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GENDERED PEACEBUILDING FRAMEWORKS: EVALUATING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS, SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS, AND DURABILITY OF PEACE AGREEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Peacebuilding has increasingly shifted from state-centered approaches toward inclusive frameworks that recognize the influence of gender, representation, institutional reform, and social participation on post-conflict stability. Despite international commitments to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, women remain unevenly represented in formal negotiations and post-conflict security institutions, raising important questions about whether meaningful participation contributes to more durable peace. This study develops a gendered peacebuilding framework for evaluating the relationship between women's participation in peace negotiations, security sector reforms, and the durability of peace agreements. It distinguishes numerical representation from substantive participation by examining women's involvement as negotiators, mediators, signatories, civil-society representatives, and contributors to implementation processes. The framework further evaluates whether gender-responsive security sector reforms strengthen institutional legitimacy, accountability, community security, and protection following conflict. Peace durability is assessed through agreement implementation, recurrence of armed conflict, institutional stability, and sustained post-conflict cooperation. By integrating negotiation processes, security governance, and long-term outcomes, the study provides a systematic basis for determining when and through which institutional mechanisms women's participation contributes to sustainable peace.

Keywords: Gendered Peacebuilding; Women's Participation; Peace Negotiations; Security Sector Reform; Peace Agreements; Sustainable Peace

1 INTRODUCTION

Armed conflict continues to generate profound political, institutional and social consequences long after formal hostilities have ended. Negotiated settlements can terminate organized violence, yet signing an agreement does not guarantee effective implementation, legitimate institutions or protection against renewed conflict [1]. Consequently, peacebuilding has increasingly moved beyond narrow approaches centered on elite bargaining and state reconstruction toward models that recognize participation, inclusion and local ownership as important foundations of sustainable political order [2]. This shift reflects growing awareness that peace processes derive legitimacy not only from agreements between armed actors but also from the extent to which affected populations can influence decisions shaping post-conflict governance [3].

Gender has become particularly important within this changing understanding of peacebuilding. The Women, Peace and Security agenda, anchored in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, established women's participation, protection and involvement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding as international priorities [4]. Women can participate as negotiators, mediators, delegates, signatories, advisers and civil-society representatives, while also contributing to implementation bodies, community security initiatives and post-conflict institutions [3]. Such participation can broaden negotiation agendas by introducing social, economic, justice and security concerns that may receive limited attention in predominantly elite or militarized bargaining processes [5]. Women's involvement may therefore matter beyond representation itself, particularly where participation creates genuine opportunities to shape negotiated commitments and their implementation.

1.1 Problem Statement and Research Gap

Despite this normative progress, women's inclusion remains uneven across peace processes, and presence at the negotiating table does not necessarily translate into decision-making authority [6]. Formal representation may coexist with restricted access to influential negotiating forums, limited agenda-setting power or exclusion from implementation structures. This creates an important analytical distinction between descriptive representation and substantive participation [7]. Counting women involved in negotiations may establish the extent of inclusion, but it cannot independently demonstrate whether their participation altered agreement provisions, institutional arrangements or subsequent peace outcomes [8].

Three interconnected gaps remain particularly important. First, research on women's participation in negotiations is frequently separated from analysis of post-conflict security-sector transformation, despite the central role of security institutions in implementing agreements and rebuilding public confidence [6]. Second, participation may be treated as a relatively uniform condition even though symbolic representation, consultation and substantive decision-making influence constitute considerably different levels of involvement [2]. Third, agreement signature provides an incomplete indication of peacebuilding success because implementation may subsequently weaken, institutions may remain fragile, and organized violence may recur [7]. Assessing peace durability therefore requires attention to the institutional processes through which negotiated commitments are translated into sustained political cooperation and security.

Addressing these gaps requires an integrated framework examining whether women's substantive participation shapes negotiated outcomes, becomes embedded within post-conflict security-sector reforms, and contributes to the longer-term durability of peace agreements [4].

Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

This study evaluates how women's participation in peace negotiations and security sector reforms relates to the durability of peace agreements. Rather than assuming that greater inclusion automatically produces sustainable peace, the study examines participation as a multidimensional process whose effects may depend upon substantive influence, institutional implementation and the surrounding political environment [8]. Particular attention is given to distinguishing numerical presence from meaningful involvement in negotiation, agreement implementation and security governance [5].

Four research questions guide the investigation. RQ1: How does women's participation influence peace-negotiation processes and agreement outcomes [1]? RQ2: To what extent is women's participation associated with gender-responsive security sector reform? RQ3: Through what institutional mechanisms can women's participation influence peace durability [3]? RQ4: Under what conditions does women's participation contribute to more durable peace agreements? Collectively, these questions enable participation to be assessed in relation to both immediate negotiated outcomes and longer-term institutional consequences [6]. The following section consequently examines scholarship on gender-inclusive peacebuilding, negotiation participation, security-sector transformation and the durability of post-conflict peace.

