

# The Internal Drivers of Women's Post-Conflict Representation

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## Abstract

Despite a substantive expansion in the literature on women's legislative representation in countries emerging from civil conflict, such as conflict trajectories or country characteristics, women's mobilization during conflict has been rather assumed than explored. In this thesis I explore the changes on women's roles during conflict, the ways in which they challenge gender socialization and their effect on women's post-conflict political status.

The first paper examines the presence of two contrasting concepts, agency and victimization, and investigates the effect of different types of violence on changes on women's legislative percentage in the first two post-conflict elections. The second paper directs its focus on different types of women's mobilization and ways they transform women to political actors through their direct and indirect challenge of gender relationships. I subsequently examine this mechanism on the short, medium, and long term to assess its magnitude. Building on the results of the first two papers, the third paper focuses solely on women's mobilization in civil society groups and organizations, and employs a willingness and opportunity framework to assess the optimal conditions under which women's mobilization has an effect on women's post-conflict political participation.

This dissertation contributes to understanding the effects of armed violence on women's status during conflict and post-conflict. It shifts the focus to the social processes that take place during armed conflict and the ways they reconfigure social and gender relationships. The theoretical arguments of the three papers are linked through the argument that civil wars are not a social process but in fact create new social hierarchies that are transferred in the post-conflict society. This thesis also contributes to the literature by affirming the importance of an analysis of war under a gender lens.

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# 1 Introduction

Women's socio-political and economic status has been a topic of interest in international institutions since 1946. Starting from the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)<sup>1</sup> that became a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN), women's status became the object of four World Conferences on Women. Later on, the the Security Council of United Nations adopted a feminist agenda that shaped the UN's approach to women's rights. The first World Conference on Women in 1975 took place in Mexico City and the second, in 1980, in Copenhagen (World Conference of the UN Decade for Women)<sup>2</sup>. The aim of the Conference was to review the progress on implementing the goals set in 1975 and focused on women's employment, health, and educational attainment, the right of ownership, child custody and nationality. The third World Conference on Women was held in Nairobi and the conference's objective was to establish particular measures pertaining to achieving the Decade's goals. The participants included governments of member states and NGOs attending a parallel NGO Forum. The result of the conference was the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which promoted measures achieving gender equality at the national level and promoting women's participation in peace and development<sup>3</sup>. The fourth and most famous World Conference was held in 1995 in Beijing and resulted in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It was adopted unanimously by the participating countries. Its agenda included

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<sup>1</sup>The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established by the ECOSOC Resolution 11(II), on June 21st, 1946. The Resolution can be found here: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3843513?ln=en>.

<sup>2</sup>More information can be found here: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/copenhagen.html>

<sup>3</sup>More information can be found here: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/nairobi.html>

women's empowerment and outlined gender equality in 12 critical areas of concern<sup>4</sup>.

These international processes led to the institutionalization of a feminist agenda by the UN Security Council. Adopted in 2000, Resolution 1325 initiated the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. To this day, it includes ten different resolutions<sup>5</sup> addressing a variety of issues. Resolution 1325 was adopted under the presidency of Namibia and the personal lobbying efforts of Namibia's Minister of Women's Affairs, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah<sup>6</sup>, the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, and the UN Development Fund for Women (prior called UNIFEM, now UN Women). The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)<sup>7</sup> is a consensus based coalition of 19 international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work towards advancing the WPS Agenda around the world, through the promotion of women's human rights and women's meaningful participation across all conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts. The new thematic area's focal point is women's status and rights in societies during conflict and emerging from conflict, and is based on four pillars: protection, prevention, participation and gender mainstreaming.

Focusing explicitly on the participation pillar, a new research agenda has been developed and examines the connection between women's participation in politics and conflict. The participation pillar affirms gender equality in political terms, and women's incorporation in all post-conflict reconstruction activities and decision-making positions. Feminist literature connected domestic political gender equality norms and their effect on a country's propensity for war (Caprioli, 2003, 2005; Melander, 2005). Indeed, greater

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<sup>4</sup>More information can be found here: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup>More information on the resolutions: <http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>.

<sup>6</sup>More information about the political career of Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah can be found here:

<https://opm.gov.na/deputy-prime-minister>.

