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Women in peace: passive observers or meaningful participants?

Does the inclusion of women in peace negotiations affect the level of female political participation in post-conflict states?

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Does it make a difference whether women are included in peace negotiations or should it just be left to the men in charge? Arguably, there is a connection in this statement: including women in the peace process may reshape who is “in charge” by affecting levels of female political participation in the post-conflict environment. Though support for the idea that women should be involved in the peacebuilding process is almost unanimous, insufficient consideration has been given to how this involvement affects women in the longer-term, especially in relation to their political engagement. This thesis will build a theory about the relationship between women’s involvement in peace negotiations, and their subsequent levels of political participation. To do so, I will consider whether involvement in peace negotiations matters, and whether the type of involvement has varying degrees of impact. I theorize that the type women’s inclusion in the peace process affects the rate of political participation in two main ways: by causing a shift in cultural norms relating to the role of women and by altering the content of the agreement itself.

Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to explicitly identify the connection, if any, between the inclusion of women in peace negotiations, and the subsequent involvement of women in political life thereafter. It aims to develop a theory which considers whether the inclusion, and type of inclusion, of women in peace negotiations affects levels of female political participation in post-conflict states. There is currently minimal research on how inclusion of women in peace processes impacts the level of political participation in post-conflict settings. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000 was a landmark resolution which for the first time codified the necessity to involve women in all aspects of the peacebuilding process. For the first time, it was acknowledged that “peace negotiations lack credibility when the peace process fails to implement an inclusive and participatory approach which respects the grievances of all parts of the population” (Nduwimana, 2006, p.18). However, almost twenty years after the development of this resolution, the majority of peace processes still regularly fail to include women in recent or ongoing peace negotiations.

Identifying if, and how, women's involvement in peace negotiations impacts their subsequent political participation is central for underscoring the full value of including women in the peace process. This goes beyond the peacebuilding phase and aids our understanding of the political legacies of the conditions under which peace is negotiated. It is widely understood that conflict affects women in differing and disproportionate ways than other facets of the population (United Nations, 2003). Post-conflict settings may actually provide a window of opportunity for the inclusion of women in political processes, through the reconstruction of institutions, but also through the vacancies created by war, which may allow new political actors to enter the political sphere (Berry, 2018).

It is widely acknowledged that women *should* be involved in peace negotiations. Yet, often women are still excluded from this process, or included in a very minimal way. Women's participation in peace processes remains one of the most unfulfilled aspects of the women, peace and security agenda (UN Women, 2018). Moreover, there is scant research on whether this inclusion has an impact on women's political participation thereafter.

Whilst it is clear that "political participation" can take many forms, this thesis will focus on women in elected positions. This is not to undermine or diminish the work being carried out by civil organisations and women's interest groups in terms of lobbying or associated activities. However, the influence and extent of such participation can often be more difficult to measure. Therefore, one relevant means by which to measure female political participation is through parliamentary representation. Though it is not a flawless measure, representation of women in elected positions acts as substantive evidence that the peace process has made material impacts on gender equality in the post-conflict setting.

The Good Friday Agreement (1998) in Northern Ireland is often hailed as a great success story of female involvement in peace negotiations. In this case, the inclusion of an all-female negotiating party resulted in 10% of the overall negotiators being women, with women making up 10% of signatories (UN Women, 2012). This proved crucial in creating “mechanisms for political inclusivity” complemented by a “rhetorical commitment to women’s advancement” (Racioppi & See, 2006, p. 198). This has remained one of the most stable and renowned peace agreements, creating lasting peace, whilst furthering women’s interests and empowering local women. The role of women in the Good Friday Agreement has had lasting effects on the cultural perceptions surrounding the role of women in the political sphere, as well as directly impacting women in society. The long-term influences and value of female involvement in the peace process can be seen in a real, meaningful way in this case.

Improving our understanding of the linkages between the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and its impact on levels of female political participation could have significant and valuable policy implications. Many international peacebuilding actors, including the U.N., acknowledge the need for women to be included in all areas of institutional and structural rebuilding in the post-conflict environment. Despite this, there appears to be minimal concrete policy outlining how this can be achieved. Further to this, any policy actions currently being taken appear to be founded on anecdotal or potentially unreliable evidence, which may render these attempts for progress futile. Policy decisions surrounding the importance of female involvement in the peace negotiations should be justified and supported by sound academic evidence, which is currently absent. This thesis will conduct empirical analysis of the cases of Côte D’Ivoire, Zimbabwe and Kenya, and determine that the inclusion of women in the peace negotiation process, in any role, may have significant influences on the subsequent involvement of women in representative politics. This theory may therefore illustrate the

necessity for female involvement in the development of any peace agreement, if gender advancement in political participation is the ultimate aim.

Literature Review

The underrepresentation of women in peace negotiations has been highlighted as an issue within the broader sphere of gender equality. UN Women acknowledge that “increasing the numbers of women...and deepening the quality and impact of their roles...remain vital twin-tracks” in producing meaningful participation (2018, p. 10). UN Women (2012) and the Council of Foreign Relations (2020) present cases studies displaying the exclusion of women from peace negotiations in the majority of major peace processes. However, these reports are limited regarding the results of this exclusion, and how it directly affects the political participation of women in the longer-term.

