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Article

Spatiotemporal enabling/disabling factors of local agency in peacebuilding processes. Analysis from present time history and critical peace geography

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze how there are spatiotemporal factors that can disable/enable local agency capacities in peacebuilding processes. Those local agency capacities depend on the context, which are shaped both by time and space. The traditional conception of time and space allows only a narrow understanding that reduces the possibilities of agency, and to rethink and broaden the concept of time and space I rely on History of the Present Time and Critical Geography. This paper illustrates the theoretical debate through the women's agency capacities in the Mozambican peace process. This example demonstrates the complexities and multifaceted disabling/enabling capacity of spatiotemporal factors for the exercise of agency and provide some guidelines to identify them.

Keywords: Space; Time; Peacebuilding Processes; Women's Agency; Mozambique.

Introduction

The importance of considering local contexts with a creative and transformative dimension in peacebuilding is broadly researched[1]. Whether the theory and practice of peace processes are truly oriented towards the (re)construction and transformation of post-conflict societies, as well as to the recovering of their historical presence and political consciousness in order to move towards positive peace societies capable of non-violent conflict resolution, depends to a large extent on the local actors' agency

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[1] This article will not deepen in the debates on the local turn in peace building from the critical perspectives, as the author has already worked on this topic in other publications (Vitón 2021, 2023 and 2024).

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and the capacity to exercise it. The type of agency and the capacity to exercise it depends profoundly on the context in which it is framed, and there are two fundamental elements that shape a given context: time and space; for as Giddens (1984, 132) writes "All social life occurs in, and is constituted by, intersections of presence and absence in the 'fading away' of time and the 'shading off' of space".

I analyze how there are factors linked to space and time that can enable or disable local agency capacities in relation to peace processes and post-conflict (re)construction, seeking to fill the gap in the existing literature. To this end, first, I address a few brief notes on agency and its relation with the local dimension. Second, I discuss the changes in the study of time and space allowing a more complex and richer understanding of both elements, and how these new understandings permit identifying other times and spaces different from the traditional ones. Third, I analyze the importance of time and space for peacebuilding studies, especially in view of the growing attention paid to the local dimension. Fourth, an attempt is made to exemplify the disabling/enabling factors of time and space considered most important for the exercise of women's agency capacities in peacebuilding for the case of Mozambique, as it is a case already studied by the author (Vitón 2021, 2022 and 2023). Being able to define these factors is of utmost importance as it allows us to better understand local contexts, and thus to determine which actions, initiatives or tools are significant for the exercise of agency capacities.

Brief notes on agency and local dimension

The common element in most definitions is that agency refers to the capacity to act or to carry out an action. However, this should be nuanced and complexified, since in the idea of agency converge several central components such as intentionality, universality and social construction, its relationship with power (Ortner 2006, 134), or resistance (Richmond 2011, 420). Agency is not only the capacity to act, but the exercise of a choice in search of change (Shepherd 2017, 116), but which is always socioculturally mediated (Ahearn 2001, 112, 130). It also includes the capacity to intentionally choose one action over another, which implies that an individual could have acted differently at a given time and that, without that individual's intervention, the outcome of the action would not have occurred (Giddens 1984, 9). These considerations on agency entail differentiating the meaning between actor and agent, two similar terms related to the exercise of an action, but which differ in important nuances. Karp (1986, 137) argues that the action of an actor is under the governance or orientation of rules, while the idea of agent is more linked to the exercise of power, that is, that capacity to produce effects and (re)constitute the world.

Agency is, therefore, a complex concept to address, as it brings together various dimensions and theoretical interpretations of its meaning, its implications or its place of constitution.

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'Agency' can be understood as the conscious individual or collective capacity under a responsible reason to choose to carry out an action among more than one option in pursuit of a given purpose, within the framework of a given sociocultural and historical context, and extended in time and space. Contextualizing agency —linking it to the given space and time from which it emerges— is very important, because it prevents to understand agency from the outside impositions, and understand it more closely linked to the exercise of agency capacities as part of the process of configuring agents as political subjects. Defining, identifying and determining the disabling/enabling spaces and times for the exercise of agency is fundamental if we intend to establish processes of (re)construction of post-conflict societies that are truly transformative and emancipatory.

