Women at the Peace Table: The Gender Dynamics of Peace Negotiations

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Where violence and conflict have become the norm, negotiating an agreement built on peace and justice can be a challenging prospect for those involved. Since 2000, with the introduction of Security Council Resolutions on women, peace, and security, the United Nations has asserted that the environment enabling peace agreements become more inclusive of women and that gender perspectives be taken into account throughout the peace building process.[1] This chapter draws on examples from the Northern Ireland peace process to show the changes that took place when a group of women moved out of the political activism of civic society to become engaged in the more formal politics of peace negotiations. The women activists grasped the opportunities of the "constitutional moment" to frame gender-specific interests within the new constitutional framework of the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. They built on skills honed through years of activism to form the Women's Coalition, a political party that was involved in the multi-party peace negotiations, and became signatories to the peace agreement. However, in the transitional space that opens up following a peace agreement, what gets resourced and implemented often falls short of what was promised. Despite its success in the negotiating process, enforcing the proposals on women's interests in the aftermath proved to be the most difficult task. Where a democratic deficit exists, with women continuing to be excluded from political participation, those who have struggled to build a new society will ask for whom was the reconstruction meant. For a genuinely transformative process to take place, women's interests must not be left in the "aspirational/to do" list but instead form a central part of the "constitutional" and legislative guarantees for the new society.

WOMEN PARTICIPATING AT THE TABLE: NOT JUST A "PRESENCE"?

There are now international standards in place to ensure that the promotion of gender equality

is an essential part of peace building.[2] These standards have also demanded the inclusion of women from the outset, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of security in post-conflict societies.[3] The experience in Northern Ireland, where the Women's Coalition was founded, is illustrative of both the inclusion of women participants in peace negotiations and the inclusion of gender equality issues in the final peace agreement. The formation of the Coalition, six weeks before the elections to the peace talks, was the outcome of intense discussion by women activists from a variety of backgrounds who, during the exclusively male pre-negotiation phase, had come to realize that unless women formed themselves into a political party the talks on the future of Northern Ireland would be heavily influenced by a different kind of gender dynamics.

A transitional space was opened up by the Republican and Loyalist ceasefires that set the scene for peace negotiations in 1996.[4] A new electoral system designed to include the political representation of smaller, predominantly loyalist, parties provided the impetus for women to build on their pre-existing networks to form their own political party. The Women's Coalition party, with its roots in civic society, succeeded in getting an electoral mandate for its two delegates, leading to their direct involvement in the multi-party peace negotiations. The Coalition was formed to highlight the under-representation of women at the party political level in Northern Ireland and to ensure that equality and human rights would be an integral part of the peace negotiations.[5] By getting elected to the peace talks on this agenda, the women in the Coalition exerted their autonomy and engaged as peace negotiators in their own right.[6]

Given that fewer than ten per cent of peace negotiators are women, and only three percent of women are signatories to international peace agreements, the UN believes that augmenting the number of women at the peace table should remain a priority.[7] In a meeting with the Northern Ireland peace negotiators, President Mandela noted that before the talks

with the South African government could take place, he had insisted that half of all the negotiating teams had to be female. This is in keeping with the view that "an inclusive peace will not be realised without women's presence and perspective at the table."[8]

But moving from the margins of participatory democracy to mainstream political deliberations has been critiqued more negatively, seeing this merely as the incorporation of women's presence into formal processes. In response to this, *Ní Áolain* believes that although presence by itself "may not fundamentally reshape women's engagement in transitional justice processes or shape outcomes[…] it remains a necessary first step to forward-looking transformation for women."[9] There are gendered dimensions to all aspects of political, economic and social construction, so gender equality and women's participation requires focused attention throughout the substantive negotiations and especially in the implementation phase of peace agreements. Catherine O'Rourke's recent analysis of UN documents furthers this argument by interpreting the participation of women in the peace and security agenda from five different perspectives: first, participation as seen through the lens of representation (the importance of "presence"); second, participation as deliberation (those most affected by conflict being involved in reflective and thoughtful outcomes); third, participation through inclusion (women's specific needs being addressed); fourth, participation requiring women's expertise (on gender-specific concerns) and fifth, participation providing role models (showing how women can perform these tasks).[10] Tangible evidence exists to show that if one, or more, is built into the framework for peace, the better the outcomes.[11]