<sup>7</sup>More information can be found here: <https://www.womenpeacesecurity.org>.

parliamentary representation for women reduces the possibility of interstate or intrastate conflict. Political gender equality is an important determinant of maintaining peace in the aftermath of conflict. The level of women's empowerment in a society has been associated with long-lasting peace and successful post-conflict reconstruction in several studies. Civil peace after the experience of conflict is conditional upon women's empowerment and gender equality norms on a societal and political level (Dahlum and Wig, 2020; Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017). Women's parliamentary representation affects countries' proneness to the 'conflict trap' (Demeritt et al., 2014), increases the possibility of conflict resolution by the signing of a peace agreement (Best et al., 2019) and strengthens successful post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building activities under the auspices of the UN (Gizelis, 2009, 2011).

Subsequently, two important questions arise: 1. Do countries emerging from intrastate conflict experience higher levels of female parliamentarians (compared to pre-conflict levels), and 2. How do women achieve increasing their parliamentary presence in the aftermath of civil conflict. Regarding the first question, when I started my PhD journey in 2018, an initial look at raw data published by the Inter-Parliamentary Union<sup>8</sup> showed Rwanda at the top of the ranking. In Rwanda, women held almost 62 percent of parliamentary seats. In countries like Mozambique, Ethiopia and Burundi, women held more than 35 percent of parliamentary seats. This observation has been noted by other scholars as well. Examining the models explaining women's representation across countries with different income levels, Hughes (2009) suggested that in low-income countries, these empirical models fail. Instead, she found that after the experience of large scale civil wars, women gain more parliamentary seats.

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<sup>8</sup>More information:<https://www.ipu.org/>

The development of this literature has been essential in helping us understand how violence, apart from its negative effects on women's lives and physical and mental health (Cohen and Nordås, 2014; Ormhaug et al., 2009; Pankhurst, 2002; Plümper and Neumayer, 2006; Urdal and Che, 2013) may also change how societies operate on multiple levels. The three main mechanisms articulated by the literature focus on (a) societal openings for women that operate as 'windows of opportunity' and the reconfiguration of gender relationships, (b) changes on formal institutions, and (c) the effect of external actors on the diffusion of international norms of gender equality. In a large part of the literature, these mechanisms are examined conjointly, affirming the changes a civil conflict provokes on multiple levels.

Today, a large part of the literature is focusing on the effect of specific conflict trajectories and poses that wartime violence creates demographic and gender imbalances that create societal and political openings for women. Openings, that in the aftermath of conflict women materialise in political representation. These changes are usually the product of the intensity and the longevity of the civil war (Hughes, 2009; Gurses et al., 2020), or the militarization process itself (Webster et al., 2019). However, these studies assume that because of these openings, women will automatically have the willingness to occupy more political space post-conflict. Employing a theoretical approach that incorporates not only women's willingness to advance their political status but also the opportunities to do so, literature has also examined the more advantageous scope conditions under which these two processes meet. Literature agrees that the way a conflict terminates is an important factor. The negotiation and implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) has the best prospects to increase women's political rights in the post-conflict era, especially if it incorporates a gender perspective (Joshi and Olsson,

2021). Indeed, gender sensitive peace agreements are far-reaching in increasing women's political participation (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021) and changes on their political rights (Reid, 2021) post-conflict.

Literature has also given a lot of consideration on the overall effect of violence on individuals and communities that have experienced it. These studies conceptualise women's political participation as participation in civil society groups and networks. The results are inconclusive, as the sub-national variation on wartime violence exposure may or may not motivate individuals to seek political office or make communities more receptive to women's political leadership (Bauer et al., 2016; Bellows and Miguel, 2006; De Luca and Verpoorten, 2015; Hadzic and Tavits, 2021; García-Ponce, 2017; Gilligan et al., 2014; McDougal and Caruso, 2012; Voors et al., 2012). This effect is also ambiguous when it comes to conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) (González and Traummüller, 2020; Kreft, 2019; Koos, 2018; Koos and Traummüller, 2022). What we do know based on these studies is that in many conflict settings, women do participate in societal functions during conflict, even in deeply patriarchal societies.

Another strand of literature has also highlighted the importance of institutional designs in promoting women's political participation post-conflict, either as an internal process (Fallon et al., 2012; Hughes and Tripp, 2015), or by the influence of external actors and dependence on foreign aid (Bush, 2011). However, the adoption of institutional designs and further democratization processes that assist women's representation may also be the product of a gender sensitive peace agreement (Anderson and Swiss, 2014).