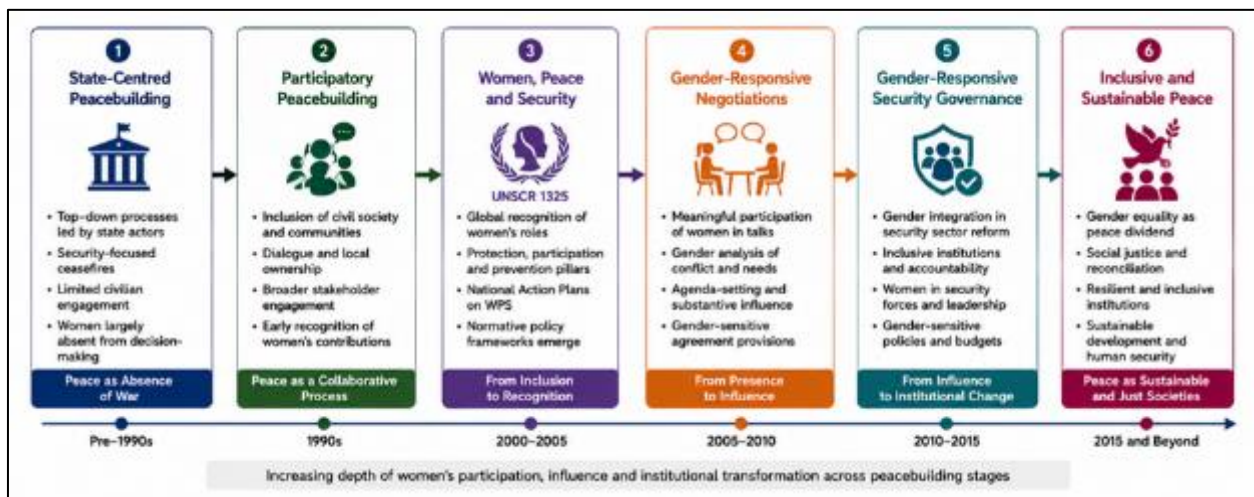
2 GENDER, PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND POST-CONFLICT SECURITY

2.1 Evolution of Gender-Inclusive Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding has progressively expanded beyond state-centered approaches that prioritized ceasefires, political settlements and institutional reconstruction toward frameworks emphasizing participation, local ownership and social inclusion [9]. Conventional approaches were criticized for privileging political and military elites while giving insufficient attention to groups whose experiences of conflict differed from those represented in formal negotiations [6]. Participatory peacebuilding responded by recognizing communities and civil society as important actors in rebuilding legitimate institutions and sustaining peace [12]. Feminist scholarship further demonstrated that conflict

and post-conflict reconstruction are gendered processes, challenging assumptions that apparently neutral peace arrangements necessarily address women's security, political participation or socioeconomic priorities [15]. As illustrated in Figure 1, this evolution reflects a broader transition from state-centered peacebuilding toward participatory and explicitly gender-responsive approaches in which inclusion becomes progressively linked to influence and institutional change.

The emergence of the Women, Peace and Security agenda institutionalized many of these concerns internationally. UNSCR 1325 strengthened recognition of women not merely as populations requiring protection but as participants in conflict prevention, negotiation, peacebuilding and reconstruction [8]. Subsequent developments increasingly emphasized women's leadership, meaningful participation and influence across decision-making institutions [11]. Gender-inclusive peacebuilding consequently extends beyond numerical representation by examining whether women possess genuine opportunities to shape agreements, implementation structures and security governance [14]. Figure 1 captures this progression from the Women, Peace and Security agenda through gender-responsive negotiations and security governance to inclusive and sustainable peace. This evolution provides the conceptual foundation for evaluating women's participation as a contributor to sustainable peace.



From state-led approaches to inclusive, gender-responsive and sustainable peace outcomes

Figure 1: Evolution of Gender-Inclusive Peacebuilding Frameworks

2.2 Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations

Women participate in peace negotiations through formal and informal channels whose levels of influence vary considerably. Formal roles include negotiators, mediators, delegates, signatories, observers and technical advisers, while civil-society organisations and grassroots networks can influence agendas through consultation, advocacy, mobilization and community engagement [7]. These different roles make it necessary to distinguish descriptive representation from substantive participation. Descriptive representation concerns whether women are present and in what numbers; substantive participation concerns whether they can articulate priorities, influence bargaining positions and affect decisions incorporated into negotiated settlements [13].

This distinction is important because physical presence may provide limited leverage where negotiating procedures, political hierarchies or informal power structures restrict meaningful engagement [10]. Conversely, women's organisations operating outside formal delegations may exercise substantial influence by developing policy proposals, connecting negotiations with affected communities and pressing parties to address neglected concerns [6]. Meaningful participation may broaden agendas to include civilian protection, justice, displacement, socioeconomic recovery and gender equality, while strengthening communication between negotiating institutions and local constituencies [15]. Such involvement may also enhance perceived legitimacy and encourage broader ownership of negotiated settlements [9]. However, these potential benefits depend on whether participation creates genuine influence and whether commitments secured during negotiations survive implementation. Evaluation must therefore consider both negotiating roles and the institutional pathways through which women's contributions enter post-conflict governance [12].