The challenge is, therefore, to be able to analyze the different dimensions of agency of local actors in such a way that the analysis does not start from previous assumptions about what agency is or is not, focusing on the promotion of the exercise of agency capacities in ways that do not exclude any individual or collective from being politically recognized. The focus must be placed on those common, everyday actors who have not been historically relevant in the discipline, since their experiences are fundamental to expand both the limits of our knowledge of the realities we study and the capacities to imagine other ways of approaching and resolving conflicts. In any case, the approach to agency is incomplete without also addressing its relationship with the idea of structure, since the agent never acts in social vacuums as it is always linked to a given context, there being a mutual dependence between the idea of structure and that of agency (Wight 2006, 210 290). And, on the contrary, it is necessary to recognize the influence of agency on structure and how this plays a fundamental role in its configuration (Richmond 2011, 420).

Approach to the study of time and space: History of the Present Time and Critical Geography

The study of time and space has undergone important changes in recent decades, and they are two central dimensions for peace studies, for as Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel (2016, 2) state, "By situating peace and war in time and space we are better able to grasp them as fleeting notions and to comprehend how they can coexist". Within Geography and History new ways of understanding time and space have emerged, which allows to approach the analysis of the disabling/enabling spatiotemporal factors of women's agency capacities in peacebuilding. Among these new ways, history of the present time is presented as a historiographical perspective that helps to rethink the relationships between past, present, and future times; and some contributions of critical geography are used as a set of theoretical perspectives that rethink space from what has become known as the 'Spatial Turn'.

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The study of time: history of the present time

Time is "an essential aspect of understanding the relationship between agency and change" (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 174) for, as Mahmood (2005, 14) noted, the ability to effect change is historically specific. Including temporality in the study of agency is important by allowing to consider historical contingency in actions and changes, as well as historical antecedents and contexts —their *longue durée* and continuities (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 174). Besides, it also makes it possible to situate the capacities of agency in relation to the time in which they take place, whereby the study of the present time becomes particularly important, since it is the time in which the capacity for agency is exercised. To this end, the history of the present time offers a series of theoretical and practical tools that allow to approach the study of the present and its implications in a rigorous manner and with a necessary historical perspective. It can be defined as:

> A historiographical perspective that aims to study the temporal space between lived experience and the horizon of expectation. As a consequence, its chronology is defined in a dynamic and mobile way by the period during which the historian's activity is coeval with both lived history and its actors and witnesses. This gives rise to one of her greatest challenges: the study of unfinished processes. (Crescentino and Vitón 2020, 276).

For Sabaratnam (2017, 39), one of the three main strategies for the reconstruction of intervened societies is the recovery of their historical presence and, in this sense, the author argues that the colonized not only have history, but also historical meaning. This historical meaning cannot but be constructed from the present, which is why the analysis of the relations between the past and the present from a historical perspective is even more necessary. Moreover, the study of time allows to discover how the micro-practices of agency "are always intersecting with the macrotrajectories of greater social and economic transformations" (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 175).

Furthermore, the history of the present time allows the study of unfinished processes. It is, in this regard, a useful tool for the analysis of how subjectivities are constituted, given that the process of their constitution is an infinite process and, therefore, unfinished. Hence, the history of the present time is central for three reasons: because allows to explore the relations between the present with past (lived experience) and the future (horizon of expectation), to analyze the temporal factors that disable/enable the capacity for agency in the three dimensions of time (long duration, medium duration and eventual histories (Peñas Esteban 2003, 25-26), and because provides epistemological and methodological tools to carry out rigorous studies with a historical perspective to those who approach the study of a contemporary reality (Crescentino and Vitón 2020, 274).

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The study of space: critical geography of peace

Space is as fundamental dimension as time. Even more so after the increasing attention to the local dimension in peace studies that evidences the importance of territory and space in peace processes, as these take place in specific spaces that have a clear influence on both the actors and the processes themselves (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 134). As with time, considerations about what is meant by space are still very reductionist[2]. However, in recent decades we are witnessing important changes in the understanding of space, which broaden and enrich its meaning. This has come about primarily from the 'spatial turn', a term first used by Soja, cited by Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel (2016, 3), to refer to the "shift in geography and the social sciences from considering space as a purely material condition to understanding it as a social product".

Thus, space comes to be understood not only as a physical space, but also as a repository —open and variable— in which social and political relations take place (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 171). In fact, space as a social production is, therefore, the result of diverse interactions being able to be described as a complex social construction in which so many social norms converge, as well as values and attributed meanings (Lefebvre 2009, 26). In this way, space is a fundamental element in the constitution of the structures that allow and restrict agency, resulting that if, on the one hand, space is a social product, on the other hand, it also configures such social productions (Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel 2016, 3).