The literature has made a very clear connection between the dynamics of conflict and the way they shape post-conflict societies. However, in their majority, the mechanisms mentioned above, stem from a common argument: women's mobilization during conflict

advances their position in the society and therefore in the aftermath, they aim to keep and expand their socio-political standing. Yet, this mechanism does not explain how women mobilize and the direct effect women's mobilization has on their post-conflict political roles. Furthermore, it is important to expand the theoretical and empirical models and include not only top-bottom approaches that examine the effect of leaders or external actors, but also bottom-up approaches that put the social processes of civil wars and the potential of domestic social forces to initiate change at the forefront.

Given the extensive literature on the determinants of women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict, this thesis differentiates itself by introducing an agency-based approach that examines how conflict shapes women's roles during conflict, how they affect dominant gender stereotypes associated with women's leadership and the mechanisms that have the potential to transfer and transform this agency in the post-conflict era. An agency-based approach deviates from examining the role of leaders or institutional frameworks, and sheds light upon the domestic social forces that bring upon change (Fuest, 2008; Moran & Pitcher, 2004). Focusing on the collective agency of women's civil society organizations and networks, this thesis highlights the collective efforts of women to expand the roles they acquired during conflict and change their political status post-conflict. Employing an agency-based approach further uncovers the variety of responses of women's CSOs during conflict and shifts the dominant perception of women affected by war from victims to actors and survivors.

Particularly, this thesis looks into the changes on women's roles during conflict and examines the ways they affect changes in their lives in the post-conflict era. How does violence affect women's representation in the post conflict era? What are the changes on women's lives during conflict and how do they affect their status post-conflict? What are



the opportunities women have to transfer their agency during conflict and materialise it politically?

## 1.1 Main Concepts

Before moving on further in presenting my research, in this section I introduce the main concepts of my research. Here, I introduce not only the definition of these concepts, but also the way they are theorized for the purpose of this dissertation, why they are important and how their measurements are created.

**Women's Representation** The phenomenon under examination in this thesis is women's representation in the aftermath of conflict. In this thesis I use the terms 'women's representation' and 'women's political participation' interchangeably to describe the same concept. In the first and second papers, I use the percentage of parliamentary seats women hold in national legislatures. For the countries that have bicameral systems, I use the percentage of seats women hold only in the lower chamber. That is because in these specific countries only the lower chamber is directly elected by the citizens and functions as a parliament.

In the first two papers I look into women's percentage in national legislatures only during electoral cycles. In general, the share of parliamentary seats political actors hold hardly changes from year to year. Changes in parliamentary seats will happen in the case of either a parliamentary breakdown, or in the case of a coup. In the sample of countries used in the first two papers, these two cases do not affect women's share of parliamentary seats and therefore the choice of electoral cycles is a justified choice. In the third paper, I examine a latent measure of women's political participation that incorporates women's percentage in national legislatures and an equal share in the overall distribution of power

(Coppedge et al., 2019). Both these measurements allow me to capture women's political participation in elective positions on a national level.

**Women's Civil Society Organizations (WCSOs)** An important concept that is present across the three different papers of the thesis is women's civil society organizations (CSOs). Women's CSOs refers to groups and synergies amongst individual women formed during conflict that work towards a common goal without necessarily having the legal and organizational structure of a non-governmental organization (NGO). The main reason for using this concept is because during conflict women organize in groups that do not have the typical organizational structure and are not officially registered under the law. Hence, WCSOs allows me to focus specifically on the capacity of women to exercise independent authority outside of the household on a societal level.

Moreover, it refers to women's social capital that has the ability and the channels to formal political institutions, such as political parties and leaders, and leadership capacities. In order to measure this concept I rely on the measurement by Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2019): 'The measurement of women's civil society participation is understood to include open discussion of political issues, participation in civil society organizations, and representation in the ranks of journalists'.

**Post-Conflict** In our field it is sometimes hard to distinguish between war and peace. The absence of war usually marks the post-conflict phase. The most common aggregation of conflict termination used in the field is a clear military victory, either for the government or for the rebel group, the signing of a peace agreement or a ceasefire. In most of the cases, the threshold of 25 battle related deaths is used in order to signify that a conflict

has ended, even though the fighting continues but at a much lower scale (Kreutz, 2010). However, many issues arise with this distinction as a country may experience conflict one year, followed by a year of absence of organized violence exceeding 25 battle related deaths, and then the renewal of violence. Therefore, this definition is not adequate for this dissertation.

