Theories and Methods in Research and Practice*, London: Sage, pp. 99-127.

Strachan, A. L. & Haider, H. (2015). *Gender and conflict: Topic guide*. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

Stone L. (2015). Study of 156 peace agreements, controlling for other variables, Quantitative Analysis of Women's participation in Peace Processes in *Reimagining Peacemaking: Women's Roles in Peace Processes*.

Thai PBS English News. (2017). *Defence budget on steady rise in past three years*. Available at: <http://englishnews.thaipbs.or.th/defence-budget-steady-rise-past-three-years/> (2017-11-12)

Tickner, J. A. (2011). Retelling IR's foundational stories: some feminist and postcolonial perspectives, *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 23(1): 5-13.

UNDP. (2016-02-10) Livelihood opportunities for women in southern Thailand boosted through training and small grants. Access: <http://www.th.undp.org/content/thailand/en/home/presscenter/articles/2016/02/10/livelihood-opportunities-for-women-in-southern-thailand-boosted-through-training-and-small-grants.html> (2017-09-19)

UNDP. (2017) Thailand Country Info. Access: <http://www.th.undp.org/content/thailand/en/home/countryinfo.html> (2017-09-19)

UN Women. (2012). Women's participation in peace negotiations: Connections between presence and influence. *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security*.

UN Women. (2017) Country Overview Thailand. Access: <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand> (2017-10-05).

Walker, D. (2009). A Conference on Ways Men of Religion can Help Restore Peace in Southern Thailand (Patani). *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 29(3): 417-423.

Wibben, A. (2011). Feminist Politics in Feminist Security Studies. *Politics & Gender*, 7(4), 590-595.

Win, Lei, T. (2011) INTERVIEW: Muslim women in southern Thailand face discrimination by civil and religious law. *Thomson Foundation News*. 14 March. <http://news.trust.org/item/20110314060500-6st2k> (2017-10-05)

Wongcha-um, P. (2015) Thai army, Muslim rebels hold closed-door peace talks in Malaysia. Channel News Asia. Access: <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/thai-army-muslim-rebels-hold-closed-door-peace-talks-in-malaysia-8228506> (2017-10-05)

Wright, H. (2014) Masculinities, conflict and peacebuilding. Perspectives on men through a gender lens. Saferworld Report.

World Bank (2017) Thailand Overview. Access:
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/thailand/overview> (2017-09-19)

Zakaria, R. (2017) The Myth of Women's Empowerment. The New York Times. Access:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/opinion/the-myth-of-womens-empowerment.html>
(2017-10-05)

10 APPENDICES

10.1 APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP RESPONDENTS

Number of respondent	Age	Sex	Location	Date
1	29	F	Pattani	07-07-2017
2	31	F	Pattani	10-07-2017
3	55	M	Pattani	10-07-2017
4	31	F	Pattani	13-07-2017
5	32	F	Yala	14-07-2017
6	35	F	Yarang	15-07-2017
7	27	F	Ice-cream Café, Yala	15-07-2017
8	35	F	Ice-cream Café, Yala	17-07-2017
9	37	F	Pattani	23-07-2017
10	35	F	N/A	25-07-2017
11	40	F	Pattanian Cafe, Pattani	26-07-2017
12	27	F	CS Hotel, Pattani	01-08-2017
13	55	F	TK Park, Yala	02-08-2017
14	34	M	Pattani	03-08-2017
15	38	F	Yala	03-08-2017

16	37	F	Yala	05-08-2017
17	29	F	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	10-08-2017
18	26	F	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	10-08-2017
19	42	F	Owl Café, Pattani	10-08-2017
20	50	F	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	10-08-2017
21	34	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
22	40	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
23	28	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
24	30	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
25	37	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
26	37	M	Prince of Songkhla University, Pattani	14-08-2017
27	50	F	N/A	24-09-2017

10.2 APENDIX 2 - LIST OF ATTENDED EVENTS

The following events were attended during the fieldwork (listed as **ORGANIZATION (ANONYMIZED)** – Name of event – Venue. Date)

1. **ORGANIZATION 1** – Think Tank Event, *Parkview Hotel Pattani*. 2017-07-16
2. **ORGANIZATION 2**– Workshop: Guidelines on working with children in a conflict area, *Saiburi*. 2017-07-22.
3. **ORGANIZATION 3** - Introduction to network and capacity building for conflict victims, *Pattani*. 2017-07-26.
4. **ORGANIZATION 4** – *Saiburi*. 2017-07-29.
5. **ORGANIZATION 5** - Towards Sustainable Social Welfare in Deep South Thailand – Psychosocial Support to Affected People From Violent Unrest, *Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus*. 2017-08-07.
6. **Peace Agenda of Women** – Building an environment for dialogue, *Prince of Songkhla University Pattani Campus*. 2017-08-11.
7. **Haji Sulong Foundation** - 63rd Anniversary of Haji Sulong’s Enforced Disappearance, *Rumah Haji Sulong, Pattani*. 2017-08-13.

Interview guide

Part 1. Background of organisation

1. Please tell me more about your organisation.
2. What does your organisation do? Activities?
3. What is the motivation for your work?
4. What role does you/your organisation play in building peace?
5. What is the organisation's view on peacebuilding and the peace process?

Part 2. Participation

1. Is it difficult/easy carry out the activities you are doing? Prior to conflict? Current?
2. What has facilitated your organisation to be able to continue working on its mission?
3. What are the main areas where women are active?
4. What are your thoughts on the peace dialogue?
- 5.

Part 3. The barriers for participation

1. Have you/your organisation been involved in the formal peace process in Kuala Lumpur? If yes, how?
2. If, no, is it something that you/your organisation would like to be a part of? How?
3. In what spheres are your organisation not able to participate in the peace process?
4. Is it difficult for women compared to men to participate in the peace process? Why?
5. What are the reasons for women not being as present in the peace process as men?
6. In what ways have women breached the barriers and opened more space for participation?