Systematic study of gender, conflict, and peace

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If you want something said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman.

Margaret Thatcher
The ‘fathers’ of peace and conflict studies...Sadly not many mothers
But many daughters....
Gender and security studies

- Gender no relevance in traditional security studies
- All decision makers men
- Gender issues not high politics and national security
- Gender constant not variable
Feminism, war, and peace

- Feminism more concerned with
  - Power structures
  - Anti-militarism
  - Feminist methodology: anti-positivist

- Useful critique of gender and power, weaker on constructive alternatives, paradox of gender stereotypes
Early empirical research of gender as an analytical tool

- MW Segal: Women’s participation in armed forces
- Ester Boserup: Women and development
- Barry Hughes: Gender equality and economic development
- Joshua Goldstein: War and Gender
Bringing gender to the mainstream

Gender equal societies tend to have fewer conflicts both internally and externally.

Gender equal societies have different quality of institutions and ways of handling conflict.

Gender equality, as the sense of providing equal opportunities and access to resources for men and women, inextricably linked with governance.

Integrating relationships identified in feminist research to mainstream: gender equality and violent conflict.

**Interstate conflict and security:**

**Intrastate conflict:**
- Melander (2005)

**Peacekeeping and gender:**
- Olsson (2000 & 2009)
Gender equality and development

Does gender make a difference?

Experimental research (Duflo)

- Women often make different choices
- Empowered women, lower fertility rates
When Ismene met Louise

The FBA 1325 Working Group (2009-2018)

• 30 published articles
• 2 books
• 16 articles in progress

(Data: Sabrina Karim)

(slide Sabrina Karim)
UNSCR 1325 and systematic empirical research

- Academics and policy-makers converge on need for solid research for Women, Peace, Security implementation
- Importance of careful selection, clear criteria, and critical evaluation
- Consideration on concepts and comparability of selected evidence

- Systematic empirical research on gender, conflict, and peace has grown quickly over the last decade:
  - Peacekeeping and gender
  - Participation
  - Protection/Sexual violence
Gender, UN effectiveness, and peace I

Peace as ‘lack of conflict’

- Evidence of interactive effects of UN involvement and higher female status on sustainable peace
Gender, UN effectiveness, and peace II

Peace as ‘quality of life’ post-conflict

- More cooperation and less conflict with UN in areas where women have relatively higher status
- More cooperation with UN actions that focused on communal concerns
- Within countries where the UN are deployed, pregnant women have better access to antenatal care and vaccinations
Female participation in political processes

- Higher female political representation increases the durability of peace (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood 2017)
  - (1) by prioritizing social welfare spending over military spending
  - (2) by influencing public perceptions of governance quality
- Higher levels of female literacy and parliamentary participation reduce likelihood of conflict relapse (Demeritt et al 2015)
Cautionary note

- What is the causal mechanism? How does participation interact with social structures? (Bjarnegård and Melander 2015)

- What do we measure by women’s participation? Women with influence or ‘just’ numbers? (Ellerby 2016)

- Can we treat women as one group?
How to increase female participation?

Gender mainstreaming: *A global strategy to promote gender equality in development and peace*

Key points of gender mainstreaming are:

- It is a strategy to include both women and men’s concerns and experiences as an integral components of all policies and their implementation.

- This means that you have to assess the implications for women and men of any action, policy, project and so forth. That is, it should be part of the core work for peace, not a separate project.

Leads to more prosperous societies with less conflict
How to achieve gender mainstreaming?

- Gender balancing:
  - Gender balancing in missions and in rebuilt institutions —security reform

- Gender budgeting:
  - An approach to budgeting that uses fiscal policy and administration to promote gender equality, and girls’ and women’s development
Women in peacekeeping forces

- Female personnel deployed in low risk missions and areas
- Not where they are mostly needed (high levels of SGBV)
- Including more female peacekeepers is not sufficient to reduce SEA among peacekeeping forces

Peacekeeping missions highly gendered spaces
(Karim and Beardsley 2015, 2016; Karim and Henry 2017)
Gender budgeting: a question of preferences

- Women support
  - More public goods spending
  - More spending on the environment
  - Less spending on agriculture and military
  - More money on childcare relative to elderly care, and on education relative to elderly care

(source: Funk and Gathmann 2015, Switzerland)

But very limited research in post-conflict countries with limited evidence of success (Stotsky, 2016-IMF)
Sexual violence in war (Cohen and Nordås)

- Variation between different armed conflicts, and even variation within one conflict (for ex. SVAC data)

- Sexual violence does not necessarily follow the same pattern as other forms of conflict violence; rarely a weapon of war

- Sexual violence affects women and girls primarily but boys and men are targeted to a higher degree than expected
SEA and UN

- A lot of variation across missions (Rustad and Nordås 2013)

- When present endemic by both military and civilians (Karim and Beardsley 2016)

- Often sexual exploitation (transactional sex) more of a problem (Beber et al 2017)
Promoting systematic research in gender, conflict, and peace: Gaps and Challenges

- Limited understanding of causal mechanisms: do gender budgeting and balancing policies lead to greater gender equality? (see Karim et al 2018)

- Limited understanding how gender mainstreaming policies interact with underlying economic and social structures in post-conflict countries

- Dearth of data to evaluate links between gender equality and governance

- Lack of consensus on key concepts hampers comparative research

- Research findings ‘highjacked’ using ‘naïve’ interpretations into policy
Key messages

- Gender, conflict, and peace: a mushrooming subfield aiming to become part of the mainstream
- Gender as an analytical framework to understand processes of peace and conflict independent from other institutions
  - Different dimension of development and social capacity
- Evidence more nuanced than often interpreted: an opportunity and a challenge
- New threats: rise of populism in Western democracies and current global economic crisis