2.3 Gender and Security Sector Reform

The transition from negotiated settlement to implementation places security sector reform at the center of gender-responsive peacebuilding. Post-conflict police, armed forces, justice institutions and oversight bodies shape everyday

security and determine whether negotiated commitments become operational realities [14]. Women's participation within these institutions can broaden understandings of security beyond territorial and military concerns to encompass community safety, access to justice and responses to gender-based violence [8]. Gender-responsive reform may therefore involve women's recruitment and advancement, institutional safeguards against discrimination, accountability mechanisms and participation in civilian oversight [11].

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes are equally significant because gender-insensitive programs can overlook female combatants, associated women and differentiated community-security needs [7]. Women's participation in DDR design and implementation can strengthen recognition of these experiences, while community-security initiatives can connect formal institutions with local priorities [13]. Nevertheless, increasing women's numerical presence within police, military or justice institutions does not itself establish transformative reform. Institutional authority, resources, leadership opportunities and accountability influence whether participation produces substantive change [10]. Security sector reform consequently represents a potential institutional mechanism through which gains secured during inclusive negotiations can become more legitimate, responsive and accountable post-conflict security arrangements [15].

2.4 Conceptualizing Peace Agreement Durability

Peace agreement durability extends beyond the formal signing of a negotiated settlement. A durable agreement must withstand political pressures, maintain sufficient compliance among parties and contribute to conditions in which organized armed conflict does not recur [6]. Non-recurrence is therefore important, but durability also encompasses implementation of negotiated provisions, institutional stability and sustained political cooperation [12]. Agreements formally terminating hostilities may remain fragile when implementation is delayed, security commitments are abandoned or political actors withdraw from agreed institutions [9].

Table 1: Core Dimensions and Indicators of Gender-Inclusive Peacebuilding

Dimension	Indicators	Expected Mechanism	Peacebuilding Outcome
Women's negotiation participation	Negotiators, mediators, delegates, signatories, advisers	Broader representation and agenda influence	More inclusive negotiations
Substantive influence	Decision-making authority, proposals adopted, agenda-setting	Translation of participation into negotiated commitments	Responsive peace provisions
Gender-responsive provisions	Equality, protection, political participation, institutional commitments	Formalization of gender priorities	Inclusive agreement design
Security sector reform	Police, armed forces, justice, DDR, civilian oversight	Institutionalization of negotiated commitments	Accountable and responsive security
Agreement implementation	Compliance, implementation mechanisms, institutional continuity	Translation of commitments into practice	Greater agreement stability
Peace durability	Agreement survival, non-recurrence, sustained cooperation	Maintenance of peaceful political relations	Longer-lasting post-conflict peace

Assessment of durability consequently requires temporal and institutional dimensions. Agreement survival indicates persistence over time, whereas implementation captures whether negotiated commitments are translated into practice [14]. Institutional stability reflects the capacity of post-conflict arrangements to manage disputes without renewed violence, while compliance indicates whether parties continue observing agreed obligations [7]. Sustained political cooperation further demonstrates whether former adversaries operate through established institutions rather than returning to coercive strategies [11]. From a gendered perspective, the critical question is therefore whether meaningful participation influences agreements and institutions in ways associated with longer-lasting peace [13]. Examining these dimensions together provides the foundation for the integrated theoretical framework developed in Section 3 [10].

These interconnected dimensions indicate that women's participation cannot be assessed independently of the institutional processes through which negotiated influence may become embedded in post-conflict governance. Section

3 therefore develops an integrated theoretical framework connecting participation, institutional transformation and peace durability.

3 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Gendered Peacebuilding Perspective

Gendered and feminist peacebuilding perspectives challenge assumptions that conflict, security and post-conflict reconstruction affect societies uniformly. Conflict frequently intensifies existing inequalities by reshaping access to political authority, economic resources, physical security and institutional decision-making in gender-specific ways [12]. Feminist approaches therefore question peacebuilding models that define security primarily through ceasefires, territorial control and state stability while overlooking everyday insecurity, exclusion and gender-based violence [17]. From this perspective, sustainable peace requires attention to who participates in political reconstruction and whose priorities become embedded within emerging institutions.

Women's inclusion alone, however, does not guarantee institutional transformation. Representation establishes presence, participation concerns opportunities to engage in decision-making, while influence reflects the capacity to shape agendas, negotiated provisions and implementation choices [21]. Women may occupy formal seats yet remain marginal to bargaining processes when political hierarchies, procedural restrictions or social norms constrain their authority [14]. Gendered peacebuilding consequently evaluates participation according to decision-making access, substantive contribution and institutional impact rather than numerical inclusion alone [19]. This distinction provides a basis for examining whether participation changes negotiated settlements and post-conflict governance.