In this thesis, instead of using the definition of negative peace to define when the post-conflict era begins, I define a country as post-conflict under three criteria. First, post-conflict refers to countries that have experienced an intrastate armed conflict. Second, for the cases where a civil war renewed after a year of that conflict was inactive, these years are not accounted as post-conflict. Third, I consider a country as post-conflict when conflict is non-active for a continuum of five years (Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). Employing these criteria allows me to distinguish between wartime and post-conflict, which further assists in connecting changes on women's lives during conflict and the ways they transfer in the post-conflict era.

## **1.2 Summary of Thesis**

How does conflict contribute to advances on women's legislative presence? Although conflict has a negative effect on women's health (Ormhaug et al., 2009), women's life expectancy (Plümper and Neumayer, 2006) and maternal mortality rates (Urdal and Che, 2013), the social processes of civil war create windows of opportunity through which, as data show, achieve higher levels of representation in the aftermath of conflict. In my thesis I address three different ways through which conflict dynamics create conditions that encourage women's autonomy, change perceptions on women's authority and accrue their social standing. Simultaneously, the new relations built with local communities,

necessitate new forms of social contact with other social and political actors, and foster an empowering post-conflict moment during which women advance their political standing and status. In the following paragraphs, I outline all the mechanisms that are presented in each of the paper that theorize the ways conflict alters social norms and institutions and engage different actors that promote women's political gender equality.

The first two papers of the thesis explore the specific experiences of women during conflict and their impact on women's post-conflict representation. Interestingly, women's experience with conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and their participation as combatants in rebel groups do not appear to exert an effect. However, women's mobilization and experience in CSOs yields a small, yet independent effect on their political status post-conflict. This effect is present in the immediate post-conflict phase (first election). Here, it is important to note that the first paper examines the hypothesized relationship in a small sample of post-conflict election years. Consequently, this might result in increased significance of the correlation detected. As per the second paper, the relationship between women's CSOs and women's representation in subsequent post-conflict elections is fragile and only detected at the lowest level of significance. In light of these suggestions from the results of the first and second papers, the third paper puts women's CSO under the microscope and further analyzes the mobilization mechanism in-depth, providing the ways it affects women's political participation post-conflict.

The first paper examines the effect of conflict related sexual violence on women's representation post-conflict. In this paper I propose that sexual violence is insufficient to create opportune conditions for women to further their participation in political structures, as increased visibility in the public domain increases the fear of being victimised through CRSV. However, in conflicts where CRSV was prevalent, it attracted international at-

tention. Through the mobilization of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the deployment of a UN-led peacekeeping operation (UNPKO), international norms of gender equality diffused sub-nationally and expanded women's access to national legislatures. Yet, women's mobilization during conflict advances and at some instances may be further fuelled by the experience of CRSV. This mobilization advances women's visibility and social leadership. The termination of the conflict provides an opportunity for women to transfer this agency in the post-conflict era and materialize it in terms of legislative representation. The argument is built on the anecdotal evidence that conflict violence mobilizes women in joining civic groups and community organizations. Subsequently, this mobilization transforms them into political actors that seek to advance their political status post-conflict.

I test this argument empirically in a sample of countries that have experienced different levels of CRSV. The empirical analysis does not find support for the effect of CRSV through the diffusion of international norms. In addition, women's mobilization during conflict yields a positive and independent effect on changes in women's legislative percentage, an effect that is prominent in the first post-conflict election but not the second. However, as mentioned above, the effect might be driven by the small sample used for the analysis presented in this paper.

The second paper examines different forms of mobilization by women during conflict and asks: are countries experiencing civil conflict more gender equal? This paper is motivated by women's increased mobilization during conflict and its potential manifestation to political representation post-conflict. Therefore, I examine two alternative mobilization measures: the existence of female combatants in rebel groups and women's participation in civic groups. Here, I theorise that civil conflict provokes synchronous changes in terms

of social capital and political structures. The powerful shock of a civil conflict provokes changes in the social fabric and alters the supply of available political actors that may be elected. Since women occupy more space during conflict in society, politics and military, I expect them to seek advances in electoral politics post-conflict since they create opportune conditions for new political actors to emerge. Simultaneously, political institutions that promote electoral diversity, such as proportional representation systems or quotas, assist women in getting elected in the post-conflict period. To examine this mechanism, I form a sample of countries that women participated actively in rebel forces and put both measurements to test for the first three post-conflict elections. Interestingly enough, the change in women's legislative percentage in the first three post-conflict elections was always positive. Overall, across all elections included in the sample, women's mobilization does not exert a significant effect on women's representation. On the contrary, both quotas and PR systems yield a positive effect. Moreover, the effect of quotas on all elections is primarily driven by the first election, while PR systems appear to have a long-term effect on women's representation.

