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## GENDER ANALYSIS OF CONFLICTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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This article explores a not well-known dimension of conflict study and reconciliation, with an emphasis on critical revision. We examine the complex realm of women as victims, combatants and peace-makers; focusing on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) On Women, Peace and Security. We tend to view women as subjects rather than or objects and observe some informal practices of mediation, advocacy, conflict management and reconciliation. In conclusion we draw attention to the positive benefits of an inclusionary politics which incorporates principled justice and practices of care. The study of women involvement and gender and the study of armed conflict (and the resolution thereof) intersect on a number of dimensions. Gender perspectives have been used to advance our understanding of the occurrence of war, patterns of violence, the efficacy of peace processes, and the legacies of violence in post-conflict periods. We not only cover works directly related to women and peacemaking and peacekeeping but we also contextualize this literature within the broader literature on gender and war, sexual violence in conflict, women and peacemaking, women and peace building, masculinities in peacekeeping operations, gender representation in national-security sectors, sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations, and gender mainstreaming. In doing so, we provide a more thorough understanding of the role women play in post-conflict settings. Moreover, by considering the role gender plays in peacemaking and peacebuilding, the literature is better able to speak beyond a negative definition of peace and to incorporate more-positive conceptions of peace that prioritize gender

## ГЕНДЕРНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ КОНФЛИКТОВ И ИХ РАЗРЕШЕНИЕ

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В статье исследуется малоизвестный аспект изучения конфликтов и примирения, а также делается акцент на необходимость его критического пересмотра. Женщины рассмотрены в контексте жертв, комбатантов и миротворцев; уделено особое внимание Резолюции 1325 (2000) Совета Безопасности ООН о женщинах, мире, безопасности. Женщины рассмотрены, скорее, как субъекты, чем объекты. Приведены некоторые неформальные практики посредничества, пропаганды, урегулирования конфликтов и примирения. Обращено внимание на преимущества инклюзивной политики, которая включает в себя справедливое правосудие и практику помощи потерпевшим. Вопросы гендерной проблематики и проблем вооруженных конфликтов, их разрешение во многом пересекаются. Анализ гендерных аспектов важен для более глубокого понимания причин возникновения войн, моделей насилия, эффективности мирных процессов и последствий в постконфликтный период. В статье не только представлены работы, посвященные женщинам, миротворчеству и поддержанию мира, они контекстуализированы в рамках более глубоких тем гендера и войны, сексуального насилия в конфликтах, женщин и миростроительства, мужественности в миротворческих операциях, гендерного представительства в секторах национальной безопасности, сексуальной эксплуатации и надругательства в миротворческих операциях. Кроме того, обращается внимание на необходимость более глубокого понимания той роли, которую женщины играют в постконфликтных ситуациях. При исследовании роли гендера в миротворчестве и миростроительстве необходимо выходить за рамки негативного опре-

equality, consideration of the victims of violence, social justice, and other issues fundamental to a high quality of peace.

**Keywords:** gender issues; international relations; UN; women as victims of war; women's contribution to peacekeeping.

деления мира, обращая внимание также на позитивные концепции, которые ставят во главу угла гендерное равенство, учет интересов жертв насилия, социальную справедливость и другие вопросы, имеющие основополагающее значение для обеспечения реального мира.

**Ключевые слова:** гендерные проблемы; международные отношения; ООН; женщины как жертвы войны; вклад женщин в миротворчество.

Any conflict within international relations exists when incompatible goals develop between countries or political blocks. It is important to pay attention to the origins, development, and life cycle of conflict as well as the factors that lead to conflict escalation and de-escalation, and the attitudes, behaviors, situations, goals, and values that influence individuals' interaction and intervention styles. The parties choose contending, yielding, withdrawing, inaction, or problem solving strategies to cope with incompatible goals, emotions, and images of the other that escalate the conflict. Bargaining, threats, and pressures are used to influence the other party's decisions and behaviors, and either escalate or through third party intervention de-escalate the conflict.