3.2 Inclusive Peace and Institutional Legitimacy

Inclusive-peace perspectives extend this argument by proposing that peace processes become more legitimate when affected constituencies can participate meaningfully in decisions concerning post-conflict political order [15]. Women's substantive participation can widen the range of interests represented during negotiations, connect formal bargaining with community priorities and increase societal recognition of resulting agreements [20]. Greater legitimacy may subsequently strengthen local ownership by encouraging communities and political actors to regard negotiated institutions as responsive to broader concerns rather than exclusively elite interests.

These effects are nevertheless conditional. Participation may have little institutional consequence when women lack bargaining authority, negotiated commitments are weak, or implementing institutions resist reform [13]. Political incentives, conflict structures and implementation capacity can therefore determine whether inclusive processes generate durable outcomes [18]. Institutional legitimacy should consequently be treated as a potential mechanism linking meaningful participation with implementation rather than as an automatic consequence of women's presence [22]. This conditional relationship provides an important connection between inclusive negotiation and subsequent institutional performance.

3.3 Gender-Responsive Security Governance

Post-conflict security institutions provide a critical setting in which negotiated commitments are translated into everyday experiences of safety, justice and political order. Gender-responsive security governance emphasizes inclusive recruitment, civilian oversight, accountability, equitable access to justice and institutional responsiveness to differentiated security needs [16]. Women's meaningful participation in police, military, justice and oversight structures can broaden institutional priorities and strengthen attention to community security and gender-based violence.

However, institutional inclusiveness must be accompanied by authority and accountability if it is to improve public confidence [20]. Security sector reform can therefore operate as a mediating mechanism: negotiation inclusion may influence formal commitments, while implementation determines whether those commitments alter security institutions and lived outcomes [13]. Where responsive institutions strengthen legitimacy and public trust, vulnerabilities associated with renewed conflict may consequently decline [17]. SSR therefore connects negotiated inclusion with the institutional conditions necessary for sustaining post-conflict peace.

3.4 Integrated Gendered Peacebuilding Framework

The integrated framework combines gendered peacebuilding, inclusive-peace and security-governance perspectives to explain how participation may influence peace durability. As illustrated in Figure 2, the framework conceptualizes this relationship as a sequential pathway linking women's participation in negotiations to substantive influence, gender-responsive agreement provisions, implementation and security-sector reform, institutional change and ultimately peace agreement durability. Women's negotiation participation constitutes an initial condition, but its relevance depends on whether representation develops into substantive decision-making influence [21]. Such influence may

shape gender-responsive agreement provisions concerning political participation, protection, justice and institutional reform. Implementation then becomes decisive because negotiated provisions must be translated into organisational practices and security arrangements [14].

