

## Gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements and women's political and economic inclusion post-conflict

Summary of results of a research-based Practicum organized by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders and the Center for Global Affairs of the School of Professional Studies at NYU

The Center for Global Affairs of the School of Professional Studies (CGA) at the New York University and the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP) have partnered to create a research-based practicum project for NYU students.

During the first practicum in the Fall of 2019, five students from the Master's in Global Affairs program at CGA worked in teams to address research questions that emerged from GNWP's work and research on current and past peace processes, and women's roles in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Using quantitative and qualitative analysis, the students examined the effect of women's participation in peace negotiations and gender-sensitive provisions in peace agreements on women's political representation and economic empowerment post-conflict.

### Methodology

The students used a dataset of 98 peace accords from 55 countries between 2000 and 2016, created by Monash University professors Jacqui True and Yolanda Riveros-Morales.<sup>1</sup> The dataset is designed to identify whether peace agreements contain gender provisions or not. 'Gender provisions' are references in the agreements that acknowledge the gendered experiences of conflict and pertain to post-conflict issues and transitional justice, the participation of women, violence against women, women's economic empowerment and development, and international women-specific legal or human rights mechanisms. The authors also defined 'women's participation' as women's direct involvement (either as signatories or as core participants) in Track 1 and 2 negotiations.

<sup>1</sup> True, J. and Riveros-Morales, Y. 2019. 'Towards inclusive peace: Analysing gender-sensitive peace agreements 2000-2016', INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW, 40(1), pp. 23-40. doi: 10.1177/0192512118808608.

Jillian Abballe, Emma Grant, Foteini Papagiorgi, Dorie Reisman, Nicole Smith: **Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University**

Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos, **Global Network of Women Peacebuilders**

**Academic Supervisor:** Dr. Anne-Marie Goetz

**Project Advisor and Substantive Editor:** Mavic Cabrera-Balleza

GNWP thanks Center for Global Affairs of the School of Professional Studies (CGA) at the New York University for the partnership that led to this publication. The findings will inform GNWP's advocacy and implementation to ensure women's meaningful participation in peace processes and decision-making at all levels.

The students used this measure of participation to test for downstream outcomes in terms of political participation and economic empowerment. They used the latest agreement in each country within the dataset and eliminated some cases where the conflict was extremely localized or brief and its resolution was unlikely to have affected outcomes for women at the national level.<sup>2</sup> The sample thus included 51 countries with peace agreements between 2000-2016. Women participated in 23 of those. Almost half (25) of the accords included gender provisions.

The students researched many potential indicators to measure downstream (post-accord) outcomes for women. Considering data reliability and consistency limitations, they selected, as indicators of improved outcomes of peace for women, higher levels of women's participation in national legislatures, and improvements in women's economic empowerment measured in changes in their labor force participation<sup>3</sup> and their share of national income<sup>4</sup> in the 5-year period before and after the conflict. Documentary and data analysis were supplemented with interviews with peace activists from select countries.

The students developed a 'Difference-in-Difference'<sup>5</sup> statistical model to explore the effect of women's participation in peace negotiations and the inclusion of gender provisions in peace agreements on their political representation and economic inclusion post-conflict. Due to the small sample size, and the fact that it also included highly anomalous cases, the inherent variation in factors affecting the agreement process (the length of the negotiating period, the intensity, type and duration of conflict etc.), and the lack or inconsistency of gender-disaggregated data, the analyses did not achieve statistical significance. However, the model yielded consistent results, indicating that future research – especially in the form of detailed case studies exploring particularities – can add nuance and robustness to the relationships identified.

The key findings of the research, and the corresponding advocacy messages developed by the GNWP team, are summarized below. These findings will contribute to GNWP's global and local advocacy efforts to ensure women's effective engagement in on-going peace talks and in longer term recovery and conflict prevention.

**Key Finding 1: Including women in peace negotiations (in this sample of cases) increases the likelihood that the final agreement will include gender provisions by 37.4%.**

This finding is in line with previous research confirming that women matter at the negotiating table.<sup>6</sup> However, it also invites questions about the relative effectiveness of women's participation. In GNWP's research on local women and civil society's perspectives on Sustaining Peace, multiple respondents emphasized that women are often included in a tokenistic manner, disconnected from feminist networks and support systems that could supply useful analysis, as well as advice on negotiating positions and drafting gender provisions.<sup>7</sup>

2 The countries excluded were: Belize, Latvia, and Russia.

3 Measured as the percentage of the total labor force. Source: World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.FE.ZS>

4 Estimated using the Global Human Development Indicators. Source: UNDP. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries>

5 For more information: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Difference\\_in\\_differences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Difference_in_differences)

6 Thania Paffenholz, Nick Ross, Steven Dixon, Anna-Lenna Schluchter and Jacqui True, "Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations", Geneva: Inclusive Peace and Transition Initiative (The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies), UN Women, April 2016.