Understanding space in the double dimension of construct and constructor of society is a reflection of power relations that is neither neutral nor static, and how the existence of a social and symbolic (and not only material) spatial nature allows space to become the concept of 'place' by containing multiple symbolic meanings, cultural and identitarian meanings that, ultimately, contribute to value the local as the main space of human experience —for it is in the local sphere where power relations, agency, identities or different struggles are mostly articulated— (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 148-150), being, all in all, a space traversed by international dynamics. The spatial turn, in short, entails a strong reinterpretation of space, which implies:

> A reaction against the traditional view of space, inherited from Modernization and based on a clear separation between nature and human society, as a mere surface containing physical forms and natural objects; an abstract, objective, given space, separated from social processes. The spatial turn, on the contrary, affirms that space is not only physical and fixed, but has a socio-political and cultural dimension, and is therefore dynamic. Space is socially constituted through social power relations, at the same time that social phenomena are spatially shaped; that is, it is not possible to understand social relations (of class, gender, race, nation, etc.) outside the realm of spatiality in which they are reproduced every day (Pérez de Armiño, 2019, 135).

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[2] An approach to the debates on the local turn in peace studies and its alternatives, where the meaning of "local" is deeply problematized, can be found in the following text by the author (Vitón, 2024).

The socio-political and cultural dimension of space must be emphasized. As Lefebvre (2009, 33) states —and precisely because of understanding space as a social product— space is a political production, which explains why there is a politics of space. This is important to understand that the subjectivation processes are not only influenced by a given time, but also by a specific set of spaces. Therefore, just as agency capacities are subject to temporal factors, so too are they subject to spatial factors, for both time and space are both producers and products of the social. Understanding space in this way, allows us to understand it not only linked to a materiality that can be formal or informal —which corresponds to public and private spaces respectively— (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 172), but also and simultaneously as ideological and subjective (Warf and Arias 2009, 3), that is, an abstract dimension of space much more linked to the social, symbolic, and ideational.

This reinterpretation of space involves different theoretical schools that give rise to the so-called critical geography[3]. The common element of the different variants of critical geography is precisely this understanding of space as a product and social producer, understanding it as "the relational sphere where power relations (social, gender ethnic, etc.) generating inequality and oppression are (re)produced, which translates into relations of conflict, but also of political struggle, resistance, solidarity and formulation of alternatives" (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 127). Their debates could be summarized into two main axes, on the one hand the relationship between the actors and their agency with the structures —explaining space as a social product from both agency and structure— and, on the other hand, the relationship between the local and the global (where the concept of 'scales' becomes especially important), which has evolved from a vertical and hierarchical understanding —where scale resembles levels—, towards a horizontal understanding in which scales do not respond to power hierarchies, but to social relations and processes —where scale resembles networks (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 146-148).

In short, while an understanding of time makes visible the opening and closing of political possibilities and the different relationships between actors when hegemonic relations are transformed, an understanding of space makes it possible to understand that there are hidden spaces or even spaces that are not physical, but in which local agency takes place (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 177). This redefinition of the approach to time and space also implies important contributions to the approach to peacebuilding processes for (re)building societies based on an idea of positive, emancipatory, and transformative peace. Along with this, it also provides interesting theoretical inputs for reflection on the nature and development of agency capacities (with an impact on their relationship with the context) as well as the exercise of these capacities in peacebuilding processes.

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[3] These include, among others, Radical Geography, Humanistic Geography, Postmodernist or Post-structuralist Geography, and Feminist Geography (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 136-146).

The importance of time and space in peacebuilding

The temporal and spatial analysis provides new insights into (post)conflict and peace processes, especially as they relate to the local dimension and how local actors exercise their agency capacities. In addition, the linkage of subjectivation processes with the context in which they take place is constant and continuous, as identities as political subjects resulting from subjectivation processes are continuously shaped and changed by both diverse temporalities and different spatial locations (Almagro Iniesta 2016, 110). In short, studying how time and space affect peacebuilding is a necessary task, and both the history of the present time and critical geography have an added value for peace and conflict studies.

In the first place, the history of the present time allows to approach both peace processes and processes of subjectivation with a historical perspective thanks to its epistemological and methodological proposals. At the epistemological level, it allows to understand the present as a historical time, which makes it possible to inscribe the processes and realities in broader historical discourses and trajectories. Being able to analyze the present from a historical perspective facilitates to better identify those time-related factors that enable or disable the exercise of agency in peacebuilding. Thus, it is possible to differentiate between the different levels —long duration, medium duration, and eventual histories— and how each of these different times affects the capacities for agency. At the methodological level, the history of the present time rescues sources for making history that had been relegated by traditional and hegemonic historiographical schools, and which are extremely useful for approaching peacebuilding processes by highlighting their local dimension. These are specifically the oral and normative sources:

> These are two sources that enhance and complement each other profoundly through their dialogue, building bridges between the four great elements of the history of the present time [witness, memory, social demand and event]. While the oral sources give the researcher the opportunity to access the primary source represented by the witness and, through him or her, the memory, the normative frameworks are the result of the dialogue between the event and the social demand. Moreover, as the historian is contemporary to the formulation of the latter, the historiographic analysis can be enriched by a multiplicity of factors external to the actual legal content of the document under study (Crescentino and Vitón 2020, 288).