Scholars acknowledge that it is important for women to be included in the peacebuilding process, for a multitude of reasons. As women experience conflict differently, they may be in a better position to “appreciate the value of peace” (Creary & Byrne, 2015, p. 249). Further, where women are included in the peace process, the agreement is more likely to result in durable peace (Nilsson, 2012), with these agreements more likely to be implemented, and to be more stable (O’Reilly, Ó’Súilleabháin and Paffenholz, 2015) - evidencing “women’s utility to peace” (Charlesworth, 2008, p. 350). Further, where women’s organisations are included in the peace negotiation process, there is a decrease in the risk of returning to war (Gizelis, 2009), leading to a “more comprehensive understanding of security in post-conflict societies” (McWilliams, 2015, p. 230). It is imperative for the stability and immutability of peace that

women are included in the peace negotiations. However, these works do not adequately consider how this inclusion may affect women in terms of political representation.

Peacebuilding is understood to be a range of “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war”, which should include institutional and structural developments (United Nations, 2000, p. 3). De la Rey & McKay record how “international bodies and governmental organizations typically view peacebuilding in terms of post-conflict reconstruction of societal infrastructures and...structural rebuilding of institutions” (2006, p. 141). In this way, the post-conflict environment may provide opportunity to create inclusive institutions, and to ensure a more gender-balanced approach is adopted in the reconstructive process, “because it is precisely at the peace accords where the foundations for a future society are often set, this is where important gender issues should be addressed” (Bouta et al., 2005, p. 51). Therefore, the exclusion of women at this time can hinder the peace negotiations from addressing gender issues, and may have lasting effects on female political participation at all levels. In this way, a failure to consider the role of women at this time may create an uneven political playing field, from the outset.

Concurrent to institutional change, civic participation and engagement on an individual level should be encouraged for functioning peace (Schulhofer-Wohl & Sambanis, 2010). Experience of conflict may influence political behaviour and participation. Though conflict affects victims in a range of different ways, exposure to traumatic events and violent conflict may change perceptions, making an individual more likely to participate and engage in political activities, or to change their political attitudes (Blattman, 2009). The space may be created for women in the post-conflict environment as “in most wars, it is men who fight and women who stay

behind... allowing women to take over household and government positions” (Rogall & Zárate-Barrera, 2020, p. 1). It is briefly recognised that “women have been able to use the post-conflict period to ensure increased female political representation at the national level through voter through...assistance to female candidates, and awareness raising about gender issues” (Justino et al., 2018, p. 912). The process of peacebuilding, therefore, extends not just to structure and institutions, but also to the development of a society in which all individuals can participate freely.

The political landscape is often irrevocably changed in the aftermath of conflict. The mobilization of civilians through different mechanisms, and the reshaping of social networks in the post-conflict environment can happen in a range of different ways (Wood, E, 2008). Though it is not realistic to expect a sudden and complete change in traditions and culture, the legacy of conflict can shift the demographics of a citizenry, and create space for women where there was none before (Berry, 2018). In this way, the impact of conflict can have great influence on the ways in which women will be accepted and included in the post-conflict reconstruction. Due consideration of these significant societal shifts must be included and incorporated in wider society if this is to be sustained in the longer-term.

Further, the degrees of women’s political participation as it relates to electoral participation varies greatly, and is influenced by a range of different factors, regardless of whether the state has recently experienced conflict or not. It is important to acknowledge that the notions of gender, and what this encompasses, vary greatly, and to identify that women are not a homogenous group. With this is the recognition of the need to move beyond essentialist stereotypes of ‘peace women’ (Olsson & Krause, 2021, p. 5). However, some value is placed on the idea of “descriptive representatives”, as having women represent women may enable

better communication and a more substantive representation of interests, as well as a shift in power, and increased democratic legitimacy (Mansbridge, 1999). There is support for the idea that more women in politics is beneficial to representative politics and democracy more generally (Buhlmann & Schadel, 2012). As such, many countries have begun adopting measures to ensure increased numbers of female candidates, through quotas, for example. However, the ways in which conflict may impact representative politics is often overlooked, especially how it relates to female political participation.

Many existing works consider the explicit exclusion of women, and the barriers that they face in making it to the negotiating table. Yet, this exclusion is often overlooked by national and international bodies (Charlesworth, 2008, p. 358), arising from the failure to view peacebuilding as “both culture-specific and gendered” (de la Rey & McKay, 2006, p. 141). It is considered how local effects or external actors can influence women’s involvement in local peacebuilding activities, with findings recording how “that women’s participation in peace building...is hindered by substantial cultural, social and economic barriers” (Justino et al., 2018, p. 915). These include cultural and social norms, economic and education barriers, and confidence levels amongst women. Such barriers are echoed by Datzberger & Le Mat (2018) in their case study of Uganda, and by Moosa et al. in Nepal (2013). However, as will be considered in this thesis, it may be that the inclusion of women in the peace negotiations may generate a shift in cultural norms relating to the role of women. This may assist women to overcome such barriers, or remove them entirely, going forward.

Despite the importance of increased numbers of women in politics, minimal research exists on how this could be achieved. The absence of sufficient examination of the long-term effects of female inclusion in the peacebuilding and peace negotiation processes is immediately evident

from a reading of the existing literature. Mbabazi et al. note that whilst “women have been actively involved in peace initiatives almost in every conflict; peace agreements are often exclusive to men” (2020, p. 134). This represents a disconnect between the work of women in the peacebuilding process and their subsequent representation at peace negotiations. Though conducting much of the groundwork, and contributing to creating a suitable atmosphere for peace, women are often uninvolved in the substantive discussions surrounding peace.