7 Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos et al., "Building and Sustaining Peace from the Ground Up: A Global Study of Civil Society and Local

More research is needed to identify the inclusion modalities that will ensure that women's participation is 'meaningful' in the sense of generating gender provisions in the agreement.

Based on its analysis of this finding, GNWP recommends:

- ▶ **Meaningful participation should be measured by the extent to which women can actually influence the text of the peace agreement, decisions on its implementation, and participation in peacebuilding processes.** Inclusion in advisory or observer roles is not sufficient.
- ▶ **It is critical to ensure diverse representation of women and other marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ persons, to guarantee a strong gender perspective in the peace agreement.**

Supporting and facilitating informal (Track 2) peace talks and related processes, and ensuring that women and other persons involved in their implementation have access to Track 1 negotiators (through Track 1.5 dialogues or consultations), are means of ensuring a broad-based and representative engagement by women in peace agreements.

GNWP and its local partners are supporting Track 2 initiatives that address root causes of violence perpetrated by armed groups in Colombia and the Philippines – for example, by organizing inter-ethnic community dialogues, raising awareness about the provisions of the existing peace agreements in local communities, providing livelihood opportunities to vulnerable groups, and supporting leadership and education of youth, including young women. GNWP and its local partners are also facilitating Track 1.5 processes: meetings and consultations that bring local women together with government officials and official negotiators. In Colombia, during the negotiations with the FARC, GNWP and its local partners supported meetings between local women and the official negotiators in the Havana process. In the Philippines, GNWP and its partners have brought together women and young women leaders and *barangay* (village) officials to mobilize different sectors in engagement in local level peace negotiations with the CPP-NPA-NDF under the Executive Order 70, while remaining critical of the government's response to the conflict.

## **Key Finding 2: Quotas are better predictors of improved outcomes for women's post-conflict political representation than are gender provisions.**

This analysis compared the effect of gender quotas for a country's Lower House<sup>8</sup> versus other types of gender provisions on women's post-conflict political representation. Quotas predict a 9.2 percent increase in women's political representation (this result is statistically significant).

The relative effectiveness of quotas, as compared to gender provisions, in increasing numbers of women in public office, may be attributed to their concrete and actionable nature. Based on this finding, the students decided to explore quotas in more detail: their research showed that in most post-conflict contexts, women use each successive election to increase their share of parliamentary seats. Assessing the impact of different types of quotas (legislated mandatory

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Women's Perception of Sustaining Peace', Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, 2019. Available at: <https://gnwp.org/publications/sustaining-peace-report-en/>

8 Data retrieved from the IDEA Gender Quotas Database, available at <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas>

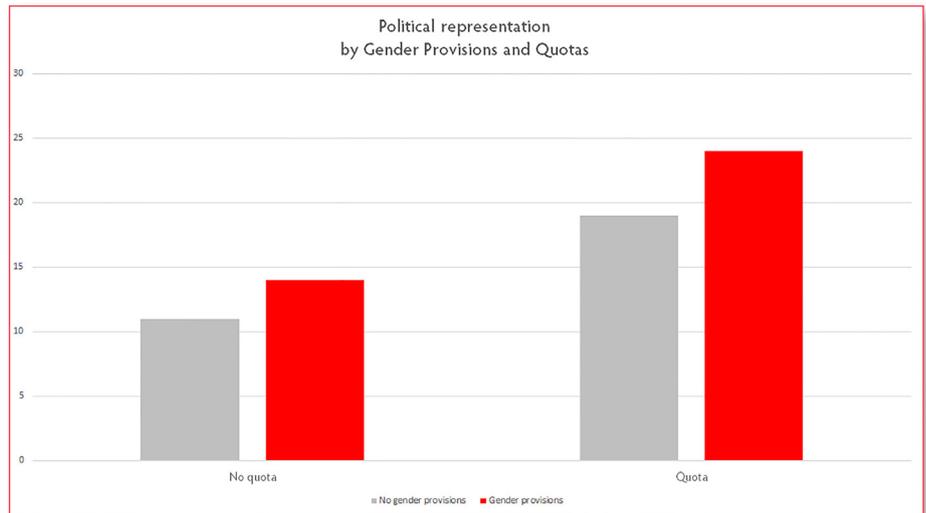


Figure 1: Women's political representation post-conflict by gender provisions & quota

quotas, voluntary party quotas, and reserved seats), they found that reserved seats are the most effective at ensuring female representation in parliament. Nonetheless, increased political participation does not necessarily imply increased feminist policy influence. For example, reserved seats filled by the ruling party may not be fully representative of the national female constituency.