Destructive conflicts tend to expand and escalate as competition, poor communication; hostile attitudes, misjudgment, and misperception take hold so that the parties get stuck in a situation that makes no logical sense. When there is a power asymmetry in international relationships, conflict may escalate as the disempowered countries seeks to redress grievances against the more powerful states. Thus, as a function of international conflict, power plays an important role in terms of relations and modes of resolution. Recent events in certain Middle East countries prove that power transitions create perilous moments in modern history. Some of the future risks include: potential great powers rivalry (*e.g.* US – EU 'Cold Friendship', China *v.* India arms race); proliferation of weapons and its components (Af-Pak and post-Iraq regions); 'low-cost' wars (*e.g.* PKK separatist uprisings in Turkey and urban guerrilla across Arabic states); failure of international governance to adapt to new powers (UN, OSCE and EDA misfortunes in peace-keeping); ageing populations and youth bulges (dilemma of growing Muslim diasporas in Western Europe); and resource competition/market volatility (water scarcity in Central Asia and Africa, forthcoming 'pipeline conflicts' in Caspian area / Southern Caucasus region; possible tensions over Arctic resources and transit routes) [Collier & Hoeffler, 2002]. Although there are many drivers of conflict, the three most prominent over the coming decades are likely to be changes in demographics, climate and economy.

Conflicts shape societies at all levels, changing their demographic composition, decimating the population and condemning them to poverty. The financial crisis caused by all situations of armed violence and the loss of men during a war (through injury or death) is spelling out the role of women in the labour market. Both in Yemen and in Iraq, women are forced to look for ways for increasing their meagre family income. This poses

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a huge challenge for them, since they had previously been kept away from the formal market. They do not have the necessary education and are subjected to all types of discrimination in a society still based on patriarchal patterns. This situation is particularly difficult for displaced women who find themselves in a new environment which is as yet unfamiliar to them. They nevertheless have to leave their homes to work, and this adds extra risk to both themselves and their daughters. Moreover, this new responsibility confers an additional burden on them, added on as it is to their traditional household chores, which already took up most of their day. This new family structure also has consequences for the rest of the family. The men accept women's contribution to the family income out of need but feel that their role is put into question. Resorting to domestic violence (whether emotional or physical) is a way of channelling their frustration and retaining control [Oxfam, 2019].

Conflict prevention is definitely not a vote winner, and it is difficult to incentivize politicians to engage in both conflict analysis and proper long-term conflict resolution. Moreover conflict prevention and resolution efforts seem to be decreasing, yet the drivers of conflict appear to be rising. In such a situation third parties, including international NGOs, multinational corporations or religious authorities with an appropriate intervention process can balance the power and even transform the very playing field.

We think it is important to underline that while men, women, children and elderly people are affected by the traumas of war, violent conflict and radical political insecurity, the specific experiences of conflict, loss and pain differ for women. The difference extends to the types of experiences, the depths of exclusion from political decision-making and participation in peace-negotiations and in many women's interpretations of what is necessary to build peace and practice reconciliation.

Women's contributions to peace-making usually are mostly informal, *ad hoc* and rarely part of formal peace processes, so their stories often drift and unacknowledged.

Despite considerable efforts by the UN, in particular, the UN Development Fund for Women, various researchers, academicians, non-governmental organizations, grass roots level movements, peace activists and supportive church groups to encourage women's participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution, women remain seriously under-represented in the institutional, formal mechanisms of peace negotiations and security enhancement.

Talking about UN it is impossible not to mention the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 *On Women, Peace and Security*, adopted on 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2000 [United Nations, 2020]. It is historical in being the first Security Council resolution to address the special needs of women in relation to peace and security. It calls for increased numbers of women to become Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and realizes the need to expand the contribution of women in UN field based operations.

This *Resolution* of course is not a perfect document and it has been criticized many times for its conceptual gaps, for the lack of guidelines in practical application and for the failure in implementation. However, its efficacy as a global advocacy tool is without doubt. Stories of women from Balkans and Middle East who testified to the Security Council in 2001, honouring the first year of the Resolution, provide some evidence of its significance.

More than 15 years after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which called for strengthening women and girls' protection from conflict-related sexual violence and women's equal participation in all stages of the prevention and resolution of conflict, women's participation in peace negotiations with voice and influence re-

mains exceptional rather than the norm. The international community increasingly acknowledges this participation gap and the lack of systematic and in-depth research.

However, few women have received direct access to peace negotiations: between 1989 and 2011, female delegates signed only 13 peace agreements in 6 peace processes. The numbers of female signatories have even decreased since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Despite the small number of peace agreements signed by women to date, our results clearly demonstrate that peace processes are more likely to lead to durable peace if women have been able to shape them. We have argued that linkages between female signatories and women civil society groups explain the positive impact of women's participation on peace durability. Linkages between diverse women groups are crucial for informing the negotiation process and inclusion of provisions that address social inequalities – and in particular gender inequality. The women networks that arise from such collaboration during negotiations, and the knowledge and expertise gained from participating in negotiations, are vital for effective advocacy of women networks for the implementation of peace agreement provisions. Strong linkages and collaboration between women signatories deeply familiar with the negotiation process and its political constellation, and women civil society groups with local expertise, improve the quality and the durability of peace after civil war [Krause, Krause & Bränfors, 2018].