For example, by conducting interviews with the subjects/agents of peacebuilding processes and putting it in dialogue with the normative frameworks and structures on peace and security agendas, the centrality of the local dimension in the approach to peacebuilding processes with a significant and transformative character is evidenced. By understanding them as subjects who are a constituent part of the historical present to which they belong —both as constituent and constituted— their agency is not understood as something that has been granted to them,

but as a capacity that, as it is exercised, develops and adjusts to the specific time in which it is exercised.

Ultimately, being able to explore other present times challenges the implicit notion of liberal peace (Vitón 2021, 333-334), whereby peacebuilding processes are necessarily inscribed in a universal and hegemonic temporal logic that, in part, is closely linked to the immediate. The different 'times' are no longer understood as sealed and limiting compartments, but rather as a more complex understanding that implies that time, while constituting political subjects, is also constituted by them. Resignifying the present by endowing it with a historical meaning and as a flexible and dynamic cognizable temporal space, allows the adoption of different rhythms that are more in line with the experiences, needs and challenges of local political subjects and, thus, to be able to build peace on their own terms.

In the second place, the dialogue between critical geographic and peace studies enables new interpretations of the relationship between space and peace (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 134), but at the same time a dialogue between the two fields broadens the understanding of spatial politics allowing for new epistemic perspectives (Vogel 2018, 444). The notion of 'spatial turn' influenced to understand space not only as a material reality, but as a social construction. Björkdahl and Buckley-Zistel (2016, 1-9) and Pérez de Armiño (2019, 145-158) summarized the values and contributions of critical geography to peacebuilding studies, highlighting, among others, the existence of spatial features at the center of peace, conflict and violence, the impacts of the agency of local actors or spaces, the importance of specific contexts on the diverse conceptions and discourses about peace, or showing how spaces are an instrument of both discrimination and sociopolitical domination against women. Considering the complex spatial dynamics of how war —and more broadly the different forms of violence— and peace are configured, also allows us to identify which spaces (whether material or symbolic) act as enablers or constraints to the exercise of agency capacities by local actors in peacebuilding. Some of these spaces will be defined in the following section.

Finally, and as is the case with reflections on temporality, incorporating this spatial dimension in its different dimensions is useful to evidence, firstly, how the colonization of physical space through multiple tools such as cartography, conquest, economic influence, or expansionist agendas drive and universalize particular worldviews at the expense of the worldviews specific to those colonized spaces (Hudson 2016, 6). Secondly, it also serves to question the liberal peace model, helping to think of models that go beyond Western guidelines and are more adjusted to each specific context and, as well, to build spaces that have as their basis more just social relations in order to build peace (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 158-159, 162). In this way, and picking up Vogel's words, "the 'spatial turn' revealed how space as a social construction is relevant to the understanding of lived realities and cultural phenomena around the world" (Vogel 2018, 434).

In sum, this re-signification of time and space is of great importance for peace and conflict studies, especially when the local dimension in peacebuilding is addressed. Considering temporal and spatial dynamics allows, firstly, to challenge many of the issues linked to the liberal peace model

or the Women, Peace, and Security agenda (WPS), such as, for example, the universalization of processes, practices, and discourses, since working from other temporal and spatial logics allows us to link these processes, practices and discourses much more closely to their local contexts. Secondly, it is discovered how through conflicts and peacebuilding specific times and spaces are constructed which, in turn, influence agency capacities. And third, it is observed how a study of time and space allows to determine what temporal and spatial factors exist, and how they influence the exercise of local agency in peacebuilding.