It appears that strong gender provisions (such as measures to counter violence against women, gender-specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and transitional justice considerations, land rights and economic development, etc.) are likely to be adopted in two substantially different types of contexts: either in countries where the women's movement is strong and women's participation in the negotiations has been high (such as in Colombia and the Philippines), or where the women's movement is weak but the country is more open to (or least able to resist) the international system. In the former, implementation of good gender provisions might be more effective, if there is no patriarchal backlash (as in Colombia), whereas in the latter, there may not be sufficient domestic buy-in to sustain long-term implementation. These conjectures should be subject to further research, as outlined.

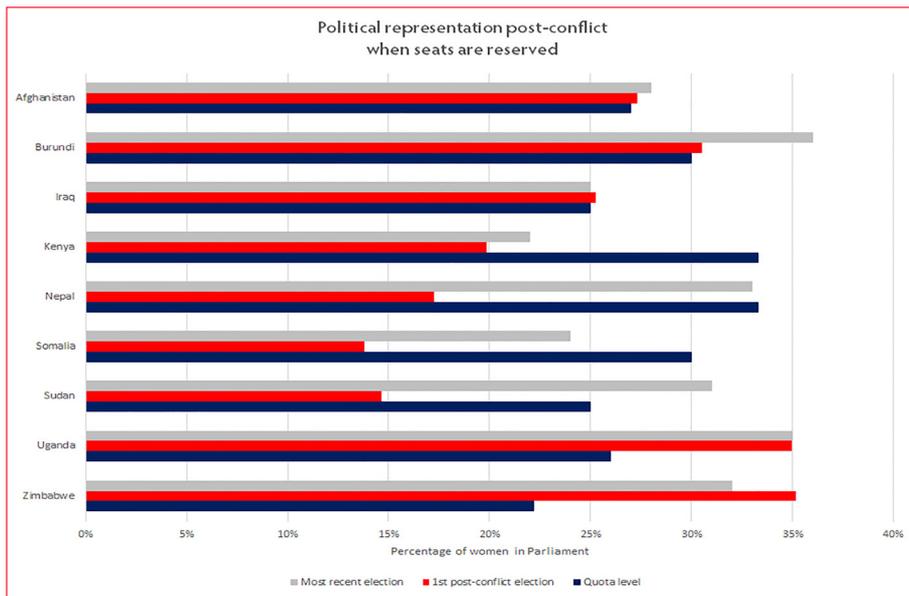


Figure 2: Women's political representation post-conflict when quota are enforced

There is a need for further research into the conditions enabling the full implementation of gender provisions in peace agreements, such as the strength of domestic feminist mobilization, the time lapse between the signing of the agreement and the implementation of its gender provisions, etc. While there is insufficient data on the key factors shaping timely and inclusive implementation, it is likely that efforts to disseminate information about the peace agreement, and to encourage local authorities to include commitments to implementing aspects of UNSCR 1325 in their local development plans, will support effective implementation of the gender provisions of the peace agreement.

Based on their analysis of this finding, GNWP recommends:

- ▶ **There is a strong need to guarantee women's sustained meaningful participation in the implementation of the peace agreement, including through their formal inclusion across the range of implementation mechanisms established in support of the agreement.**

In many contexts, such as currently in Colombia, women's participation in the *implementation* of the peace agreement – both in terms of the structured engagement of women in consultations and in leadership of implementation mechanisms – appears to be less systematic than it had been in the peace negotiation phase. This may have to do with mobilization fatigue or patriarchal backlash. The international community must monitor and support women's participation in the implementation of the peace agreement and speak against implementation processes that are not inclusive.