Even where women are included in the process, this may not be in any real or meaningful way, despite acknowledgements that the “the process and the substance of negotiations are interdependent” (McWilliams, 2015, p. 233-234). This tokenistic nature of women’s involvement in peace negotiations is clear where women are formally present, but have no ability to participate actively, or to have any influence on the proceedings (Moosa et al., 2013). This is supported by Olsson and Krause, stating how women “constitute a very limited, and sometimes marginalized, dimension of a peace process” (2021, p.1). UN Women reflect on this sentiment, reporting that increasing women’s presence at the negotiations is insufficient if their concerns and demands are not truly heard (2018). It is therefore clear that there is a large difference between including women’s demands, and their physical presence at the table. Yet, this difference, and its consequences, are rarely acknowledged or considered to any great degree. These works do not sufficiently consider how female involvement at the peace negotiation stage may have ancillary societal impacts, through the shifting of norms or the lasting influence on legislative developments deriving from their presence at the negotiating table.

This field of research is important in identifying how and why women are often excluded peacebuilding activities, or how they may fail to have sufficient influence on the proceedings

and subsequent content of any agreement. This is a necessary discourse in identifying the alternative ways in which women influence political change, but does not consider the next step towards formal participation.

These works do not identify the processes or mechanisms which may support the advancement of women in politics in the post-conflict environment, or consider a direct connection between the involvement of women in the peace process and political participation. There is no distinct theoretical examination of the longer-term impacts of the involvement of women in peace negotiations on levels of female political representation in the post-conflict environment. The literature does not fully consider the longer-term effects of what happens when women do make it to the negotiating table, nor offers a complete consideration of *why* women should be included, declining to emphasise the ways in which female involvement may influence political participation by means of elected positions, as this thesis hopes to address.

Research Design and Methodology

The outcome of interest for the purposes of this study will be the level of female political participation in post-conflict states. Whilst “political participation” can take many forms, this thesis will focus on women in elected positions, for the reasons outlined above. This focus on elected positions is twofold; in a practical manner, the existing data is more accessible and reliable, and it is a definitively measurable variable. Further to this, it is widely acknowledged that representative politicians should “mirror the broad spectrum of ascriptive characteristics present in the population” (Krook & O’Brien, 2012, p. 254). Accurately reflecting the population which is being represented is important from a substantive view, but also has important impacts on the policy outcomes of more representative governments (Devlin & Elgie, 2011; Lovenduski & Norris, 2003). Therefore, ‘elected positions’ is a relevant and suitable focus for this study.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) provide annual reports on the percentage of women in parliament, which will be used in this study. These reports supply a comparative ranking, enabling the observation of changes over time, within and between states. Further, the “Women in Parliament: 1995 – 2020” document gives a broad but relevant overview of the changes in the last twenty-five years, which provide useful evidence for the empirical analysis. For comparative purposes, the study will focus on women in single or lower houses of parliament.

The main independent variable will be the involvement of women in peace negotiations. This is a variable which can be difficult to operationalise, due to the varying degrees of inclusion, and the different roles within peace negotiations which women may hold. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) provide extensive data on the roles of women in peace processes.

They provide evidence of the different roles taken by women in each case, presenting the data as a percentage of the total participants. This CFR data will be used to identify and measure the participation of women in peace negotiations, and the extent of this participation, as it is the most current and accurate data available. Supporting data will be provided by the reports of UN Women on Female Participation in Peace Negotiations.

In this thesis, the term ‘negotiator’ should be understood to represent “participants in or parties to a final round of talks resulting in a signed agreement” (CFR, 2020). In line with the UN Guidance for Effective Mediation, this thesis understands the term “mediator” to be “a third party that assists two or more opposing protagonists to prevent, manage, or resolve a conflict by helping them develop mutually acceptable agreements” (CFR, 2020). Due to time and space constraints, this thesis cannot consider the nuances within the stages of the negotiation process. The theory will focus on their role in the ‘negotiation’ and ‘mediation’ stage of the process. As each peace negotiation process is conducted differently, this also enables a more accurate comparative approach.

The study will be conducted using a qualitative method, using causal process tracing; by use of a theory-building process tracing approach (Beach & Pedersen, 2013) in order to reconstruct the process between the involvement of women in the peace negotiation process and the involvement of women in politics thereafter, and causal mechanisms that exist. In this case, a theory-building approach is justified, given that the relationship at hand has not been previously examined to any great extent. The thesis aims to trace the mechanisms that link the inclusion of women in peace negotiations and the levels of female political participation, more than simply establishing correlation between the two. It is for this reason that a process-tracing approach is the technique most suited to this study.

The cases which will be studied include Côte D'Ivoire, Zimbabwe and Kenya. In Côte D'Ivoire, there was no female involvement in the peace process, therefore providing a comparative standard, with insight into a case where women are excluded. Zimbabwe and Kenya share many similarities in the types and timing of conflict, but differ in that in Zimbabwe, women were included only in the role of negotiator, whereas in the Kenyan case, women participated as both negotiators and lead mediators. Therefore, this case selection provides an accurate comparison, and aids the creation of a more reliable and robust theory.

Firstly, I will examine whether female involvement in peace negotiations impacts the levels of female political participation in post-conflict states. Further, it will be discussed if the type of involvement – that is in the role of negotiator or mediator impacts the level of female political participation to different extents. On this basis, with further process tracing, the theorized causal mechanisms will be determined.

I expect women's involvement in peace negotiations to have a positive impact on the involvement in post-conflict politics via two different paths: a) transformation of cultural norms and, b) inclusion of specific provisions relating to female political participation. The causal mechanisms identify how the inclusion of women in the peace negotiations can transform how women are viewed in society, and how women view themselves, for the first time as political actors, and how their presence can have lasting influence on any agreement which arises from the negotiation process – becoming more active, engaged participants, not just passive observers.