Disabling and enabling factors of time and space for the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding

In this section I exemplify how spatiotemporal factors that enable or disable the exercise of local agency could be determined for a specific case, to demonstrate how this theoretical framework can be applied to the study of a given reality. Although this would certainly require a more in-depth and detailed study of the case, this is simply to illustrate how the conditions in which agency is exercised matter, as there are circumstances (linked to time and space) that are more empowering and others with a more restrictive character (Madhok et al. 2013, 3). Thus, there are times and spaces that are constituted as enabling factors, and others that are the opposite. In the following, the temporal factors are addressed first to then focus on the spatial factors. As a preliminary note, it is important to point out that these factors are enabling or disabling in interrelation and conjunction with other factors, and depending on the specific context in which they take place. Therefore, I have chosen the case of Mozambique to exemplify this in a specific context, as it is a case that I have researched in depth both from secondary and primary sources —where more than twenty semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with different actors of the socio-political reality of Mozambique can be highlighted— (Vitón 2022). For the purposes of this paper, I will select only some aspects of the reality of Mozambique, since this is not an in-depth analysis of the case, as that would correspond to a paper of a different nature focused specifically on the Mozambican case.

Time disabling/enabling factors

The approach to the question of time is a complex task, since different phases coincide and overlap in a given context. The analysis of these factors is based on the Braudelian conception of time, which allows it to be studied through a threefold division:

> The first deals with an almost motionless history, the history of man in his relations with the environment that surrounds him; a history slows in flowing and transforming itself, often made of insistent reiterations and cycles that are incessantly repeated. I did not want to forget this history, almost situated outside of time, in contact with

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> inanimate things (...) Above this immobile history rises a history of slow rhythm: the structural history of Gaston Roupnel, which we would willingly call, if this expression had not been diverted from its true meaning, a social history, the history of groups and groupings (...). Finally, the third part, that of traditional history or, if we wish, that of cut history, not to the measure of man, but to the measure of the individual, the history of events, by François Simiand: the agitation of the surface, the waves that lift the tides in their powerful movement. A history of brief, rapid and nervous oscillations. Ultrasensitive by definition, the slightest step is marked on its measuring instruments. (Braudel 2016, 16-17)

This conception is used to analyze the enabling or disabling elements of each of the three divisions that influence the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding. It is understood that there is therefore an almost immobile history, a structural history, and a history of the event. Each of these temporalities is related to long, medium, and short duration respectively, although depending on the object/subject of study it is possible to determine what is understood by long, medium or short duration.

Long duration must correspond to almost immobile historical processes, of very slow transformation, which are practically not perceived in everyday life but have profound implications in the configuration of socio-political and historical realities. The medium duration are the structural historical processes that more directly mark the evolution of a society, but which respond to the logics of the processes of long duration. Finally, the short duration is made up of historical processes that could be called 'events', whether of a political, economic, social or cultural nature, which have a certain relationship with each other, and which can be grouped into historical processes of medium duration. Thus, in a given context these three dimensions of time converge, since long, medium, and short duration times are simultaneously present. For the case of Mozambique, as the example of this paper, the process of configuration of liberal western modernity is understood as one of the long-term phenomena. Among the times of medium duration, I consider, on the one hand, the period that circumscribes the colonial ages and, on the other hand, the independence period. Finally, in the short duration I highlight the factors that incorporate the analysis of the colonial war (1962-1974), the civil war (1976-1992), the peace dialogues and the signing of the Rome Peace Agreement (1992), the multiparty system, the resurgence of the conflict between 2012 and 2019, and the second peace process culminating in the signing of the Maputo Final Peace Accords (2019).

In the first place, when reflecting on the current long-term time, I will select the process of configuration and development of liberal western modernity that has taken place since the 17th century (Peñas Esteban 2003, 25), which directly influences the populations of the current territory of Mozambique at the political, economic, cultural, and social levels —although it is crucial to observe that in Mozambique there are many non-modern dynamics that coexists with the development of liberal western modernity. This is a process whose premises are fundamentally sustained under the ideology of modernity and have been questioned and challenged from various

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theoretical and activist positions —such as feminisms and postcolonial studies. The questioning and challenges are centered on its tendency to universalize, which inevitably leads to the silencing and marginalization of otherness, its androcentric and anthropocentric character that marks its patriarchal nature —legitimizing and perpetuating different forms and expressions of coloniality of peoples and subaltern subjects—, and its hierarchical and dichotomous understanding of the world that oversimplifies and homogenizes complex realities and concepts (Cunha and Casimiro 2019, 80-87). Therefore, this long-standing time is eminently a disabling factor for women's agency in peacebuilding, as it tends to homogenize and universalize the needs, experiences and specificities of women, making invisible and marginalizing many others who do not respond to the canons imposed by this dominant paradigm. This, ultimately, results in the non-recognition of women as political agents and subjects and, consequently, restricts their capacity to exercise agency.