- ▶ **Timely and inclusive implementation of peace agreements, including in particular their gender-sensitive provisions, is of vital importance. Member States and the United Nations should put pressure on governments that have signed peace agreements to ensure full and swift implementation.**

In this context, the 'Localization of UNSCR 1325' strategy pioneered by GNWP<sup>9</sup> may prove a useful tool to ensure effective and inclusive implementation. GNWP, in partnership with its local partners, is currently applying the Localization strategy to strengthen the implementation of peace agreements in Colombia and the Philippines, and guarantee women's meaningful participation in the process.

**Key Finding 3 a Gender-sensitive provisions do not seem to improve women's economic outcomes, measured in terms of their Labor Force Participation and their share of Gross National Income, 5 years post-conflict.**

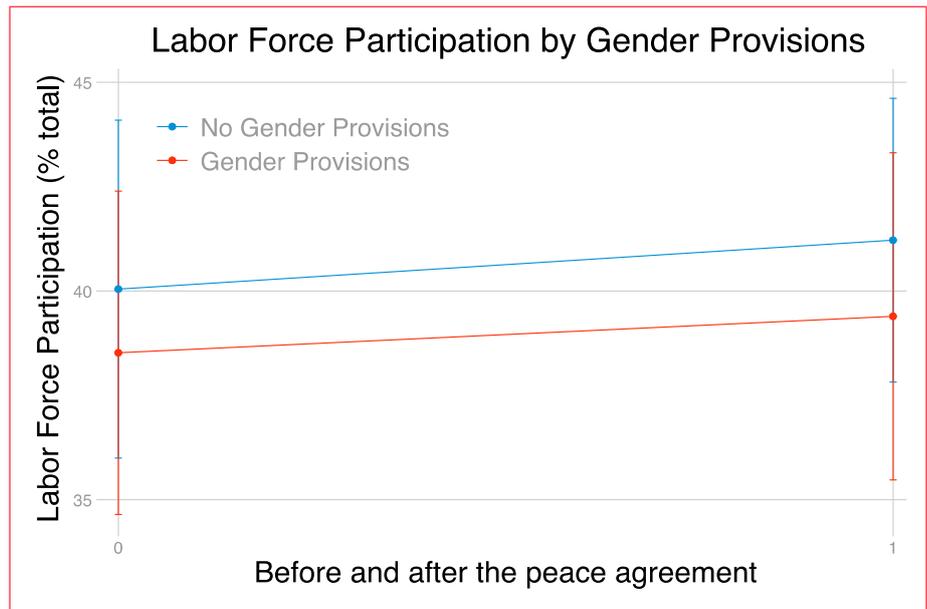


Figure 3: Women's economic inclusion before and after conflict, by gender provisions

This finding can be explained by the fact that peace agreements rarely address women's livelihoods, much less the structural reforms necessary to create truly inclusive economies. Of the 660 peace agreements in the PA-X database<sup>10</sup> that the students analyzed, only 36 included economic provisions mentioning women. Even those would be unlikely to bring about transformational change to address fragile economies, weak governance, and high levels of corruption, particularly in extractives-based economies, that afflict most post-conflict countries.

Women face serious challenges moving beyond subsistence agrarian livelihood systems in these situations, particularly where they are denied the right to land and other property. Additionally, structural adjustment reforms often imposed on fragile and post-conflict economies may indeed increase women's labour force participation and income. However, further research may reveal a more nuanced picture of such gains: women are often trapped in labour-intensive, precarious and/or lower-paying sectors of the economy with few prospects for true economic empowerment.

<sup>9</sup> Localization of UNSCR 1325 is an innovative, bottom-up strategy that brings together local women, youth and other historically marginalized groups and local authorities, traditional and religious leaders, to jointly analyze the WPS resolutions and other relevant global and national policies; define their relevance to local needs and priorities; and identify concrete actions for their effective implementation at the local level. More details on the Localization strategy are available at: <https://gnwp.org/publications/localization-toolkit/>

<sup>10</sup> PA-X Gender Peace Agreement Database, <https://www.peaceagreements.org/wsearch>

It appears that whereas some powerholders are willing to agree to gender quotas to accelerate women's political participation, no similar measure is used to generate significant improvements in women's economic status. Interestingly, the students' research found that gender quotas are associated with better outcomes in terms of labor force participation than other gender provisions in peace agreements. However, they do not make up for the lack of dedicated provisions on economic inclusion. Equal land rights might serve this function, but although there is often an explicit demand from women's movements for land rights, this tends to encounter significant opposition (as in Burundi after the 2000 Arusha accord, for instance).