Effectiveness of peace processes also requires that they should be built on the widest base of experience. Thus, they need to take into account women's diverse experiences before, during and post conflict. Failure to do so can lead to an impoverished understanding of peace and security. As Donald Steinberg explains, if governments want to know whether justice and security sector reforms are working, they need to ask the women who are the eyes, ears, and

consciences of the communities to which the fighters are returning.[12] Women can also provide security personnel with many of the best ideas and the most reliable information because their families' safety depends on it. As Jacobson notes even if the activism is not widely acknowledged as political: "the way in which women have set about rebuilding their lives so that their children do not have to experience the same horrors is unmistakably transformative."[13]

UTILIZING A DIFFERENT SKILL BASE IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Peace negotiations also need a great deal of nurturing especially since so many agreements fail during the first five years.[14] John Paul Lederach argues that it can take a society the same amount of years to come out of conflict as the duration of the conflict itself.[15] In such a scenario, peace building requires patience and persistence and an understanding that progress can be precarious. Whether women bring this "added value" to the "mix" of conflict transformation is a question that has exercised academics, peace activists, the global women's movement, and international agencies. Kofi Annan agrees with the importance of "greater consultation with and involvement in peace processes of important voices of civil society, especially those of women, who are often neglected during negotiations."[16] However, if civic actors are expected to make their contribution through representative participation and consultative mechanisms rather than as direct participants in peace accords, what difference does it make when they become directly involved.[17]

As UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan recognised that successful negotiations required the involvement of individuals who could test the public thermometer for political accommodation, dismantle rumours and maintain dialogue at times of crisis. Women community leaders attain these skills through mediating local disputes and by opening up dialogue across divided lines during conflict. There has been a growing acceptance of the

need to incorporate these skills into the task of peacekeeping and reconstruction following conflict.[18]

In the Northern Ireland process, the Women's Coalition made a leap from Track Two (indirect involvement through civic society) to Track One Diplomacy (direct participation in formal high level negotiations). Wain-St. John and Kew's comments are pertinent to this contextual shift: "viewed from the shoes of negotiators and mediators, civil society participation at peace negotiations can be predicted to disturb the already murky waters of multi-party negotiations."[19] In swimming in these murky waters, the Women's Coalition moved from the margins to the mainstream. In becoming more directly involved in the male-dominated polity, the women delegates were initially regarded as an unwelcome intrusion.[20] Where the polity has thrived on adversarialism and triumphalism, in pursuing a peace agreement women activists may be seen as participating in an elusive quest.[21] However, given the adversarial nature of mainstream politics, there is often not just one peace process going on but instead a whole range of processes in which women play an active part and without their role, lasting change is highly unlikely.[22]

FACILITATING A CONSTRUCTIVE ENVIRONOMENT FOR NEGOTIATIONS

Given the overt hostility of some politicians, ensuring women's voices are heard during peace negotiations can be a difficult task. The antagonism and sexism directed at members of the Women's Coalition in Northern Ireland has been documented as an example of this hostility.[23] Targeting abuse at women in leadership positions is a deliberate tactic employed by male politicians across a range of conflict societies.[24] Women who have been singled out for attack report how their denigration was intentionally designed to diminish their credibility in public life.[25] A gender-specific lens has been applied to the objectification and degradation of women during violent conflict.[26] However, much less attention has been paid to the ways

in which abusive insults are used strategically to keep women out of public life and to diminish their positions of leadership. This has to be publically challenged if the social/political transformation in post conflict societies is to be meaningful.