In light of the results of both papers indicating a positive relationship between women's participation in CSOs and their political representation, the third paper seeks to understand how this relationship is formed. Building on recent literature on the importance of conflict termination through a peace agreement, I employ a 'willingness & opportunity' framework that explores in depth the mechanism on women's mobilization and the scope conditions under which it is more successful. Conflict transforms women into political actors and decision makers that seek to advance their influence and status post-conflict, however, facing many structural barriers that prohibit their participation. Peace processes and the adoption of gender provisions have a mitigating effect to these barriers,

carving a pathway for women to transfer their agency in the post-conflict era. In this paper I exploit the variation of gender provisions from the PA-X dataset and utilize two types of gender provisions: the ones that refer directly to women's political participation, and those that indirectly promote women's rights. The reason is because these two types have the potential to create legal frameworks that put women at the forefront of policy making efforts. The results of this analysis do not provide support for the hypothesis, proposing an interaction between women's mobilization and gender provisions in peace agreements. Notwithstanding the above, women's CSOs during conflict appear to have a positive, independent and statistically significant effect on women's political participation. The effect is also prevalent when women's representation post-conflict exceeds the critical mass threshold of 30%.

### **1.3 Contribution of Thesis**

This thesis contributes to the literature by examining changes on women's legislative presence in national parliaments and lower chambers in the aftermath of conflict. More specifically, it looks into conflict related changes in women's lives and their potential to affect women's post-conflict political status. Women's legislative percentage reflects women's access to high decision-making positions. Despite changes in gender roles, women still find it hard to be associated with political office and generally hold less power than men (Diekman et al., 2004). This stems from enduring stereotypical views that do not associate women with authority and power (Carli and Eagly, 2001; Eagly and Karau, 2002). In fact, these stereotypes persevere even as women's educational attainment and participation in the labour force improve. While women's participation in horizontal societal level groups and organizations is accepted and sometimes encouraged, women's

participation in hierarchical structures (such as politics) is still perceived as ‘unnatural’. In this thesis, I examine the ways conflict breaks down social relationships and gender stereotypes that allow women to emerge as leaders and their potential to transfer their agency in the post-conflict era.

The results across the papers of this dissertation highlight that women’s mobilization during conflict is an important factor that contributes to changes in their post-conflict political participation. Further, their wartime mobilization is an independent mechanism that and does not require specific scope conditions to have this effect. Moreover, the results contribute to our overall knowledge by introducing the importance of local actors. When looking into the factors that can contribute to greater political gender equality, literature should also focus on the capacity of local actors. Even though this thesis does not conduct policy analysis, it provides important insights for policymakers and organizations that are working in post-conflict societies and advocate for women’s greater inclusion in politics. Tapping on women’s social capital and leadership and providing women’s organization with greater access to political leaders can assist them in improving their post-conflict political participation.

The current dissertation also provides thorough insights on the longevity of the effect women’s CSOs have in the aftermath of conflict. Employing a research design that looks into the post-conflict elections, the first two papers inform us that the effect of WCSOs is significant in the first post-conflict election. Yet, this effect becomes non-significant as the time goes by and is not detected in the second or third post-conflict elections. The first post-conflict election is usually in the first 5 post-conflict years. This finding corroborates previous research that articulates that the advances in women’s status during conflict are usually short-lived (Hughes, 2009; Tripp, 2015). The results also shed light on the legacies



of wartime dynamics and the extent to which they may shape or affect post-conflict social and political arenas.

On a methodological level, this thesis contributes to what is defined as post-conflict. Instead of relying on the concept of negative peace, that understands peace as the absence of war, I incorporate additional criteria. In this thesis, the concept of post-conflict era is defined by a continuum of peaceful years (Doyle and Sambanis, 2000; Davenport et al., 2018). This distinction, allows to further aggregate conflict and post-conflict years, especially since the purpose of this thesis is to make connections between conflict related trajectories and their effect on post-conflict political outcomes.

The following chapters are organised as follows. Chapter 2 presents a study of two contradictory mechanisms, that of victimization and agency. Chapter 3 examines different types of mobilization and how they challenge dominant perceptions on women's participation in decision making positions. Finally, Chapter 4 suggests a willingness and opportunity framework that combines women's willingness to advance their political status post-conflict and the opportunities created by gender provisions in peace agreements to materialise their advancements during conflict. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the limitation of this study and future avenues for research.