Secondly, in terms of medium duration, two temporal periods are considered for the case of this research: the colonial and the independence period. These two periods constitute in themselves a 'structure' in the terms referred to by Braudel, being two political, social, cultural and economic periods with their own identity in the history of Mozambique. In this case, whether the medium duration times function as enablers or constrainers on agency capabilities depends largely on the specific context. Thus, authors such as Tripp (2015) have studied how times of conflict sometimes open up possibilities for women for their exercise of agency, but there are also conflicts whose nature strongly restricts the possibilities of agency (such as those with a strong extremist religious component). The same occurs with the different political periods of a country, since there are multiparty democratic periods that function as an enabling factor for women's agency, but others, due to specific conditions, are more restrictive in terms of women's capacity for agency. For example, a period in which resolutions are adopted for the promotion of the WPS agenda may be enabling for women's agency in peacebuilding initiatives, but a period in which this is not a social or government priority may hinder the exercise of that same agency. In summary, there is a certain ambiguity as to whether medium-length periods are considered as enabling or disabling for women's capacity for agency in peacebuilding. To determine this, it is necessary to inscribe it in a specific context and link it to other factors.

Third and finally, in relation to the short duration or event, there is also some ambiguity as to its nature as a disabling/enabling factor for women's capacity for agency in peacebuilding. Within this level, different times can be distinguished, such as periods of war, peace dialogues, international peace missions, the signing of agreements, electoral periods, initiatives such as the Decade of African Women, periods in which resolutions are approved or certain anniversaries take place on the international WPS agenda.

These 'events' must also be considered in connection with a specific context to determine whether they are an enabling factor or not. Thus, for example, the time in which peace agreements are being discussed can be an enabling factor when the dialogue is open to the incorporation of multiple actors or because it fosters the emergence of women's movements that push for an agreement to be reached (as in the paradigmatic case of Liberia or Colombia). But the timing of

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peace agreements is also a disabling factor if the dialogue process is elitist and secret, as in the case of Mozambique. By contrast, times such as the Decade of African Women or the ephemeris of the adoption of Resolution 1325 are enabling factors for women's agency, as the discourses and practices around the WPS agenda emerge more strongly and, therefore, are times in which the exercise of such agential capacities is facilitated, although even in those cases they could be obstacles to a meaningful local ownership (Basini and Ryan 2016). Finally, another example is the electoral periods which, if they coincide with the existence of enabling spaces for women's agency, are a very important enabling temporal factor because they are a time when the exercise of certain agencies has much greater visibility and incidence (Jacobson 1995, 31-32). In short, there are stories of short duration that are more likely to be constituted as enabling factors for the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding (such as, for example, an ephemeris of a resolution on the subject), and others whose constitution as a disabling/enabling factor is more closely linked to their convergence with other disabling/enabling factors.

Space disabling/enabling factors

The spatial factors are also very varied. In this case, the division of the spatial dimension will be twofold. On the one hand, a distinction is made between formal and informal spaces, as well as public and private spaces, and on the other hand, any of these spaces also has an ideational dimension of a political, economic, social or cultural nature. It is important to note that every space is linked to an ideational dimension and vice versa, as they are mutually constituted[4]. In any case, this division facilitates the approach to spaces as disabling/enabling factors of women's agency capacities in peacebuilding.

Thus, a distinction can be made between formal and informal, and private and public. Formal spaces take place at the local, national, regional or international level, and are fundamentally of a political nature (a town hall, a ministry, or a parliament), legal (a national or international court, or a police station), economic (local markets, or the headquarters of transnational corporations) or social/cultural (a neighborhood association, a university, or an NGO). In general, they are also closely linked to the notion of public space and are normally disabling factors for the exercise of women's capacities for agency in peacebuilding, since most of them are highly masculinized spaces that are usually governed by patriarchal logics. On many occasions, even the presence of women does not guarantee that these formal spaces can be an enabling factor for the exercise of agency. The expressions and exercises of agency are very varied, such as a woman victim of diverse violence to present testimony in an international tribunal that is investigating cases of sexual violence in conflict or a female researcher to be studying the impacts of conflict on women (Kreft 2019, 17).

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[4] For example, a city square is a public space that on the one hand allows the grouping of people, but that can also have elements of symbolic spaces present if that square is associated with some specific historical event (an independence uprising, for example), or if in that square there is a sculpture that commemorates a peace agreement, an independence or a military victory. That is to say, the square as a space acquires the meaning of 'place' by having these symbolic elements associated with it.

In this sense, formal spaces such as a court or a university are enabling factors for the exercise of agency. Similarly, the taking of public spaces in a feminist demonstration or a peaceful sit-in in a public square are evident exercises of women's agency where public space is also an enabling factor.