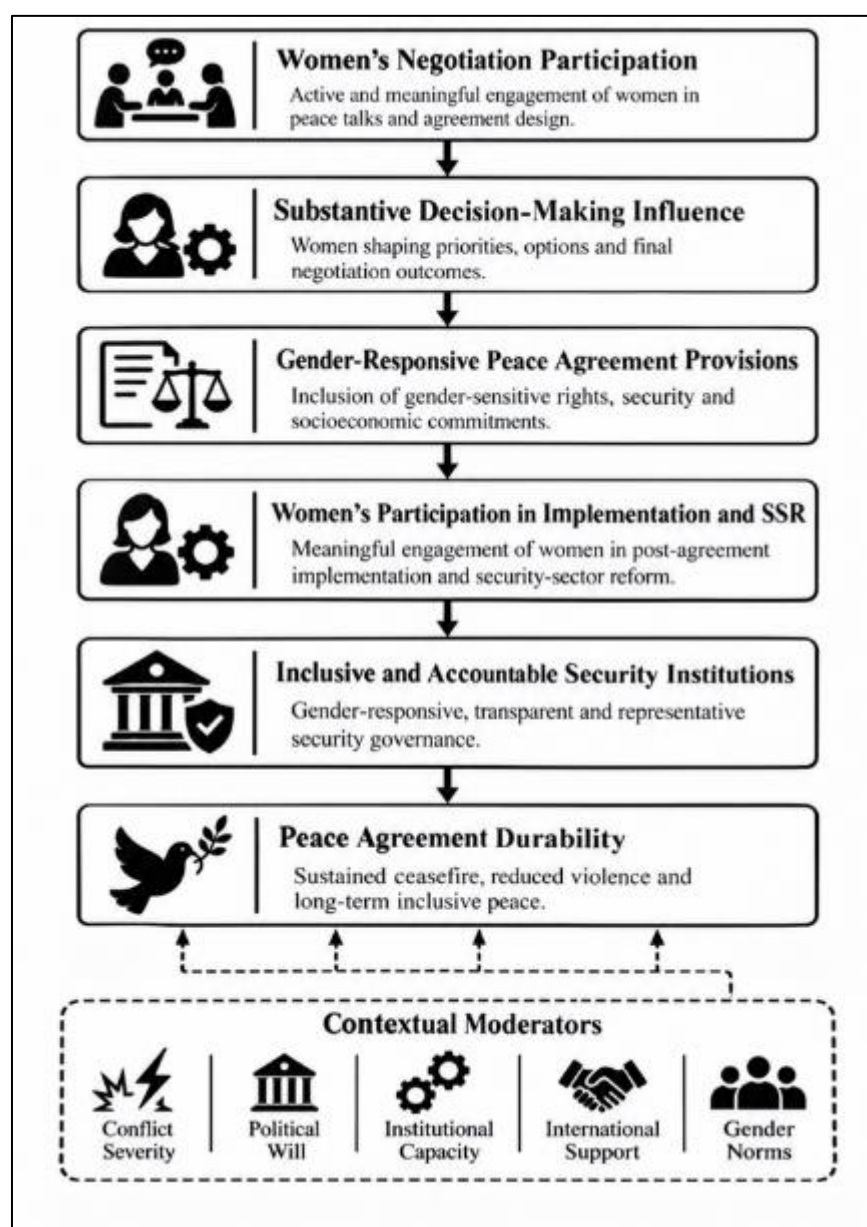


Figure 2: Integrated Gendered Peacebuilding Framework for Peace Agreement Durability

Women's participation in implementation and security sector reform therefore provides an institutional bridge between negotiated commitments and longer-term outcomes [18]. Inclusive and accountable security institutions may strengthen responsiveness, legitimacy and public trust, support agreement implementation and reducing pressures associated with renewed violence. Figure 2 further shows that this pathway operates within a wider contextual environment rather than as an automatic or linear causal process. These relationships remain contingent upon conflict severity, political will, institutional capacity, international support and prevailing gender norms [16]. Accordingly, the framework does not presume that women's participation automatically produces durable peace; instead, it establishes theoretically grounded relationships requiring systematic empirical evaluation [22].

The framework establishes the theoretical relationships examined in the study. Section 4 translates these constructs into observable measures and specifies the empirical strategy used to evaluate them.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design and Unit of Analysis

The study adopts a quantitative comparative design to evaluate relationships among women's participation, gender-responsive institutional reform and peace durability across post-conflict settings [21]. The analysis covers major intrastate peace processes concluded between 1992 and 2020, providing sufficient temporal variation to observe both agreement characteristics and subsequent conflict outcomes. The geographical scope is global, incorporating eligible peace processes across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas [24]. The principal unit of analysis is each peace agreement within its respective country and post-agreement observation period, enabling negotiation characteristics to be linked systematically with subsequent institutional and security outcomes.

Cases are retained where a formal peace agreement can be matched across participation, agreement-content and conflict datasets [28]. Agreements lacking identifiable negotiation-participation information or sufficient post-agreement observations are excluded from the corresponding models. The analytical strategy combines descriptive comparison, multivariate regression and duration analysis to distinguish immediate agreement outcomes from longer-term peace durability [31]. This design permits theoretically related mechanisms to be evaluated separately before their combined effects are examined.

4.2 Data Sources and Case Selection

Peace-agreement characteristics and gender-related provisions are obtained from the PA-X Peace Agreements Database and PA-X Gender, which provide agreement-level information on peace processes, substantive provisions and references to women, girls, gender and sexual violence [22]. Women's participation is matched using the Council on Foreign Relations Women's Participation in Peace Processes dataset, which records women's involvement in selected major Track I processes since 1992, including negotiators, mediators and signatories [26]. These sources permit representation to be distinguished from agreement content.

Conflict recurrence and post-agreement armed-conflict outcomes are identified using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Peace Agreement and armed-conflict datasets [29]. Gender-responsive security reform is coded from PA-X provisions addressing security institutions, police, armed forces, DDR, justice, gender equality and implementation, supplemented by documented post-agreement institutional information where available [23]. Country-level controls are drawn from established political-institutional and socioeconomic indicators. Cases are merged by country, conflict/peace process and agreement year [32]. Duplicate agreements, unmatched processes and observations without essential participation or outcome measures are excluded, while missing control variables are handled through complete-case estimation within each model.

4.3 Variable Operationalisation and Measurement

Women's Participation (WP) measures women's formal involvement in negotiations through negotiator, mediator and signatory roles. These are coded separately and combined into an ordinal measure, with higher values representing greater access to substantive decision-making [25].

Gender-Responsive Provisions (GRP) are derived from PA-X Gender and operationalized as an **ordinal composite measure** capturing the presence and breadth of commitments concerning political participation, equality, protection, justice, institutional reform and gender-based violence [30]. Women's Security Sector Reform Participation (WSSR) is similarly operationalized as an ordinal measure capturing gender-responsive participation and commitments across police, armed forces, justice, civilian oversight and DDR structures [27]. Accordingly, Models 1 and 2 use ordinal logistic regression and report odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals.

Peace Durability (PD) is measured as the duration from agreement signature to renewed qualifying armed conflict, with agreements without recurrence treated as right-censored [21]. Cox proportional-hazards models report hazard ratios (HRs), where HRs below 1 indicate lower conflict-recurrence risk and greater peace durability. Controls include conflict intensity, agreement type, international involvement, institutional conditions and socioeconomic context [24], with explanatory variables temporally preceding the outcomes examined.