Empirical Approach

Does female participation matter?

A study of Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe

The first step in this study is to establish whether women's involvement in peace negotiations has any influence on the female political participation in the longer-term. In order to identify whether female involvement in peace negotiations matters at all, it will be considered as dichotomous variable – that is, whether women were involved or not. The cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe have been selected as they have many contextual similarities, but one major difference – in the peace negotiations in Côte d'Ivoire there was no female involvement, whereas women were included in the peace process in the role of negotiator in Zimbabwe (UN Women, 2012). These two cases have been deliberately selected in order to illustrate how even minimal involvement in peace negotiations may make a lasting impact on women's political participation thereafter.

For the purposes of this first empirical narrative, “women's participation/involvement in peace negotiations” will be considered in the role of negotiator. This is the entry point for much female involvement in peace negotiations, and is the most likely form of participation. Whilst it could be argued that it would be more appropriate to select a case with complete involvement of women in all roles at the peace negotiations, this would be too extreme. Identifying cases with the largest differences in terms of participation - where women partook as signatories, mediators and negotiators - may show significant differences, but provide less reliable empirical evidence. Women's inclusion in the role of signatory is extremely rare; in a study conducted by UN Women, it was found that “from August 2008 to March 2012, women were

signatories in only two of the 61 peace agreements that have been concluded over the period” (2012, p. 2). Therefore, case selection on the basis of full involvement in the peace process could skew any findings and limit the generalisability of the theory.

The Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accords was a comprehensive agreement adopted in the Côte d’Ivoire in 2003, following an extended period of civil war (CFR, 2020). The goal of the agreement was to create a Government of National Reconciliation, composed of representatives of all Ivorian delegations (Linas-Marcoussis Peace Accords, 2003, S/ 2003/09). There were no women involved in any roles during the drafting or creation of this agreement.

The Council of Foreign Relations records 8 percent of total parliamentarians being women in the parliament of Côte D’Ivoire in year preceding the adoption of the agreement (2020). The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) ‘Women in Politics 2007’ report, five years later, shows a minor increase to 8.9 percent of women in parliament (IPU, 2007). The percentage of women in parliament increased to 12 percent by 2020, with only 30 of 251 members of parliament being female (IPU, 2020). The IPU “Women in parliament: 1995–2020” report places the Côte d’Ivoire at a ranking of 144 (of 172). This increase in female parliamentarians came many years after the adoption and implementation of the peace agreement. This is a relatively minor increase over 25 years, and a poor development, by comparative standards.

In Zimbabwe, political conflict erupted following the disputed 2008 elections, meaning that for many Zimbabweans, it was “not so much an election as a war” (McGreal, 2008). The peace process resulted in the drafting and adoption of the Global Political Agreement (Agreement between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANUPF) and the two

Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, on resolving the challenges facing Zimbabwe)(herein ‘Global Political Agreement’)(CFR, 2020).

In this peace process, 17 percent of total negotiators were female. The IPU ‘Women in Parliament’ report 2007, ranked Zimbabwe at 75, with 16 percent of parliamentarians being female, holding 24 of 150 seats. The same report in 2020 records an almost doubled increase, at 31.9 percent, with 86 of 270 seats filled by women, placing Zimbabwe at a rank of 45 (IPU, 2020). The IPU “Women in parliament: 1995–2020” report shows an increase of 17.2 percent of female parliamentarians in the last 25 years.

Women in Parliament (%)	CÔTE D’IVOIRE	ZIMBABWE
2003	8	18
Five years post agreement	8.9	31.5
2020	12	31.9

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union, ‘Women in Parliament: 1995-2020; Council on Foreign Relations: Women’s Participation in Peace Processes (2020)

Due to the different years in which the agreements were drafted, this thesis compares the two countries after a five year period, to allow for the implementation process. Based on this analysis, there appears to be a large difference in the levels of women in parliament in Zimbabwe, in which women participated in the peace negotiation process, and the Côte D’Ivoire, where they did not. This thesis does not claim that female involvement in the peacebuilding process is the only reason for this increase, or that there is any causation. However, this provides a basis for which to theorize observable implications of female involvement in peacebuilding activities, and to identify the causal mechanisms of this potential relationship.

Does the type of involvement matter?

A study of Zimbabwe and Kenya

Having established that female involvement in the peace negotiation process may impact the subsequent levels of female political participation, the next natural development is consider whether the type and extent of this involvement matters. Most often, female involvement in peace negotiations is limited to the position of negotiator. UN Women record how “presumptions around lack of “capacity” or relegation of women to “women’s issues” pose a significant barrier to women’s meaningful participation” (2018, p. 6). In this way, if women’s involvement is to be more than tokenistic, the role of negotiator is the minimum requirement.

Cases have occurred wherein female peacebuilders participate in the peace negotiation process in both a negotiator and mediator role, such as in Kenya. In the Kenyan context, the December of 2007 brought a contested election, and subsequent violence. The conflict meant “as many as 1,400 people died in the span of 59 days, while 600,000 people were displaced from their homes, as Kenya slipped dangerously close to outright civil war” (Brownsell, 2013). The resulting peace process developed and implemented the “Acting Together for Kenya: Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government” (herein “Acting Together for Kenya) in 2008 (CFR, 2020). In this case, women made up 25 percent of the negotiating teams, as part of both the Orange Democratic Movement and the Party of National Unity (CFR, 2020). Further to this, 33 percent of the total mediators were female (CFR, 2020).