Due to the enmity between the parties, the Women's Coalition paid attention to the process and sought ways to achieve consensus in the tense atmosphere of negotiations. Unlike the majority of parties at the table, the Women's Coalition was a bi-communal party with membership crossing the nationalist/unionist divide, which enabled its members to have a much wider engagement with others at the table. In the Northern Ireland context, most of the delegates were strangers to each other exemplified by a party leader in his refusal to sit next to an individual he considered to be "a warlord." Seating arrangements can be contentious at peace talks especially where parties feel aggrieved at being placed next to those perceived to have caused serious harm. But placing adversaries alphabetically next to each other can also encourage exchanges between previous protagonists. Reverting to non-alphabetic seating arrangements in the aftermath of the peace agreement can be indicative of the larger parties' nostalgia to return to the "status quo."[27]

Since the Coalition's aim was to build an inclusive negotiating process, it opened up back channels to parties affiliated to armed groups. However it was more often censured than accepted as it was perceived to be 'talking to terrorists.' Despite the opposition, the Coalition continued to nurture contacts with both republican and loyalist ex-combatants. It maintained the dialogue when these groups were excluded from the talks, following breaches of their ceasefires, and entered the prison to engage with those who had become sceptical of the process.[28] These examples should exhort policymakers to recognize that women's perspectives, women's agency and particularly women's ways of promoting peace do make a difference in conflict resolution, and conflict transformation.[29]

INCLUDING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE ON THE SUBSTANTIVE AGENDA

Negotiating agreement in such conflict zones provides several challenges particularly from a gender perspective: first, creating a process that is inclusive of women; second, ensuring proposals for sustainable peace include women's interests; and third, ensuring the commitments in the agreement on women's issues are implemented. From a gender perspective, the process and the substance of negotiations are interdependent. Achieving substantive commitments on women's rights and ensuring that women's interests are contained in the plans for transformative change requires an inclusive process and vice versa. In the forging of the Belfast Agreement, Beatrix Campbell reflects positively on the role of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition in this regard.[30]

In relation to substantive proposals, the Coalition ensured the establishment of a civic forum that would act in an advisory capacity to the legislative Assembly on economic, social and cultural issues. The Civic Forum also provided a role for civic society actors to advise on, and measure the performance of, the new democratic institutions. However, the Forum's influence was short lived as the political parties regarded it as surplus to their new power sharing arrangements and suspended its operation two years after its formation. Other substantive proposals in the peace agreement addressed the needs of victims and had the Women's Coalition not been present at the negotiations, these provisions would have been absent from the final agreement. Providing resources for victims was not a key priority for some of the other parties; their concerns focused mainly on constitutional matters and institutional change. But social justice has to be prioritised if peace agreements are to gain a sense of allegiance amongst those most affected by the conflict. This was apparent in the subsequent referendum on the peace agreement where it was widely acknowledged that had the Belfast/ Good Friday Agreement been silent on the issue of victims, there might not have been such a successful outcome.[31]

The Women's Coalition also ensured that the agreement made provision for "young people affected by the troubles" which included the development of special community-based initiatives based on international best practice.[32] In insisting on such clauses, the Coalition was conscious that post-conflict rebuilding had to include a societal transition. For young men, the role models had been the paramilitaries and the vanguard fighters perceived to be the standard bearers in their local communities but in a post conflict situation this would have to be radically changed. The term post-conflict may be a misnomer since it assumes an element of restoring people to a position that previously existed. But what most people seek is societal transformation based on respect for human rights standards that may never have previously existed. These are the challenges for men and women alike in adjusting to life after war. Local and international actors need to be able to respond to such challenges otherwise a transition that accords full citizenship, social justice and empowerment for all will not occur but finding champions to support these can be problematic.

CHAMPIONING GENDER-SPECIFIC CLAUSES

On gender specific interests, the Women's Coalition proposed a separate clause affirming "the right of women to full and equal political participation."[33] While this was an important aspiration, it has not been legally enforced in the implementation process nor has the British government exerted any influence in making it obligatory for local parties as part of the process of electoral reform. Where peace agreements phrase the gender-related provisions at a level of generality, this can lead to no further action at the implementation phase. For example, while there may be references in peace agreements to the participation of women in executive, legislative or judicial bodies, there is rarely reference to quotas or a commitment to 50/50 gender balance in such bodies within a specified time frame. Agreements often fall short on measures that ensure implementation as well as sanctions for non-compliance.