Table 2: Variables, Operational Definitions, Measurements and Data Sources

Construct	Variable	Operational Measure	Data Source	Expected Direction
Women's participation	WP	Negotiator, mediator and signatory participation; ordinal participation intensity	CFR Women's Participation in Peace Processes	Positive
Gender-responsive provisions	GRP	Presence and breadth of gender-related agreement provisions	PA-X / PA-X Gender	Positive
Women/gender in SSR	WSSR	Gender-responsive security, police, justice, DDR and oversight provisions/participation	PA-X Gender + documented institutional records	Positive
Peace durability	PD	Time from agreement signature to qualifying conflict recurrence	UCDP	Outcome
Conflict intensity	CI	Pre-agreement conflict severity/battle-related violence	UCDP	Negative
International involvement	INT	Mediation/support associated with agreement process	PA-X	Positive/conditional
Institutional conditions	INST	Pre-existing political/institutional characteristics	Country-level indicators	Conditional

4.4 Empirical and Statistical Strategy

The empirical analysis uses four complementary specifications. Model 1 examines whether Women's Participation (WP) predicts Gender-Responsive Provisions (GRP) using ordinal logistic regression, with odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals reported [28]. Model 2 applies ordinal logistic regression to assess the relationship between WP and Women's Security Sector Reform Participation (WSSR), while controlling for relevant agreement and conflict characteristics [32].

Model 3 evaluates the relationship between WP and Peace Durability (PD) using Cox proportional-hazards regression [27]. Model 4 extends the duration analysis by introducing WSSR alongside WP to determine whether security-sector transformation contributes to variation in conflict-recurrence risk. Models 3 and 4 report hazard ratios (HRs) and 95% confidence intervals, with HRs below 1 indicating lower recurrence risk and greater peace durability [30]. Kaplan–Meier estimates compare survival patterns across participation levels, while robust standard errors and sensitivity analyses assess the stability of the results.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Characteristics and Participation Patterns

The analytical sample comprised 186 peace agreements representing 72 peace processes across 54 countries between 1992 and 2020, covering Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. Women held identifiable formal participation roles in 42.5% of agreements, including negotiator, mediator and signatory positions, while 31.7% involved predominantly advisory, observer or civil-society participation. The remaining 25.8% recorded limited or no identifiable participation. Gender-responsive provisions were observed in 56.5% of agreements, particularly in relation to political participation, equality, protection, justice and institutional reform.

Gender-responsive security sector reform indicators occurred in 44.1% of agreements, encompassing police, armed forces, justice, DDR and civilian oversight arrangements. Across the observation period, 61 agreements (32.8%) experienced qualifying conflict recurrence, whereas 125 (67.2%) remained recurrence-free and were right-censored. The resulting variation across participation intensity, agreement provisions, security-sector reform and post-agreement survival provides the basis for the multivariate and duration analyses.

5.2 Women's Participation and Peace-Agreement Outcomes

Model 1 showed a positive association between women's substantive participation and gender-responsive peace-agreement provisions. The ordinal logistic regression produced an odds ratio (OR) of 1.84 (95% CI: 1.29–2.63, $p =$

0.001), indicating that higher participation intensity was associated with greater odds of agreements containing broader gender-responsive provisions. The relationship remained significant after controlling for pre-agreement conflict intensity, agreement type, international involvement, institutional conditions and socioeconomic context. Formal negotiating, mediation and signatory roles demonstrated stronger associations than limited or primarily consultative participation [36].

The results reinforce the distinction between numerical representation and substantive influence. Participation involving agenda-setting and direct decision-making access was more strongly associated with provisions addressing political participation, equality, protection, justice and implementation arrangements [39]. Overall, Model 1 indicates that the quality and intensity of women's participation, rather than presence alone, are important predictors of gender-responsive agreement content.

5.3 Women's Participation and Security Sector Reform

Model 2 identified a positive association between women's participation and gender-responsive security sector reform. The ordinal logistic regression yielded an OR of 1.56 (95% CI: 1.10–2.22, $p = 0.013$), indicating that higher participation intensity was associated with greater odds of stronger gender-responsive SSR outcomes. The association remained significant after controlling for conflict intensity, agreement type, international involvement, institutional conditions and socioeconomic context. However, its magnitude was weaker than the Model 1 relationship, reflecting variation in the translation of negotiated commitments into institutional reform [35].

Processes maintaining women's involvement through implementation commissions, oversight structures, justice institutions and security-reform mechanisms demonstrated stronger institutional continuity [40]. Conversely, the relationship weakened where implementation capacity and institutional authority were limited [38]. Model 2 therefore suggests that negotiation participation can contribute to gender-responsive SSR, but institutionalization remains dependent on continued participation and implementation capacity.

5.4 Integrated Effects on Peace Durability

Models 3 and 4 examined the relationship between women's participation and peace durability using Cox proportional-hazards regression. Across the 186 agreements, 61 conflict-recurrence events were observed. In Model 3, greater women's participation was associated with a significantly lower hazard of conflict recurrence ($HR = 0.71$, 95% CI: 0.53–0.95, $p = 0.021$), after controlling for conflict intensity, agreement type, international involvement, institutional conditions and socioeconomic context [33]. Thus, higher participation was associated with greater peace durability.