## 2 Sexual Violence and Women's Representation

### Abstract

Focusing on the effect of sexual violence, recent literature suggests a positive relationship with women's representation post-conflict, mainly through post-traumatic growth mechanisms. Although sub-national findings may provide support for the above-mentioned mechanism, a larger quantitative analysis conducted in this paper does not find support for this argument. Looking into the effect of different types of traumatic experiences on women's representation in the first and second post-conflict elections respectively, the analysis finds that women's mobilization in civil society organizations has a significant, positive, and independent effect. However, this effect is detected only in the first post-conflict election. On the contrary, conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) does not exert an effect on women's legislative presence. The results have important implications on the way we understand sexual violence, the international community's response in conflicts with prevalent sexual violence and women's representation.

### 2.1 Introduction

How does the experience of victimization affect political participation in the aftermath of conflict? In this paper, I examine this question in countries with prevalent levels of conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) and its subsequent effect on changes on women's representation post-conflict. Looking at changes on women's parliamentary percentages, compared to their pre-conflict levels, the majority of the cases that report positive changes did not experience any level of sexual violence during conflict, while less than a quarter of the observations that report positive changes experienced some level of sexual violence during conflict. Considering the case of Bosnia, that reported extreme levels of sexual

violence against women during conflict, women's percentage in the national parliament in the first post-conflict election decreased. However, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, women's representation in the aftermath of conflict increased in both elections. This creates an interesting puzzle on the connections between sexual violence and women's representation.

Recently, literature has provided evidence on the connection between sexual violence and women's political participation. It proposes a positive association between higher levels of sexual violence and women's protest activity (Kreft, 2019). Furthermore, it finds that in conflicts with prevalent levels of CRSV women mobilize politically, seeking advances on their socio-political status. Concurrently, international actors respond to sexual violence by perceiving gender to be salient and push for changes on women's political status. Conjointly, these two pressures result in the quicker adoption of quotas (Agerberg and Kreft, 2020). While both papers increase our understanding between sexual violence and women's mobilization, there is no direct link between sexual violence and women's representation in national legislatures. Therefore, it is unclear whether this relationship exists.

In this paper, I address this issue by unpacking this complex relationship. By nature, CRSV affirms gender hierarchies and impairs social relationships. These hierarchies articulate women's inferior status, restrict women's roles in a society and are unlikely to promote political gender equality. Yet, during conflict, women have opportunities for agency and leadership. Through their mobilization and increased agency during conflict they seek changes regarding their status and overturn negative stereotypes associated with women's leadership. As such, women aim to transfer their agency in the post-conflict phase and expand it in politics. The support of an international actor is of great importance as they can mitigate the obstacles women face in politics and create opportune conditions

for women to advance their representation post-conflict. In cases with prevalent levels of CRSV, the mobilization of the United Nations (UN) is well documented (Benson and Gizelis, 2020; Hultman and Johansson, 2017; Kreft, 2017). Through the deployment of a peacekeeping operation (PKO), the UN promotes a gendered agenda that aims towards social and political gender equality, therefore promoting women's representation post-conflict.

In order to test the hypotheses proposed in this paper, I look into changes in women's representation from pre to post-conflict during electoral cycles in a sample of countries that have experience different levels of sexual violence. The choice of electoral cycles is important as it can reveal the direct choice of the voters towards women. The data I use to calculate the dependent variable are from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The data on conflict related sexual violence are from the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict dataset (Cohen and Nordås, 2014) and include three different measurements of sexual violence. The three measurements are constructed from reports pertaining sexual violence from three sources: Amnesty International (A.I.), United States State Department (U.S.S.D.) and Human Rights Watch (H.R.W.). In order to capture women's agency and leadership during conflict I operationalize Women's Civil Society Participation Index from the Varieties of Democracy dataset (Coppedge et al., 2019). This measurement reflects women's capacity to form and participate in civil groups, and subsequently their ability to transform their social agency during conflict in political representation post-conflict.

The results of the analysis presented later in this paper show that sexual violence is negatively associated with women's representation in post-conflict elections, although this correlation is insignificant. Instead, the analysis suggests that women's mobilization in civil society organizations during conflict has a positive and significant effect in the

first post-conflict election, all things being equal. Furthermore, the interaction between extreme levels of CRSV and women's CSO has a positive effect in the first post-conflict election, but only for one of the three sources of sexual violence. For two out of the three sources of CRSV, the interaction with women's CSOs has a negative and significant effect in the second post-conflict election. The interaction between UNPKO and women's participation in CSOs is insignificant, reaffirming the independent effect of women's CSO participation during conflict on women's representation.