It would be a mistake however to assume that all women are natural born peace-makers; some women are aggressive combatants, particularly in Africa and Central America. Over the last decade, female soldiers have been part of fighting forces in more than 50 countries and involved in armed conflict in 38 of these countries, all of them internal conflicts [Fox, 2004]. Women have fought as 'freedom fighters' in Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Vietnam. Indeed, in Eritrea, South Africa and across Latin America, women make up a third of the forces in guerrilla armies. In some conflicts, women are abducted to join irregular armies and young girls are forced into 'jungle marriages' or 'bush marriages' [Gardner & El-Bushra, 2004]. Some women act as spies, couriers or providers of refuge for combatants in hiding. Many women in Chechnya in 18<sup>th</sup> century were strong supporters of separatist paramilitary organizations and foster sectarian attitudes and during the violent conflict, hid weapons or fugitives. Some women incited violence and encouraged revenge for the dead [Kim, 2005]. Wherever there are deep ethnic, religious or tribal divisions, many women, like many men, instill in the young notions of the enemy as hated 'other' [Alison, 2006].

Despite these sad facts women universally are the prime nurturers in relationships, families and communities, they play crucial roles in peace-making, often in very informal, unofficial ways. These roles often emerge out of the experience of oppression, knowing what it is like to be excluded and seeking a society that is truly inclusive. Some women become peace activists, advocating strongly for non-violent ways of relating. Other women are mediators, trauma healing counselors and policymakers working to address the root causes of violence and ways to transform relationships. Many women are educators and group facilitators, contributing to building the capacity of individuals, communities and nations to resolve conflict and prevent further surges of violence. Some women are humanitarian aid workers or peacekeepers [Fuglerud, 1999]. Many women facilitate dialogue between warring factions, tribes, clans or ethnic groupings by convincing husbands, brothers, uncles and sons to lay their spears, machetes or guns aside. Women often are willing to bridge divides across traditional ethnic, religious and cultural divisions, coming together on matters of commonality that generally

revolve around their familial responsibilities in order to take care of the practicalities of life, such as food, shelter, health care, education and safety for their children [Hunt & Posa, 2001].

The Machel Study emphasizes that girls, like boys, are recruited as child soldiers, although they are fewer in number and their responsibilities are usually gender specific. Girls may be 'volunteers', often because of family poverty and their families' inability to sustain them, or they may be involuntarily seized by the military. Like boys, girls may join opposition groups for protection, for example, when their own parents have been killed [El-Bushra, 2005]. Unaccompanied children are also picked up by soldiers for 'humanitarian' reasons. Regardless of how they are enlisted, girls often are required to serve as camp cooks, to wash clothes, and care for the wounded. In contemporary wars, girls and young women may be compelled to seek economic livelihood by providing sexual services. They may be forced into prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation because they need food, shelter, safe conduct through war zones, or require papers or privileges for themselves and their families. The Machel Study reports that girls as young as 12 years have sexually submitted themselves to paramilitary forces as a means of protecting their families from other groups. The Machel Study reports that reunification with families may be especially troublesome because a formerly cheerful 12-year-old may return home as a sullen 16-year-old who feels newly assertive and independent. Girl soldiers who have been raped or sexually abused, in part because of cultural beliefs and attitudes, can find it very difficult to stay with their families or to have any prospects of marriage. With few alternatives for economic survival available to them, girls and young women may eventually turn to prostitution. The arrival of peace-keeping forces often perpetuates prostitution. For example, in Mozambique after the peace treaty was signed in 1992, girls from ages 12 to 18 years were recruited into prostitution by soldiers of the UN Operation [Haywood & French, 2009].

Throughout the course of the Syrian conflict, women have been disproportionately affected by violence and have generally been excluded from peace negotiations. The inclusion of Syrian women in peace negotiations is a necessity for a stable post-conflict Syria. Their inclusion at all levels of peacebuilding processes is crucial to create long-lasting peace and has the potential to promote sustainable development in the country. With Assad's military victory looking likely, Syrian women will face many challenges having their voices heard in reconstruction processes.