Kate Fearon argues that proposals to address gender-specific concerns in peace agreements require political leadership and effective oversight so leaving the responsibility to the participants was misguided.[34] Despite the UN Security Council Resolutions, creating a political climate that endorses women's equal political participation as an outcome of peace agreements remains a significant challenge.[35] Given this scenario, electoral reforms are needed to increase the proportion of women in politics particularly in post conflict situations.[36] In the Northern Ireland context, the Women's Coalition was unsuccessful in getting an election based on the "list" system added to the agenda. This proved beneficial in Scotland and Scandinavian countries, leading to a critical mass (over 30%) of women in these legislatures.[37] In Northern Ireland the major political parties were reluctant to retain the "list" system and insisted on a return to the status quo. This meant that the pluralism and diversity that had helped to create the agreement were frittered away. [38]

THE ROLE OF OVERSIGHT IN CHAMPIONING COMMITMENTS

The problem remains that in the aftermath of an agreement, most parties prefer to return to the customary "top-down" processes; where local communities—especially women—are typically excluded and women, despite their activity in informal peace processes, remain largely absent from the implementation. Chinkin draws attention to this huge gap between community-based processes and the official negotiation processes of peace settlements, which UN Resolution 1325 has not been able to bridge.[39] For this reason, women challenging the status quo and entering public life require champions to affirm their roles and to ensure that their rights are enforced.[40] Since it is at the implementation stage of peace accords that the foundations for a future society are set, more women need be included in policy making at this level. If this is not achieved, the good practice that exists at community level will not be developed.[41]

Donald Steinberg acknowledges that his experience in drafting the Angolan peace agreement in the mid-1990s taught him that any agreement, perceived to be gender neural, is inherently discriminatory against women.[42] In Angola, the exclusion of women was notable with 40 men and no women present. Nothing in the commission members' backgrounds as military commanders provided them with special insights into girls' education, mother-child healthcare or related concerns. From this experience, Steinberg argues that the silencing of women's voices in peace negotiations means that issues such as sexual abuses by government and rebel forces and the rebuilding of social services and girls' education get short shrift. The result is that such agreements are far less likely to succeed since the process is viewed as serving the interests of the warring parties rather than the people.[43] In every situation women have argued that human rights relating to women, including health, education, political rights and equality should be recognized. However, following peace agreements, the focus is on the removal of arms and the disbandment of armies or paramilitary groups rather than on these issues.

Simultaneously, women in local communities compete for resources against projects for the reintegration of prisoners. In the trade-offs on de-militarization and disarmament, women negotiators have little to bargain with.[44] When issues are prioritized for implementation, it is the militarists who win out whilst the women's interests get marginalized. The gain in normalizing society by standing down armed groups is important but making provision for health, education and housing is also crucial. The international monitoring bodies established to deal with no recurrence of violence, have paid scant attention to these needs as articulated by women on the front line.[45]

MAKING PUBLIC THE PRIVATE HARMS

Despite the impact of violent conflict on the lives of women and girls being highlighted by the UN Security Council Resolutions, in places like Northern Ireland there has been less focus on this issue. During the conflict, higher femicide rates have been recorded due to the availability of legally held weapons together with high levels of domestic violence.[46] While the decommissioning of illegal weapons was a contentious issue in the political negotiations, the retention of legally held personal protection weapons did not form part of the security sector reforms post conflict.[47]

Reflecting on the discourse on legal and illegally held weapons in post conflict situations, Shelley Anderson calls for an examination of the links between this "private" violence and the "public" violence of armed conflict:

> The attitudes and values that give rise to the former lay the groundwork for the latter. Both are rooted in mind sets where domination, control and beliefs in certain group's superiority and others' inferiority are central. A mind set that permits and justifies the use of physical or psychological force by a "superior" against an "inferior" cannot be safely relegated to one corner of life, such as the home, or certain personal relationships. It will become a part of public life.[48]

There is some recognition of the gendered harms suffered by women and girls, including sexual and other violence throughout the conflict and the need to end impunity for these crimes but there is less recognition of the importance of reconfiguring gender relations in the post conflict society, leaving this as a priority and concern for women. As Marie Smyth notes, what is needed is "demilitarisation at a cultural and ideological level."[49] Although women have, on rare occasions, emerged empowered from the experience of war, it is more usual to find women losing what has been a hard-won autonomy once war ends. Cynthia Cockburn phrases this in stark terms:

> The civil society rebuilt after war or tyranny seldom reflects women's visions or rewards their energies. The space that momentarily opens up for change is not often used to secure genuine and lasting gender transformations. Effort may be put into healing enmity by reshaping ethnic and national relations, but gender and class relations are usually allowed to revert to the status quo ante. […] Instead of the skills and confidence forged by some women by the furnace of war being turned to advantage, the old sexual division of labour is reconstituted, in the family, and in the labour force.[50]

The establishment of an implementation or validation committee, inclusive of political parties and civic society, could have counteracted the nostalgia for the status quo.[51]

Despite the peace agreements specific proposals, there have still been no special measures and no enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the commitments for women's rights and equality were met. A paradigm shift is essential if gender justice is to be understood as an important feature of democratization in a deeply conservative society. The lessons from Northern Ireland as from elsewhere are that gender-specific proposals should move from being aspirational clauses to become institutional guarantees with benchmarks, timetables and indicators similar to those for security sector reform or prisoner releases.

CONCLUSION

If women are absent from peace negotiations then much-needed "social services justice" (care for victims, education, health, and well-being) will also be absent in post conflict societies.[52] This would have been the case in Northern Ireland had the Women's Coalition not been present in the peace talks. The clauses on children and young people, education, and community development would have been missing and victims' needs would have been ignored. Promoting a role for participatory democracy through a civic forum and introducing

electoral reform should also be seen as a necessary part of the democratization process. Reflecting on the contribution of the Women's Coalition, the international chairperson of the peace talks stated "the emergence of women as a political force was a significant factor in achieving the Agreement."[53]

The Women's Coalition was aware that any silence in the peace agreement about the position of women would perpetuate and institutionalize the marginalization of women in the transitional political process. It would also have allowed those tasked with implementation, including international agencies, to commence their mandates without reference to how their operations impact differentially upon women and men. However, if the post conflict phase becomes narrowed to security sector reforms then transitional justice measures such as proposals for affirmative action and temporary special measures will get lost. Without strong enforcement mechanisms, women will disappear from the process. Robust language in a peace agreement that promotes gender equality and women's participation needs to be backed by specific responsibility and an allocation of resources to facilitate implementation. Unless entrenchment mechanisms are in place, the progress in advancing women's interests in achieving long-term workable solutions will remain precarious.

The involvement of women in peace processes opens up a space for political transformation but this space needs to be sustained. It requires the support of political leaders. If there is no political will to encourage the wider participation of women, the ownership of an agreement can become fragmented. What gets prioritised or placed in the archives will also determine who and what were important to the process. Women's contribution to peace talks shows what can be delivered but much more needs to be done for women to maintain a central role in rebuilding their societies.

NOTES

1. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, "Women, Peace and Security," October 31, 2000; UNSCR 1820, "Women, Peace and Security," June 19, 2008; UNSCR 1889, "Women, Peace and Security," October 5, 2009a; UNSCR 1888, "Women, Peace and Security," September 30, 2009b, http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc-resolutions.htm.

2. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Chapter IV, Strategic Objectives and Actions, 1995; Women and Armed Conflict, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995The Outcome Documents of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly, "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century," 2000; and UNSCR 1325.

3. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, Dina F. Haynes, and Naomi Cahn, *On the Frontlines: Gender, War and the Post Conflict Process* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4. The region itself has been contested since the 1922 division of the island of Ireland, resulting in the southern Republic of Ireland (Ireland) and the north-eastern corner (constituted as Northern Ireland) remaining within the United Kingdom. The predominance of a politics of identity saw a Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist majority reflected in one party rule for fifty years. The Catholic/Nationalist/Republican population, holding aspirations towards a united Ireland, formed a substantial minority that was both marginalised and alienated. Violence erupted in 1968 resulting in the British Army patrolling the streets and the re-emergence of militant republicanism and loyalist paramilitaries. The outcome was the consolidation of divided ethnic/political identities and increasing residential segregation.