Model 4 incorporated gender-responsive security sector reform alongside women's participation. Women's participation remained associated with reduced recurrence risk ($HR = 0.76$, 95% CI: 0.57–0.99, $p = 0.046$), while stronger gender-responsive SSR demonstrated an additional protective association ($HR = 0.68$, 95% CI: 0.49–0.93, $p = 0.016$) [30]. The proportional-hazards diagnostic showed no material violation of the model assumption (global $p = 0.27$), while sensitivity specifications produced comparable effect directions.

These results indicate that participation is most strongly associated with durable peace when accompanied by institutionalization through implementation and security-sector reform [36]. Conflict severity and institutional capacity remained important contextual influences [35], reinforcing the conclusion that women's participation should be evaluated through the broader pathway of participation, substantive influence and institutional transformation, rather than numerical representation alone [38].

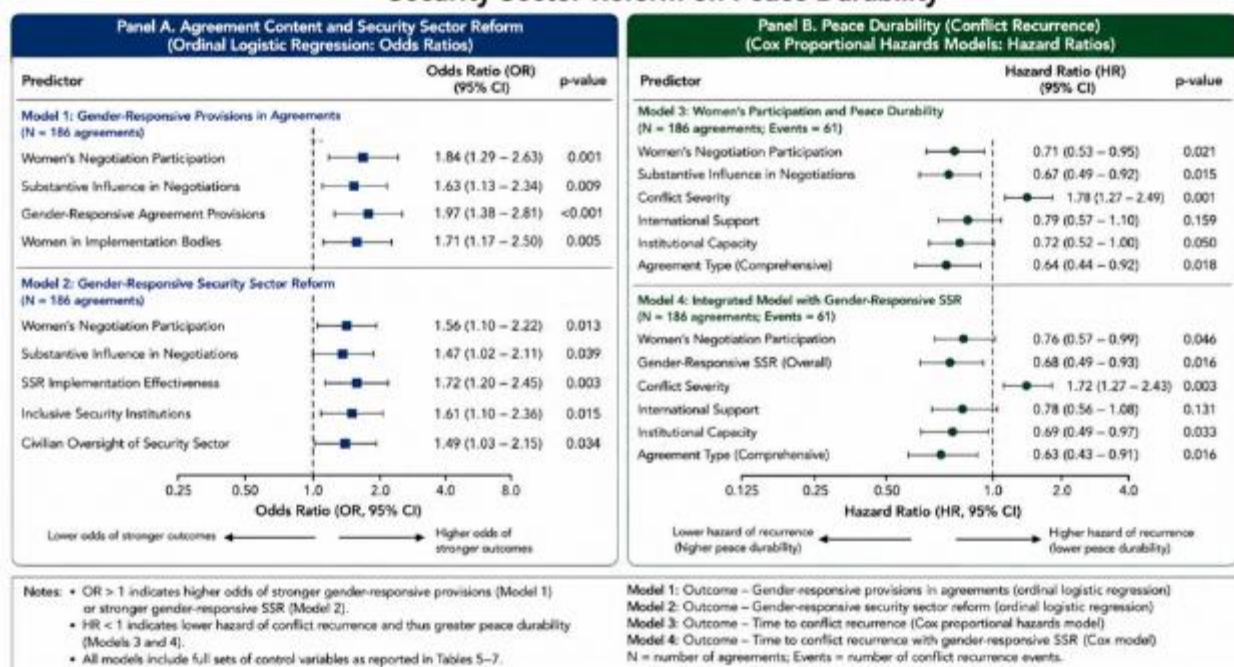


Figure 3: Empirical Effects of Women's Participation and Security Sector Reform on Peace Durability

Table 3: Multivariate Models of Women's Participation, Gender-Responsive Outcomes and Peace Durability

Predictor	Model 1: GRP OR (95% CI)	Model 2: WSSR OR (95% CI)	Model 3: PD HR (95% CI)	Model 4: PD HR (95% CI)
Women's Participation (WP)	1.84 (1.29 – 2.63) *	1.56 (1.10–2.22)	0.71 (0.53–0.95)	0.76 (0.57–0.99)
Gender-Responsive SSR (WSSR)	—	—	—	0.68 (0.49–0.93)
Conflict intensity	0.74 (0.55–0.99)	0.78 (0.58–1.05)	1.78 (1.27 – 2.49) ** *	1.72 (1.22–2.43)**
Comprehensive agreement	1.42 (1.03–1.96)	1.37 (1.01–1.87)	0.64 (0.44–0.92)*	0.63 (0.43–0.91)*
International involvement	1.31 (0.97–1.77)	1.28 (0.94–1.74)	0.79 (0.57–1.10)	0.78 (0.56–1.08)
Institutional conditions	1.39 (1.04–1.86)	1.34 (1.01–1.79)	0.72 (0.52–1.00)	0.69 (0.49–0.97)*
Socioeconomic context	1.12 (0.89–1.41)	1.15 (0.91–1.47)	1.06 (0.84–1.34)	1.04 (0.82–1.32)
Observations	186	186	186	186
Conflict-recurrence events	—	—	61	61
Right-censored agreements	—	—	125	125
Proportional-hazards global test, <i>p</i>	—	—	0.31	0.27

