

## **Abstract**

Despite the important developments that peacebuilding plays in academia on conflict resolution and management, the field remains unexplored in multiple ways. One of the ways that this can be done is through the involvement of women in a domain that is considered to be relatively less inclusive of marginalized groups. The role women can play in negotiating for conflict resolution is significantly emerging as an important debate in peace research work and studies. Relatively little attention has been paid on the relevance of traditional approaches to conflict resolution particularly on the role that women contribute to using such methods. This impacts in balancing gender representation in peacebuilding processes. This research therefore takes a deeper look into the role of women in peacebuilding using the women groups in Casamance, Senegal as the empirical case study. The main objective of this study is to critically analyze the significant role women play as peacebuilders specifically, highlighting the relevance of traditional knowledge of conflict resolution. Hence, the key research question is to empirically reconstruct the role of women in peacebuilding and analyze how the use of traditional methods of conflict resolution has contributed to peacebuilding in Casamance. In this vein, this study employs a qualitative approach to critically analyze the situation in Casamance using semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. This study utilizes the actor network theory (ANT) as the framework for analysis. A core finding of this dissertation reveals a disconnection between the existence of laws and policies on the participation of women in peacebuilding versus recognizing the local practices and initiatives of women groups at the grassroots with regard to implementation. The findings also bring to light the importance of further research in traditional methods of conflict resolution as contributing to peace and security.

**Keywords:** Peacebuilding, conflict resolution, women groups, traditional knowledge, grassroots, Actor Network Theory, Casamance, Senegal.