Both Kenya and Zimbabwe created and adopted their peace agreements in 2008, following contested elections, and as such will provide an accurate comparison in terms of time for the

developments in female political participation. Both Kenya and Zimbabwe are similar in that they are African countries, having both been historically colonised by the British; both have centralised governments, with presidential systems. However, as recorded, women in Kenya were involved in the peace negotiations as both negotiators and mediators, but participated only as negotiators in Zimbabwe. This enables an accurate examination of the ways in which the different roles, and varying degrees, of involvement of women in peace negotiations may impact the levels of female political participation thereafter.

Prior to the creation of the peace agreement, in 2007 in Kenya 7.2 percent of total parliamentarians were female, putting Kenya at a ranking of 115 (IPU, 2007). The ‘Women in Politics’ report 2020 places Kenya at a ranking of 92, with a percentage of 21.8 women in parliament, with 76 seats of 349 filled by women (IPU, 2020). This is a threefold increase in female parliamentarians in the twelve years following the adoption and implementation of the peace agreement.

Women in Parliament (%)	KENYA	ZIMBABWE
2007	7.2	16
2020	21.8	31.9

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, ‘Women in Parliament: 1995-2020’
Inter-Parliamentary Union: “Women in Politics 2007”

The ‘Women in Politics’ 2020 Report place Zimbabwe at a higher ranking of 45, with 31.9 percent of female parliamentarians, over Kenya at 92, with 21.8 percent (IPU, 2020). Comparatively, however, the percentage of female parliamentarians has increased more rapidly in Kenya than in Zimbabwe, since the adoption of the peace agreements in 2008. Whilst it is important to note that there are other variables involved, with concerted efforts towards increasing women’s political participation ongoing through different channels, such as

intergovernmental institutions and NGO involvement. Due to the small number of cases available, and the numerous contesting variables, it is extremely difficult to deduce and prove causation at this stage.

Despite this, it is unlikely that the vastly different levels of change in female political participation in the aftermath of a peace negotiation process is coincidental. The objective of this dissertation is not to prove the causation between the involvement of women in peace negotiations and the increase in levels of female political participation, but to examine the relationship that may exist. It is on this basis that the following analysis is conducted, and theory proposed.

Cultural Norms

The issue of gender inequality in political representation is apparent across the world, but especially evident in the post-conflict environment. As there was no female involvement in the peace agreement process in Côte D'Ivoire, there is no opportunity to analyse any change in cultural norms, and so this will be considered only regarding Kenya and Zimbabwe. It is important to note that "sexist attitudes and treatment of women politicians is something that is not particular to Zimbabwe or Africa" (Ncube, 2020, p. 26). These cultural norms imposed on women in both Kenya and Zimbabwe have historically restricted their ability to participate fully in political activities. UN Women attribute this to institutionalised patriarchal and militarised systems, which are formed upon, and perpetuate gender inequality as a barrier to women's participation in conflict resolution (2018).

Zimbabwe

Historically, even in the "more liberal" Zimbabwe, where the cultural norms were not always as limiting as those in Kenya, the increase in "personal agency did not displace women's exercise of power based on more conventional models", such as those of the "sacrificing mother and the obedient wife" (Martin-Shaw, 2015, p. 2). When women began to try and enter the political sphere, they were often limited, perhaps to a party's "women's wing", yet given no real influence on policy formation (Geisler, 1995). Women did not engage in political life prior to the peace agreement formation, and those that tried to were often relegated to tokenistic tasks, or branded as outcasts (Ncube, 2020). Whilst it is unreasonable to expect cultural and social ideals to change immediately, the change in cultural norms is a contributing factor which has enabled space for development over time.

The campaign for peace by Zimbabwean women in 2008 illustrates the ways in which women have managed to “successfully breach” social and cultural obstacles, and “demonstrates the potential of women’s active engagement in peace processes” (Mbwadzawo & Nhwazi, 2013, p. 8). There still exists “negative attitudes towards women’s participation in positions of decision making” in Zimbabwe (Mudege & Kwangari, 2013, p. 243). Further, even still, “women politicians are expected to safeguard and maintain a certain level of respectability and domesticity” (Ncube, 2020, p. 29). However, the fact that women are able to, and do, participate in politics in Zimbabwe in a manner equal to their male counterparts is a large change from the pre-peace negotiation political landscape.

This paper theorises that with the participation of women in the peace negotiation process, women were acknowledged, for the first time, as equal political players. This space that was created through their involvement in peace negotiations, and the changing attitudes towards women as political actors, has facilitated their long-term political participation.

Kenya

In Kenya, the women who participated in the peace negotiation process were active citizens, on a grassroots level, known for “their active role within civil society organizations, notably in the fields of peace and human rights” (ITPI, 2016, p. 4). They performed acts that “interrupted the status quo and paved the way for men and women to advance other cultural work” (Sanya & Lutomia, 2016, p. 229). However, socio-cultural beliefs and practices have limited their ability to hold influence or participate fully in politics (Anyago et al., 2018), often formed on notions of womanhood “not necessarily based on the realities of women’s lived experiences

but rather on ideals that ascribed onto women” (Sanya & Lutomia, 2016, p. 231). This theory proposes that a shift in cultural norms occurred as a result of the female involvement in the peace negotiation process, which demonstrated the capability and competence of women in the political sphere.