In the following pages I conduct a review of the current literature regarding the connection between victimization and political participation in post-conflict contexts. Moving on, I briefly discuss some of the misconceptions of CRSV, and later present my theoretical argument that focuses on the linkages between sexual violence, women's mobilization in civil society and UN responses to the conflict. I also provide two illustrative cases (Liberia and Bosnia) for the mechanisms discussed in the theory section. Then, I present the methodology and the research design I employ for the statistical analysis and introduce the results of my analysis. I conclude this paper summarizing my findings and how they fit in the bigger picture regarding women's lives during and in the aftermath of conflict and the broader implications of this research. The results challenge the way we understand conflict dynamics and our responses to armed conflict.

## **2.2 Victimization & Political Participation**

Recent literature has examined the link between the experience of violence and its subsequent effect on social and political outcomes amongst individuals. This linkage, known as post-traumatic growth theory, suggests that "Post-traumatic growth theory poses psychological growth resulting from a cognitive re-evaluation of traumatic experiences in

an evolving personal narrative and process of meaning making” (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004). Bateson (2012) for example finds that individuals that have experienced crime victimization are more likely to participate in civic and political life<sup>9</sup>. Extant literature on the effect of conflict related violence proposes that individuals that were directly affected from war violence, were more likely to participate in local and community groups and participate in electoral processes by voting (Bauer et al., 2016; Bellows and Miguel, 2006). These findings are consistent amongst different conflict affected countries such as Sri Lanka (De Luca and Verpoorten, 2015), Nepal (Gilligan et al., 2014), Burundi (Voors et al., 2012) and Mozambique (McDougal and Caruso, 2012).

Applying a gender dimension in this relationship, another strand of literature has explored if the relationship holds in the cases of conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) and its effect on women’s prosocial behaviour (in terms of political participation). On the individual level, Koos and Traunmüller (2022) explore the effect of CRSV on social and political behaviour through surveys in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia and Sri Lanka. The results confirm that exposure to CRSV (either personally or on a family level) increases the individual’s participation in civic groups. Moreover, interethnic relations are unaffected while political trust is heterogeneous across different contexts. These findings are conducive to Koos (2018) earlier findings that CSRV has an empowering effect in terms of social participation.

González and Traunmüller (2020) are looking directly into the effect of CRSV to individual political participation. Their list experiment in Sri Lanka indicates that the experience of CRSV increases political participation, both in institutionalised and non-

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<sup>9</sup>Contrary to this, Hager et al. (2019) report that they note heterogeneous effects after the Osh riots in Kyrgyzstan. They show that victimized neighbourhoods show substantially lower levels of prosocial behaviour. This finding is constant within and across ethnic groups.

institutionalised forms of political action, and propose that civic networks are of a great importance in this relationship.

Another strand of literature focuses on the collective effect of CRSV on a national level. More specifically, Kreft (2019) theorizes that the threat of CRSV mobilizes women collectively and therefore has a positive effect on women's mobilization measured either as protest activity or linkages with international women's NGOs. Her findings provide support for the mobilizing effect of systematic rape and CRSV against women. CRSV however is increasingly politicized for both international and domestic actors. Agerberg and Kreft (2020) theorise that in conflict where CRSV is prevalent, international actors are increasingly mobilised and initiate a gendered response to the conflict, while simultaneously, women also mobilize and advocate for improvements in their political status. Their results find that indeed, countries that experienced higher levels of CRSV adopted quotas quicker than those that did not.

The above-mentioned studies improve our understanding of the ways different forms of violence affect individuals and community changes in social and political behaviours. However, they focus on civic engagement and protest activities. Although these types of mobilization have a highly political imprint, the question still remains whether CRSV (or the threat of CRSV), working through the same mechanisms, manifests in changes in women's legislative percentage post-conflict. It would be interesting to test whether the experience of CRSV works through post-traumatic growth mechanisms, to elect women in high decision-making positions. In the next sections I briefly outline the literature on CRSV and lay out my theory proposing that in conflicts where CRSV was prevalent, women achieved changes in their parliamentary representation through their mobilization in civil society. Using Liberia and Bosnia as illustrative cases, I argue that

CRSV re-enforces views of victimhood and dependence for women, rather than autonomy and agency which are important for women to get elected in decision making positions. Nonetheless, women's participation in CSOs is capable of altering gender hierarchies that are based on the assumption of women's inability to perform in leadership positions.