5. The Women's Coalition succeeded in getting women elected to the Multi-Party Peace Talks, to the Forum for Dialogue and Understanding, to local councils and to the first Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly. In 2006 it stood down the formal structures of the Coalition.

6. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "Advancing Feminist Positioning in the Field of Transitional Justice," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6.3 (2012): 1-24. In this article Fionnuala Ní Aoláin comments on how the focus of Transitional Justice has been on the role of women as victims rather than as autonomous agents of change and the need to change this discourse to take more account of the latter.

7. UNIFEM. *UNIFEM Annual Report* 2009-2010, July 13, 2010, 3.

8. Kvinna till Kvinna, *Make Room For Peace: A Guide to Women's Participation in Peace Processes* (Stockholm, Sweden: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2011).

9. Ní Aoláin, "Advancing Feminist Positioning."

10. Catherine O'Rourke, "'Walking the Halls of Power'? Understanding Women's Participation in International Peace and Security," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 15.1 (2014): 128-54

11. Elisabeth Porter, *Peace Building: Women in International Perspectives* (New York, NY and London, England: Routledge, 2007), 41.

12. Donald Steinberg, "The Role of Men in Engendered Peacebuilding," *Building Peace* no. 3 (2014): 30-32, accessed 10 December 2013 http://buildingpeaceforum.com. **Please include date of publication/ access before link**

13. Ruth Jacobson, "Women 'After' Wars," in *Women & Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures*, ed. Carol Cohn (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 2013), 240.

14. Examples are Angola and Central Africa Republic, amongst others.

15. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute for Peace Press, 1997).

16. UN Secretary General, "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility." Report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (United Nations, 2004), 38.

17. Anthony Wanis-St. John and Darren Kew, "Civil Society and Peace Negotiations: Confronting Exclusion," *International Negotiation* 13.1 (2008): 21.

18. UN Secretary General, "A More Secure World."

19. Wanis-St John and Kew, "Civil Society and Peace Negotiations."

20. Kate Fearon, *Women's Work: The Story of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Blackstaff Press, 1999). The book provides a more extensive discussion on why its election poster: "Wave Goodbye to Dinosaurs" caused such mirth as well as some considerable controversy.

21. This term is used by Norman Porter in his book *The Elusive Quest: Reconciliation in Northern Ireland* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Blackstaff Press, 2003).

22. The Northern Ireland process benefitted from having a concentration of feminist and community activists who were established "agents of change" within the community but when the peace talks were declared they moved to become more formal players in the process.

23. Avila Kilmurray and Monica McWilliams, "Struggling for Peace: How Women in Northern Ireland Challenged the Status Quo," *Solutions* 2.2 (2011), accessed June 16, 2014, http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/893.

24. Kvinna till Kvinna. *Equal Power Lasting Peace* (Stockholm, Sweden: The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2012).

25. Labels such as “whore” and “witch” were highlighted by women from Armenia and Azerbaijan, reported in Kvinna till Kvinna, *Equal Power Lasting Peace*.

26. Monica McWilliams, “Violence Against Women in Societies Under Stress,” in *Rethinking Violence Against Women*, ed. Rebecca Emerson Dobash and Russell P. Dobash (London, England: Sage, 1998), 111-40.

27. When the New Assembly was formed after the Peace Talks the alphabetical arrangement was dropped as the larger parties wished to return to the status quo and be seated on opposite sides of the Chamber. This proved to be a regressive step as parties reversed to adversarial behaviour with opposing sides facing each other.

28. At a tense stage of the peace talks, the Women’s Coalition visited the Maze high security prison at the request of one of the parties. The women who went to the prison agreed to sit down with paramilitary prisoners and to be locked in a mobile hut for the duration of the visit.

29. Swanee Hunt and Kemi Ogunsanya, “Women Waging Peace: Making Women Visible,” *Conflict Trends* no. 3 (2003): 46.

30. Beatrix Campbell, *Agreement! The State, Conflict and Change in Northern Ireland* (London, England: Lawrence and Wishart, 2008).