The culture of politics as a male-only activity has begun to change, as a result. For example, “in Kenya...parliamentarians can now bring their young children with them when travelling for committee work, and parliament has designated a senior-level gender focal point” (IPU, 2020). This cohesive and considerate approach to enabling participation of women may not have been possible prior to the peace agreement process, where the presence of women signified a changing attitude towards women in politics. The lasting impact of the cultural changes surrounding the role of women in politics on female political participation are not only evidenced by the numbers of women in parliament. Further to this, significant cultural changes have been adopted and implemented to ensure that access to parliamentary participation is possible for women. Creating a culture where women are not hindered by the other existing barriers, means that meaningful and lasting political participation can occur.

The traditional values and role of women as a homemaker and mother in both Kenya and Zimbabwe have not been wholly disregarded, but instead incorporated into their role as politician, or political representative. This enables increased levels of female political participation as it does not make it an “either-or” choice, but the presents the possibility of both. This represents the changing attitudes towards women in politics, making more inclusive political environments, instead of the historically exclusive ones which previously existed.

Influence of female involvement in peace negotiations on content of the agreement

In the course of my research, it has been found that female involvement in the peace negotiation process may not always have direct impacts on the content of an agreement by means of ensuring specific provisions relating to female political participation. However, the content of the agreement may present a framework under which levels of female political participation can be increased, and in this way, reflect the influence of female involvement in the peace process.

Côte D'Ivoire

In the context of the Côte D'Ivoire, there is almost no reference to women, girls or gender in the Linas-Marcoussis Peace Agreement. Part VI of the Agreement records the rights and freedoms of the individual, but does not explicitly reference gender, or the ways in which the new government will protect and develop the roles and rights of women, in the post-conflict environment. As there were no women present during the drafting and creation of this agreement, this is perhaps unsurprising. The absence of a female voice is reflected in the exclusion of these considerations in the agreement.

The recent Constitution of Côte D'Ivoire, adopted in 2016 records how “the State works to promote the political rights of women by increasing their chances of access to representation in elected assemblies” (Article 36, Côte d'Ivoire's Constitution of 2016). Further, a “new law introduced in 2019 stipulates that at least 30 percent of candidates fielded by parties for parliamentary and regional elections must be women” (Bradpiece, 2020). However, this is more likely influenced by the grassroots activism by women and other influencing variables.

These developments came more than a decade after the creation and implementation of the peace accords, and not in the direct aftermath, therefore unlikely to be connected.

Zimbabwe

The Global Political Agreement is somewhat of an outlier, in that it explicitly references the need for gender equality in many facets of society. Article XX of the Agreement presents the framework for a new government, which commits to “acknowledging the need for gender parity, particularly the need to appoint women to strategic Cabinet posts” (the Global Political Agreement, p. 20). This definitive codification of the need to ensure adequate representation of women in political positions sets the foundation on which all institutions and frameworks would be built, in the post-conflict environment.

Though criticised for not being sufficiently reflective of the involvement of women in creating the environment for peace, the Zimbabwean peace process signified a major change in the political landscape of the country (Mbwadzawo & Ngwazi, 2013). As a negotiator, Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga “kept in constant communication with women’s organizations and activists” (UN Women, 2012, p. 8). The information flow resulted in due consideration being given to the rights and roles of women within society, especially relating to political participation.

The presence of such considerations within the agreement itself affects the development of subsequent legislative developments. In this way, the value of a female negotiator is made evident, not just to represent women’s interests, but forcing the consideration of wider gender-issues in the drafting of the agreement. Having a female voice at the table can have significant

impacts on the development of such an agreement, which may have been neglected with the absence of any female negotiators.

Kenya

The “Acting Together for Kenya” Agreement does not explicitly make references to women, girls and gender (CFR, 2020). However, the agreement set the foundations for the drafting of a new constitution, and the establishment of truth and reconciliation commissions and inquiries. The presence of women at this stage of the agreement formation ensured that a gender-sensitive approach would be subsequently implemented in these activities.

Graca Machel, of the Forum of Elders, participated as a lead mediator in the negotiation process (UN Women, 2012). In this role, she supported and consulted the Kenyan Women’s Consultation Group (KWCG), an organisation of women from across Kenya which “consisted of women who shared similar professional backgrounds in peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian organizations and who were seeking to have a more active role in shaping events from a gender perspective” (IPTI, 2016, p. 4). The KWCG “recommended the use of specific women’s rights language in the agenda and agreements, in addition to addressing the root causes of violence, such as constitutional reform, transitional justice mechanisms, and the strengthening of electoral bodies” (IPTI, 2016, p. 5). Many of these provisions were considered, and adopted in the course of the negotiations.

The effects of this involvement of women are multiple, and lasting. Gender quotas were imposed for all peace implementation commissions (IPTI, 2016); evidencing the lasting influence of female involvement at the peace negotiation stage. The inclusion of women at the

peace negotiation stage enabled female participation in the truth and reconciliation commissions (CFR, 2020). These included Constitutional Reform Commission, the Independent Review Committee (also known as the Kriegler Commission); the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission; and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (IPTI, 2016). The conclusions and recommendations of these commissions had, and continue to have, influence on the transformation of Kenyan politics, and on female political participation.

In 2010, as a result of the peace agreement proceedings, Kenya drafted a new constitution which imposed a one-third quota for female representation in elective and appointed positions (CFR, 2020). Though this gender quota was not categorically outlined within the peace agreement, it was the Acting Together for Kenya agreement which provided the base from which all legislative developments stemmed. In this way, the influence of female negotiators and mediators at this time had significant and lasting effects on the levels female political participation thereafter.