In 2008, sexual violence was recognized as a weapon of war. France played an active role in the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820, highlighting a real awareness on the part of the international community about the necessity of significantly strengthening the fight against sexual violence in armed conflicts and the fight against impunity. Regarding sexual abuse and violence, France supports the 'zero tolerance' strategy of the UN Secretary-General, to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuses [Miftah, 2018].

At 12 years old, Evelyn Amony was abducted by the Ugandan rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which for three decades has committed a range of atrocities including the abduction of children, rape, killing, maiming and sexual slavery [Kaldor, 2003]. Today, Evelyn is Chair of the Women's Advocacy Network, comprised of over 400 formerly abducted and war-affected Ugandan women [Coomeraswamy, 2004]. With funding from UN Women, the Network encouraged the Ugandan Parliament to adopt a landmark resolution addressing war-affected women on 9 April 2014 [Cilliers & Dietrich, 2000].

After the war situations it's women who start to put the fabric of life together. There is little choice – they are left with children, the aged and ill, amid devastation and have to find ways to survive. During war, women often are victims of rape and the loss of loved ones and grief, poverty and intense trauma sets in. Yet, an overemphasis on victimhood obscures women's agency and power to overcome massive obstacles. Further, in the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up and creates new beginnings. There are numerous examples of women who grasp this window of opportunity that transitional democracies allow to further gender justice, equality and rights. The impact of women's contributions to peace-making is significant in global terms.

However, funding for dedicated programmes that target gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal (main) objective still remains low at 4% and 62% of aid remains gender blind [Bouret, Hedman, Hos & Sangaré, 2019].

But while women are active peacebuilders, their contribution often is informal, behind-the-scenes, unpaid, collaborative and unrecognized as actual peace-making, and thus they consistently are excluded from formal peace negotiation processes and public, political decision-making [Sweetman, 2005]. While women will often have been at the forefront of peace initiatives throughout the conflict, peace agreements are usually negotiated predominately, if not exclusively, by men. There is an acute need for greater recognition of women's activity as peace-builders which translates into the inclusion of women more fully in all stages of peace-making.

These examples directly challenge gendered dualisms, such as the idea that men are suited to the public world of transitional justice and political negotiations and women are suited to the private world of personalized care and picking up the emotional pieces after war. Moreover provided examples draw attention to women as subjects rather than as victims or objects.

They also challenge typical UN and orthodox peace scholars' understandings of peace-making as being located solely in formal peace processes or primarily as part of post-conflict reconstruction. So, we argue instead that these views of peace-making miss the informal practices of mediation, advocacy, conflict management and reconciliation in which many women are involved informally.

Where people have been subject to the trauma of violence, providing forums for truths and confessions are crucial, but women often are silenced in these events, fearing the shame of talking about their traumas, particularly of sexual assault. Each culture is dealing with the past in different ways. What is appropriate in Myanmar may not be suitable in Bosnia, Yemen, Nicaragua or Syria. Each reconciliation process is unique [Snyder, 2000].

Successful conflict analysis and resolution should lead us to reconciliation and this way involves processes that address conflict, fractured and antagonistic relationships in order to heal past wounds and foster cooperative relationships in a spirit of open, fair and tolerant engagement. In order for these processes to begin, there must be a willingness to change personal and cultural attitudes and practices of prejudice, fear, suspicion and mistrust toward the 'other'. Once there are workable relationships, there can be the development of a shared vision for an interdependent future that permits reconciled relationships to work cooperatively. As the world becomes increasingly multi-polar, the ability to wield power and influence will potentially be more than mere hard military power, broadening into values, becoming *hubs in networks*, and develop-

ing the ability to manage relationships more effectively with non-state actors including nonterritorial sovereign organizations.

We have tried to demonstrate the positive benefits of an inclusionary politics which incorporates principled justice and practices of care. I wanted to emphasize also the importance of defying black and white dualism: that given the appropriate conditions, it is possible to recognize specific identities and include differences as integral to building peace; combine justice with compassion; respect memory truthfully; and apologize and forgive where appropriate in order to embrace difference in a spirit of not just resolution, but *reconciliation*.

And for reconciliation to be more than a trendy catchphrase, practical peace-building must be truly inclusive of women and men from all branches of life as well as working with various 'spoiler' groups. And only through embracing the rich diversity of humanity we can practice a politics of compassion that creates unimaginable reconciliatory spaces of mutual respect for equal dignity.

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