In contrast to formal spaces, informal spaces are where women's exercises of agency have historically been conceived. Moreover, informal spaces are repeatedly associated with the local, the community and the everyday, as opposed to the national or international, which are associated with formal and 'neutral' spaces —which is also where peace takes place according to modern-liberal and Western models. These are, for example, a market, a river where people go to wash their clothes, a school's gate, a room of a women's activist organization or one linked to a religious space.

Informal spaces are more closely linked to private spaces, although not always. Private informal spaces tend to function as disabling factors due to the predominance of patriarchal logics and practices linked to everyday life, although, once again, it also depends on the type of exercise of agency, since active resistance to an abuser or consciously deciding not to resist in order to protect herself and her children from violence should be considered exercises of agency (Kreft 2019, 17). Informal/private spaces, however, are generally much more feminized, and often go unnoticed, are more hidden or unused. It is in these spaces that critical agency is often exercised from below (Björkdahl and Selimovic 2015, 176), whereby the key challenge is to recognize and strengthen these spaces and agents (Hudson 2011, 88) in order to make visible that peace is also built from below, from these spaces. Informal spaces have great potential to be enabling factors for the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding. This is an expression of a spatial logic that for authors such as Shepherd is parallel to a logic of empowerment, as "women as 'change agents' are placed at the 'grassroots' (in a 'bottom-up' development approach) or at the 'grassroots' community level" (Shepherd 2017, 118). It is usually in these informal spaces that what authors such as Vogel have called 'peace spaces' emerge:

> Peace spaces shall be understood as spaces where the subaltern voice, in this case the marginalized voice of peace can find or create a space in which to evolve and challenge the hegemonic discourses of (ethno-)nationalism or the prevailing violence in (post-)conflict societies. (...) Peace spaces transcend the idea of physical spaces; I understand them as networked, ideological or geographical —or any combination of the aforementioned characteristics (Vogel 2018, 432).

This concept of spaces of peace also makes it possible to interrelate spaces with their ideational dimensions. As Vogel argues, they transcend the idea of physical spaces, but they are as well "specific places, in contexts of deep social division, that subaltern non-state actors need to articulate, discuss, imagine and develop alternatives to the status quo, and formulate pro-peace discourses that challenge hegemonic discourses of ethnonationalism and violence" (Pérez de Armiño 2019, 156). For Vogel (2018, 435), these spaces of peace that emerge in every conflict are a 'home' from which to challenge and resist hegemonic discourses of conflict and violence, and also from which to create and form alternative discourses that have an impact on building peace. A space of peace

in these terms is probably the paradigm of a space that functions as an enabling factor for the exercise of women's agency. Predictably, the dynamics that take place in these peace spaces are more likely to enable greater participation of women at both the discursive and practical levels.

In line with the idea of spaces of peace, there are women-only spaces, which normally take place in the informal sphere. Due to a series of factors that restrict women's activity in formal and public spaces, women-only spaces are a first point of empowerment, a sort of 'training ground' prior to their involvement in broader social issues that take place in other spaces, being also very useful in peacebuilding to identify what issues such as 'peace' and 'security' really mean for women (Alaga 2010, 7). These types of spaces are undoubtedly highly enabling factors for the exercise of women's agency. However, these spaces can also at times restrict the ability to exercise agency. From an intersectional perspective, there are times when older women or those who live in urban environments are the ones who monopolize presence, discourse and practices in these spaces as opposed to younger women or those from rural environments.

It is necessary to emphasize that every space has an ideational dimension and that these are very diverse, from a discussion group, a set of values, a social or political normative body, to the existing dichotomy between the Global North as that privileged place of agency and progress, versus the Global South as the opposite place where coercion, violence, oppression and subjugation stand out (Madhok et al. 2013, 3). It is difficult to determine whether an ideational dimension of a space is an enabling or disabling factor, as it sometimes depends on the reading of that space or its relationship with other factors. Thus, in a country there may be a normative space that is very prone to the defense of women's rights but which, when it comes to implementing this normative body, is faced with the existence of highly restrictive formal spaces (such as a police station without human or material resources to deal with gender-related complaints, or a court without personnel specialized in gender issues). In any case, the role of ideational and symbolic spaces is central, because they usually have an impact on the reinterpretation of other spaces to turn them into safe spaces, spaces of peace, or women-only spaces that are enabling factors for the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding.

Identification of spatiotemporal disabling/enabling factors for the exercise of women's agency in peacebuilding.