This thesis proposes that the female involvement in the peace negotiation process influenced the inclusion of the relevant provisions, and ensured the adoption of a more gender-inclusive agenda for the proceedings. Further to this, the presence of women at the peace table enabled a more expansive channel of communication, through which women's interests could be presented. With this presence comes a consciousness of the role of women, at the time of development, and prospectively.

Theory

Change in cultural norms

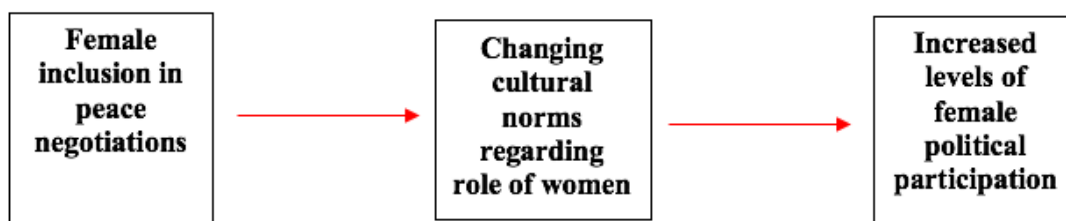
The literature review extensively records how these cultural norms posed a multitude of barriers to female participation, including social and cultural norms regarding the role of women. In the countries studied, women were often excluded from education and economic engagement, and expected to exist as homemakers, as “some cultural values prohibit the active participation of women in politics as some societal values and norms proscribe their involvement in activities outside the home” (Anyango et al., 2018, p. 1510). It is therefore unsurprising that the levels of female involvement in both Kenya and Zimbabwe prior to the peace negotiation process were quite low. This is to be expected under the cultural norms and societal expectations of women at the time.

The conventional beliefs about women, and their role within society, impeded access to political participation, at all levels. However, it is crucial that this be considered, because where there is a high level of female empowerment, “it is easier for women...to elicit broader domestic participation” (Gizelis, 2009, p. 506). Therefore, a shift in these cultural norms, where women are enabled and empowered as political actors, can facilitate an increase in political participation.

This is supported by the idea of the peace process as transformative for the understanding of the roles of women. Engagement of women in the peacebuilding process can therefore transform the cultural understandings of what the role of women is, and create a space for women to participate as political actors. This can be built on, going forward, to influence lasting female political participation, or to lay the groundwork for election to parliamentary positions.

In essence, it is the peace negotiation process which “sets in place reforms and institutions which can have both short-term and long-term effects on gender equality, women’s empowerment, and peace” (Olsson & Krause, 2021, p. 8). It is the longer-term effects of involvement which effects levels of political participation that are most relevant for the purposes of this theory.

The following causal mechanism has been identified as a result of this analysis.



The cultural beliefs and traditions are often deeply embedded, and change very slowly, over time. Even when men return after war, and reclaim their patriarchal position of head of the household, “the positive socio-economic and political participation effects remain” as a result of a “change in gender norms, which prevail even after gender ratios have normalized again” (Ragoll & Zárate-Barrera, 2020, p. 3). It is therefore clear that this is not just a temporary shift which may occur in the absence of men, but instead a lasting change regarding the gender norms.

It is not necessary that these norms are changed or eradicated completely. Instead, a small shift to the extent that women have the ability to enter the political sphere. It is difficult to quantify or operationalise the changing of norms, but where the existing standards are so minimal, the

ability for women to have the opportunity to stand for elected office is an improvement. Involvement in the peace negotiation process proposes the changing of these cultural norms surrounding the role of women, as it creates a space for their engagement in the political process for the first time. Olsson & Krause succinctly record how the participation of women in peace negotiations places a “spotlight on the fact that women constitute mobilized political actors in many contexts” (2021, p. 3). In this way, the conscious effort to include women in the peacebuilding process provided a significant cultural shift in relation to how women were perceived, for the first time as political actors.

Influence of female involvement in peace negotiations on content of the agreement

It has been illustrated that female involvement in peace negotiations is valuable beyond the substantive content of any agreement. However, that is not to detract from the impact of the presence of women in ensuring that any agreement which is created reflects women's interests and represents and defends the role of women as active political citizens. UN Women note how peace processes can be "seized as an opportunity to transform the political landscape of society, increase women's political participation and representation in elections, and advocate for the appointment of women in decision-making bodies, from cabinets and parliaments to commissions" (2012, p. 12). Women can have real influence on the discussions, and subsequent content, as opposed to simply being present in a tokenistic manner.

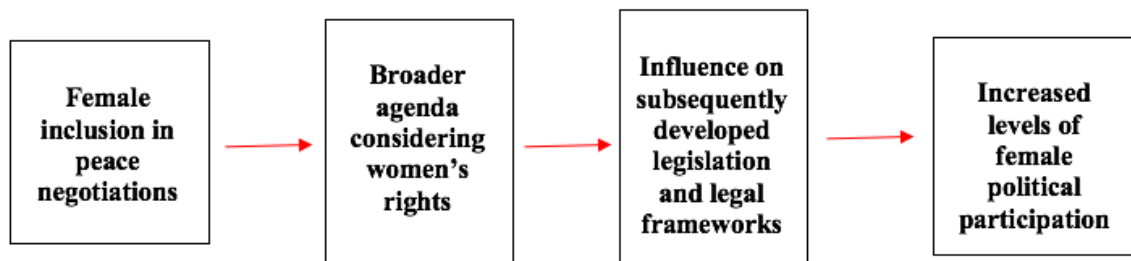
Women's involvement in the peace negotiation process offers a "unique understanding of the dynamics of conflict...essential to crafting a long-term venture which includes reconciliation and reconstruction of the social fabric in post-conflict environments" (Mbwadzawo & Ngwazi, 2013, p. 6). In the aftermath of violence and conflict, the peace agreement may not be the most appropriate vehicle for specific provisions relating to gender equality in political representation. However, the recognition of women as citizens, and the commitment to creating a government and political environment in which women can participate, may hold place in any peace agreement.