31. During the Referendum following the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, there was a public outcry on prisoner releases. However, the provisions for victims helped to increase the vote of those in favour (71%) of the agreement.

32. *The Agreement: Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations*, 18, para. 12.

33. *The Agreement: Agreement reached in the multi-party negotiations* (Belfast, Northern Ireland, 1998), 16. The clause on women’s political participation was based on the equality provisions of the Guatemalan peace agreement.

34. Kate Fearon, "Gender and Peace in Northern Ireland," in *A Farewell to Arms? From "Long War" to Long Peace in Northern Ireland*, ed. Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000), 157.

35. The political participation of women has become an issue not just for post-conflict societies. For example, governments such as those in France and the Republic of Ireland are bringing forward legislative proposals to increase the proportion of women selected.

36. In Northern Ireland the election to the peace talks was based on a list system and the top ten parties achieving the most votes in the electoral list were invited by the two governments to attend the peace negotiations. Women were more comfortable with this electoral system as they perceived themselves to be standing for the party and not as individuals in a single constituency. The list system was particularly beneficial to women given their safety and security concerns. More women are encouraged to come forward for the party list system, in comparison to standing alone as a party candidate in a constitueny. The benefits of the various systems for women should be taken into account when decisions are made on electoral reform in post-conflict societies.

37. This proposal was not just an alternative to the single constituency system but would have added to it. It was still seen as unacceptable to the Unionist parties in particular and received little support in the negotiations. It is currently under consideration in relation to electoral reform in the Republic of Ireland.

38. The Women's Coalition won two seats to the first assembly but lost these at the next election. Had the list system been retained it is predicted that the life span of the three smaller parties, the NIWC, the PUP and the UDP would have been longer. None of these parties currently hold seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

39. Christine Chinkin, “Peace Processes, Post-Conflict Security and Women’s Human Rights: the International Context Considered,” paper delivered to the 9th Torkel Opsahl Memorial Lecture (Belfast, Northern Ireland, December 2004), 6.

40. What is significant, in terms of female political participation, is the fact that, although numbers elected to the Assembly have increased marginally from 13 percent in 1999 to 17 percent in 2012, this has not been accompanied by greater representation in substantive decision-making.

41. Jacklyn Cock, “Closing the Circle: Toward a Gendered Understanding of War and Peace” (July 2001), in *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict*, ed. Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, **Page range** (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2010).

42. Steinberg, “The Role of Men.”

43. Chinkin, “Peace Processes.” Examples include Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and East Timor.

44. European Union and Irish diaspora funds totaling 1.6 million have been allocated for the re-integration of ex-combatants.

45.In Ní Aoláin, Haynes, and Cahn, *On the Frontlines*, this theme is further expanded.

46. Joan McKiernan and Monica McWilliams, “The Impact of Political Conflict on Women’s Lives,” in *Gender Relations in Public and Private: New Research Perspectives*, ed. Lydia Morris and E. Stina Lyon (London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996). Femicide is where men use these guns to kill their spouses or female partners in intimate relationships. Figures for incidents of domestic violence have risen steadily, from 6,727 in 1996 to over 17,000 by 2011.

47. There are 134,000 legally held small arms with one person in 17.6 holding a shotgun certificate.

48. Shelley Anderson quoted in Marie Smyth, "The Process of Demilitarization and the Reversibility of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16.3 (2004): 548.

49. Smyth, "The Process of Demilitarization."

50. Cynthia Cockburn, *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline Moser and Fiona Clark, 13-29 (London, England: Zed Books, 2001).

51. In December 2003, when briefing the Council of Europe on the role of women in the Northern Ireland peace process, the Department of Foreign Affairs declared that the benefits of involving women in conflict resolution to be "clearly evident in Northern Ireland, where women played and continue to play a pivotal role in building peace and are essential contributors to the on-going process." Despite this recognition the British and Irish governments have made no attempt to ensure the inclusion of more women in the implementation process

52. Naomi Cahn, Dina Haynes, and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "Returning Home: Women in Post-Conflict Societies," *University of Baltimore Law Review* 39.3 (2010): 369.

53. George Mitchell, *Making Peace* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1999), 44.

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