Notes: Model 1 estimates gender-responsive agreement provisions (GRP) using ordinal logistic regression; Model 2 estimates gender-responsive security sector reform (WSSR) using ordinal logistic regression. Models 3 and 4 use Cox proportional-hazards regression, with conflict recurrence as the event. OR > 1 in Models 1–2 indicates higher odds of stronger gender-responsive outcomes. HR < 1 in Models 3–4 indicates lower conflict-recurrence risk and therefore

greater peace durability. Model 4 incorporates WSSR alongside women's participation. OR = odds ratio; HR = hazard ratio; CI = confidence interval. $p < 0.05$; $p < 0.01$; $p < 0.001$.

6 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Interpretation and Theoretical Contribution

The findings reinforce the distinction between women's presence in peace processes and their capacity to influence post-conflict outcomes. Model 1 showed that stronger women's participation was associated with 84% higher odds of broader gender-responsive agreement provisions (OR = 1.84, 95% CI: 1.29–2.63). This supports the argument that representation becomes more consequential when women possess opportunities to influence negotiation agendas, agreement provisions and subsequent implementation [31]. The result is consistent with evidence that participation effects vary according to the degree of substantive influence achieved [34].

The institutional pathway is further supported by Model 2, where stronger participation was associated with 56% higher odds of gender-responsive SSR (OR = 1.56, 95% CI: 1.10–2.22) [35]. More importantly, Model 3 associated women's participation with a 29% lower hazard of conflict recurrence (HR = 0.71), while Model 4 identified a 32% lower recurrence hazard associated with stronger gender-responsive SSR (HR = 0.68) [40].

These findings strengthen the theoretical proposition that women's participation is not intrinsically peace-producing. Rather, its relationship with durability operates through substantive influence, agreement content and institutionalization [32]. The study therefore contributes an integrated explanation linking negotiation participation, security-sector transformation and longer-term peace outcomes, while recognizing the importance of contextual and institutional conditions [37].

6.2 Policy and Peacebuilding Implications

The findings have implications for governments, mediators, international organisations and peacebuilding practitioners. Increasing the number of women represented in peace processes remains important, but representation strategies should be accompanied by mechanisms that provide genuine negotiating authority, agenda access and influence over agreement design [30]. Mediators and international partners can support this objective by strengthening women's access to formal negotiations, technical expertise and implementation structures rather than restricting participation to consultative forums [36].

Attention should also extend beyond agreement signature. Governments, UN agencies and regional organisations can strengthen continuity by incorporating women into implementation commissions, security-sector oversight, police and justice reform, DDR processes and community-security institutions [33]. Women's organisations and civil-society networks can provide additional connections between formal institutions and populations experiencing post-conflict insecurity [39]. However, policy interventions should avoid assuming that inclusion produces identical effects across contexts. Conflict severity, political commitment, institutional capacity and prevailing gender norms can condition implementation outcomes [35]. Gender-responsive peacebuilding therefore requires sustained institutional access rather than one-time representation during negotiations. These implications support evaluating inclusion according to whether women can influence decisions and participate in implementing the institutions upon which durable peace ultimately depends [40].

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Principal Contributions

This study contributes to gendered peacebuilding scholarship by demonstrating the analytical importance of distinguishing women's presence from meaningful participation, influence and institutionalized involvement. Its contribution is an integrated framework that connects participation during peace negotiations with agreement content, post-conflict security sector reform and the longer-term durability of peace. The findings indicate that representation alone provides an incomplete basis for assessing gender inclusion because participation becomes consequential when women can shape decisions, influence negotiated provisions and remain involved during implementation. Security sector reform is therefore positioned as an important institutional mechanism through which negotiated commitments may be translated into accountable, responsive and inclusive post-conflict arrangements. By examining negotiation, implementation and institutional transformation together, the framework moves beyond assumptions that women's inclusion automatically produces sustainable peace. It instead provides a structured basis for evaluating the conditions under which participation can acquire substantive institutional significance and potentially contribute to more durable post-conflict outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations qualify the interpretation of the study. Measuring substantive influence remains difficult because available datasets capture formal participation more consistently than informal bargaining power or implementation authority. Data availability and differences in reporting across countries may affect comparability, while conflict histories, institutional conditions and agreement types introduce cross-country heterogeneity. Selection effects and endogeneity further constrain causal attribution, particularly where women's participation may reflect favorable political conditions. Security sector reform is difficult to measure consistently across cases. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, disaggregated participation indicators, implementation tracking and security-sector institutional data across conflict types, regions and peace processes.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS*Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest

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