UN Women record how "many peace accords include a general equality clause and non-specific references to human rights guarantees and international treaties, but rarely mention quotas or other special measures to reverse women's exclusion from decision-making, nor allocate responsibility to monitor that equality is indeed achieved" (2012, p. 16). The majority

of “major peace agreements concluded between August 2008 and April 2012 shows that 17 of the 61 accords included gender-related keywords” (UN Women, 2012, p. 19). However, simply because there is no explicit provisions requiring gender equality or female representation, this does not mean that female involvement in the peace negotiation process does not have lasting effects on the levels of female political participation.

On the basis of this analysis, I theorize that the involvement of women at the negotiation stage of the peace process broadens the overall agenda and contributes to the creation of subsequent legislation and legal frameworks which support increased levels of female political participation.

The following causal mechanism is theorized as a result.



Adopting a wider scope when considering how the presence of women in the peace negotiation process can impact the ways in which female political participation develops over time is necessary. Enabling the development of gender-sensitive legislative frameworks and structures that support increasing levels of women in political settings can arise from the peace process, even where it is not explicitly incorporated into the accord. This may be omitted where there are no women present at the negotiating table. The transformative nature of the post-conflict environment can be seized as an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a more equal political

landscape, through a range of different mechanisms, arising from more inclusive peace proceedings.

This theory proposes that where women are included in the peace negotiation process, a broader agenda may be adopted, facilitating the development and implementation of a more gender-conscious accord. These considerations do not need to be explicitly included within the agreement, but may influence legislative developments in the succeeding period, which relate to women's political participation. This thesis does not suggest that female involvement in peace negotiations is the only factor which has affected levels of female political participation in post-conflict states, but suggests that it is an important influential variable that has been overlooked to date.

Conclusion

The lack of data and small number of cases wherein there has been significant involvement of women in the peace negotiation process pose difficulty in providing reliable evidence of its effects on levels of female political participation thereafter. This minimal evidence means it is difficult to deduce concrete conclusions on whether the involvement of women directly impacts levels of female political participation in the post-conflict state. However, that is not the aim of this paper.

This thesis proposes that there is a correlation between female involvement in the peace negotiation process, and levels of female political participation, and has examined the ways in which this may occur. It has established that levels of female political participation in the post-conflict state may be influenced by women's involvement in the peace negotiation process by two main pathways; the changing of cultural norms relating to the role of women, and the impact of women on the agenda, and therefore, on subsequent legislative developments.

However, it is difficult to determine whether the type and extent of involvement, in the role of negotiator or mediator, has influence on the level of female political participation. Regarding cultural norms, as the inclusion of women in the peace negotiation process has a largely symbolic impact, it is unlikely that the form or extent of involvement matters as much as the fact women are included at all. Where women have been deliberately excluded previously, the vision of any woman actively participating within the peace negotiation process, regardless of their role, may signify a shift in their perception as political actors.

Further, as there is minimal evidence illustrating the extent of involvement between the role of negotiator and mediator means it is difficult to establish any influence it may have. The analysis

of the Kenyan and Zimbabwean cases suggest that in terms of subsequently developed legislative frameworks and gender-sensitive legislation relating to female political participation, the type and extent of female involvement may have a greater impact. In Zimbabwe, the effects of female participation in the role of negotiator are evidenced within the agreement, but further influence beyond this appears minimal. The effects of female participation in the roles of both negotiator and mediator in Kenya has multiple and lasting effects throughout the peace process, and on current and ongoing legislative developments.

In this way, it appears as though women's involvement in peace negotiations does matter, but the type and extent of this participation also matters. Further research should be carried out in order to establish whether the type of involvement directly causes an increase in gender-sensitive legislative developments. Testing of this theory in different geographical regions, or under different conflict conditions would strengthen its position. Unfortunately, due to the limited involvement of women in many peace processes, the data availability may pose issue. Future research regarding ongoing peace processes, or following the implementation of more recent agreements may provide further insight, and support of this theory.

This thesis can theorize that, regardless of role, female involvement at the peace negotiation stage of peace can result in the adoption of a broader gender-inclusive agenda, and subsequently sets the playing field for gender-conscious legislative developments. In many post-conflict settings, the peace agreement outlines the foundations for transformative structural and institutional reformation. The involvement of women in drafting any agreement, in a negotiating or mediating capacity, can ensure that these foundations include women, considering of women as equal and capable political figures, and shifting existing cultural norms. Building on this, any legislative advancements which are carried out on this basis, may

hold space for women to engage as active political participants, and increase the ability to run for elected positions.

Evidently, there remains many other challenges which hinder women from participating fully in politics in the post-conflict environment, many of which have been studied at length. This study proposes an alternative theoretical basis for including women in the peace negotiation process. Nearly two decades after the adoption of Resolution 1325, change is ongoing, but at a very slow rate – even today only a tiny percentage of peacebuilding aid is directed towards women’s organisations (U.N., 2019). Given the potential lasting influence of female involvement in this peacebuilding process, specifically on women’s political participation, this should be made a priority.

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