**Key Finding 3 b): While gender-sensitive agreements had little effect on women's post-conflict economic prospects, the *inclusion* of women in peace processes consistently predicted better economic outcomes for women 5 years after the signature of the agreement.**

The students' research found that compared to the inclusion of gender provisions in the peace agreement, women's participation in peace negotiations is associated with a higher labor force participation, a higher share of Gross National Income (GNI) for women, and a lower female-to-male GNI ratio 5 years later.

This finding also requires further investigation since it is well established in the literature, and in this research, that the mere presence of women in peace negotiations does not necessarily lead to strong gender provisions. The students tentatively hypothesized that societies in which women are able to participate in peace negotiations may already see higher rates of women's economic activity and market engagement, and possibly also stronger and more numerous women's organizations that can lobby for changes in laws to overcome gendered market barriers. To support this hypothesis, the students used the newly developed Feminist Mobilization Index (FMI, which measures the size and strength of feminist organizations in 120 countries) and found that increases in the FMI are indeed associated with a marginally statistically significant increase in labor force participation. Mystifyingly, this trend tends to decelerate and even reverse at the highest FMI scores, another finding that calls for more in-depth research.<sup>11</sup>

The students also addressed the consistent failure of international funding to support women's economic empowerment as a principal target of aid funding. Using OECD DAC data, they showed that in three case studies analyzed (Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Nepal) such funding was less than two percent of total aid and primarily went to project-based interventions with limited prospects for long-term income security (candle-making, basket-weaving, sewing etc.).

Based on the analysis of these findings, the following advocacy messages and recommendations are suggested:

- ▶ **Women's economic empowerment in post-conflict countries must be a bigger priority for governments and donors.** Despite the growing recognition of the humanitarian-peace-development nexus, economic empowerment continues to be perceived as a development rather than

<sup>11</sup> Forester S, Kelly-Thompson K, Lusvardi A, and Weldon L. 2019. A Global, Comparative Map of Feminist Movements, 1975-2015: An Intersectional, Mixed-Methods Approach. Prepared for Presentation at Vancouver Workshop on Movements, Markets and Transnational Networks: Feminist Mobilization and Women's Economic Empowerment Worldwide.

a peacebuilding issue. However, it is crucial to address it as a priority during peace negotiations and in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. Very few peace agreements include provisions on women's economic empowerment, and even when they exist – for example in Colombia – implementation has encountered serious delays and obstacles.

- ▶ **While improvements in women's inclusion in formal economies post-conflict should be viewed as the ultimate goal, women's participation in informal economies should not be dismissed. Rather, it should be viewed as a potential stepping-stone towards more equitable economies and women's inclusion in economic decision-making at a macro-level.**

GNWP has been supporting small-scale livelihood initiatives led by young women in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indonesia. Through its work, GNWP was able to gather anecdotal evidence that gaining economic independence through micro-economic initiatives enables young women's effective participation in decision-making in their families and communities. As one of the young women involved in GNWP's Young Women for Peace and Leadership program in DRC put it, "The most effective way to empower women in North Kivu is to transform their lives through economic independence, which is essential for them to fully enjoy their rights."<sup>12</sup>

Their experience developing and running their own businesses has also exposed the young women to the negative impacts of gender-blind or discriminatory laws, policies and practices, such as flawed taxation laws and corruption. This is prompting them to undertake advocacy for their economic rights at the macro-level.

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<sup>12</sup> Emilie Katondolo, "Finding Empowerment in Entrepreneurship", Soka Gakkai International Office for UN Affairs, July 2019. Available at: <https://sgi-ouna.org/our-work/gender-equality-and-empowerment/emilie/>

## Questions for further research

While this research has yielded interesting results that can be translated into key advocacy messages and recommendations, there are more questions that need to be explored in order to fully understand the impact of women's participation in peace processes on their economic and political inclusion post-conflict; and identify strategies to ensure that women's participation is meaningful or influential at all levels of political and economic decision-making after a conflict. Topics and questions for further research include:

1. **An improved classification of gender-sensitive peace agreements could be helpful in strengthening quantitative analyses of the impact of gender provisions on post-conflict outcomes for women.**
2. **In-depth case studies can add qualitative nuance and may be better suited to explore highly anomalous cases in the sample or evaluate the implementation of gender provisions.**
3. **An expanded quantitative model to explore the conditions for women's economic empowerment (addressing issues of military spending, corruption, the informal sector, and the extent to which the economy relies on commodities and extractives) may yield more nuanced conclusions, particularly if complemented with case studies identifying enablers of female-friendly economies post-conflict.**