Conflicts and peacebuilding processes are key moments in which times and spaces are redefined as their traditional divisions collapse (Strickland and Duvuny 2003, 7), opening up new possibilities in which different times and spaces are constituted as enabling factors for the exercise of agency. Temporal and spatial enabling factors are necessary so that non-state and local actors can imagine, discuss and develop alternatives to deploy their role as agents in social change, and because times and spaces determine which populations are included or excluded from processes and influence discourses and imaginable solutions (Vogel 2018, 432). The following table sets out how to identify these factors.

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Table 1. Time and space disabling/enabling factors

Common elements for identification
The disabling/enabling character of spatiotemporal factors for the exercise of agency is always determined by other elements of the context of the specific reality being analyzed. By itself, a given space or time does not enable or disable agency capacities.
The disabling/enabling character of spatiotemporal factors for the exercise of agency is always determined by one's conception of agency and the possibilities of its exercise.

Particular elements for identification	
Temporary factors	**Spatial factors**
Coincidence and overlapping of the different temporalities.	Interrelation and mutual constitution between both non-exclusive dimensions.
Three dimensions of historical processes:	Two spatial divisions:
1) Long duration: Almost immobile, of slow transformation. They are not perceived in everyday life but have profound implications in the configuration of socio-political and historical realities.	**1) Formal/informal and private/public spaces**
2) Medium duration: Structural in nature, which respond to the logic of long duration, but more directly mark the future of a society.	**2) Ideational dimensions of spaces:** They transcend the idea that spaces are only physical. They have a very diverse expression: discussion groups, legal normative bodies, socio-political scenarios with shared elements, the meaning that a physical space acquires, etc.
3) Short duration: 'Events' (political, economic, social or cultural) that have a certain relationship with each other and can be grouped into historical processes of medium duration.	

Source: own elaboration.

It is important to emphasize that based on an understanding of time and space as social constructions, the process by which a space or time is constituted as an enabling or disabling factor is also influenced by the exercise of the agency of the subjects. That is to say we are the ones who determine that a spatial or temporal factor is an enabling factor but, at the same time, these same factors determine our own capacity for agency.

In conclusion, and in the case of the exercise of agency capacities in peacebuilding, the disabling/enabling factors depend to a large extent on the specific context. Therefore, it is necessary to inscribe them within a specific research environment to determine whether the factors presented here, in a specific case, have an enabling character or not. This is a sign of the need to investigate material realities, since only from them can we obtain the necessary keys to approach peacebuilding processes.

Conclusions

Agency is one of the key elements when local participation is studied in peacebuilding. It depends highly on the context, and in turn, context is made of time and space. As this article shows, there

is still a necessity of rethinking and broadening our conceptions of time and space to be able to imagine new possibilities for the exercise of local agency. Besides, time and space became two central concepts for peace studies, even more after the increasing attention to the local dimension. Thus, this resignification of time and space is of great importance because three main reasons: discover how through conflicts and peacebuilding specific times and spaces are constructed which, in turn, influence agency capacities, determine what temporal and spatial factors exist and how they influence the exercise of agency in peacebuilding, and challenge many of the issues linked to the liberal peace model or the WPS agenda (for example, the universalization of processes, practices and discourses)

The spatiotemporal conditions in which agency is exercised matter, as there are circumstances that are more empowering and others with a more restrictive character. This disabling/enabling capacity exists in interrelation and conjunction with other factors, and depending on the specific context in which they take place. Through the example of Mozambique, I have tried to illustrate how to identify the disabling/enabling spatiotemporal factors for a specific case of study. To do so, my proposal is to divide time into three dimensions of historical processes that coincide and overlap: long duration, medium duration and short duration or events. To identify the disabling/enabling spatial factors, I suggest a twofold division between material and ideational spaces, understanding them in interrelation, mutual constituted and being non-exclusive dimensions. It is noteworthy to highlight that, by itself, a given space or time does not enable or disable agency capacities but that, as social constructions, the process by which a space or time is constituted as an enabling or disabling factor is also influenced by the exercise of the agency of the subjects. It is also important to keep in mind that the disabling/enabling character of spatiotemporal factors for the exercise of agency is always determined by one's conception of agency and the possibilities of its exercise.

Conflict and peacebuilding processes are key moments in which times and spaces are redefined as their traditional divisions collapse, opening up new possibilities in which different times and spaces are constituted as enabling factors for the exercise of the agency. Much work has to be done in relation to what it is proposed in this paper, such as trying to identify the spatiotemporal factors in other contexts, or even not only in (post-)conflict situations. There is still a literature gap on how time and space constitute both disabling and enabling factors for the exercise of local agency, and this paper seeks to be only a first step in demonstrating how important is to pay attention and to focus in the analysis of time and space when we are researching on peace processes and the agency of local actors in them.

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