### **2.3 Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict**

Despite the perception that sexual violence is an integral part of armed conflict, recent data advances do not support this argument. On a report first published in 2011, Nordås finds a big temporal variation on sexual violence in African civil wars: sexual violence happens randomly and is quite different from the killing pattern observed. She also finds that it is not necessary a conflict pattern, but also continues in the post-conflict era. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2013) advance this research and look into any observable patterns of sexual violence on a global scale. They find that indeed, wartime rape is neither ubiquitous, nor inevitable and that sexual violence differs significantly amongst conflicts. More importantly, existing data cannot determine conclusively whether wartime sexual violence on a global level is increasing, decreasing or holding steady. Another prevalent misconception regarding sexual violence is that the recipients of violence are always women and the perpetrators men. Although research has shown that women may as well be perpetrators (Sjoberg, 2016), the majority of the perpetrators are men, and the victims are disproportionately women and girls (Cohen et al., 2013). It is also important to note that sexual violence during conflict may also be unrelated to combatants -sexual violence is perpetrated by civilian population as well (ACLED data, 2021).

CSRV is also found to have long-lasting negative effects on the survivors' mental (Johnson et al., 2010) and physical health (Longombe et al., 2008). The social consequences



of victimization through CRSV also become stark on a family level (Woldetsadik, 2018). Family members are susceptible to secondary traumatic stress, and alongside with victims, stigma is an enduring legacy for both victims and their families. In fact, a few scholars have noted how communities rejected and isolated victims of CRSV due to stigma (Josse, 2010). Amone-P'Olak et al. (2016) for instance found poor community relations and prevailing stigmatization amongst formerly abducted girls in Norther Uganda.

The above-mentioned facts are important when examining the effect of CRSV to societies and individuals as well. Before the 1990s CRSV was perceived as an “unfortunate part” of violence in civil wars. This perception changed mainly due to the rulings of the international criminal courts on former Yugoslavia<sup>10</sup> and Rwanda<sup>11</sup> (Skjelsbæk, 2010) that recognised CRSV as a weapon of war and a strategic choice by the armed actors. Since then, the UN Security Council has adopted more than ten resolutions regarding CRSV and has operationalised this type of violence for a gendered response to specific conflicts. Furthermore, the UN has developed a framework that views CRSV as a threat to international security. This is potentially short-sighted as it insinuates that “bringing perpetrators to justice decreases sexual violence and addresses gendered insecurity” (Meger, 2016)<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup>For more information: <https://www.icty.org/>

<sup>11</sup>For more information: <https://www.unict.irmct.org/en/tribunal>

<sup>12</sup>As Meger (2016) writes “By elevating this particular form of violence above others, wartime sexual violence is excised from the continuum of violence and the underlying social, political, and economic determinants of gendered violence. Decontextualization is necessary in securitization because it requires an act to pose a threat sufficient in immediacy and scope to warrant an extraordinary response. Instead of thinking about sexual violence in terms of social relations that produce and give meaning to this violence, securitization limits our consideration to the intent behind the act.”

## 2.4 Sexual Violence, Women's Mobilization & Post-Conflict Political Participation

By nature, sexual violence does not only victimise women's bodies but asserts hierarchies amongst individuals, generating feelings of shame to its survivors due to the connection between women's bodies and male honour. As such, the degradation of women to spoils of war amongst men signals women's inferior status to that of men. Views proposing women's inability to perform in leadership positions and be regarded as political actors get transferred undisrupted from the pre-conflict to the post-conflict era. Women are rarely associated with leadership positions or authority, attributes that are usually ascribed to men (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Rather, the more appropriate roles or professions for women usually involve education or care. As a result, women are not considered fit to run for office or get elected. If these views are not challenged, then women are unlikely to get elected or even nominated for political office.

Although we know that the consequences of victimization through CRSV have heterogeneous effects amongst victims and their families, we do not know how exactly this affects overall gender relationships on a collective level. Here, I argue, that CRSV reproduces hierarchies between women and men that promote men's dominance and authority at the expense of women. Consequently, CRSV ruins social connections, undermines trust in inter-personal relationships and creates further divisions on a societal level by increasing the insecurity of women during conflict. As such, any opportunities for women to exert agency and leadership are minimized and women's roles remain confined in private or non-political spheres. Hence, women become dis-empowered and do not seek to alter their socio-political status.

Therefore, I argue that in conflicts with prevalent CRSV, it exerts no effect on women's representation post-conflict.

**Hypothesis 1:** CRSV does not have an effect on women's representation post-conflict.

However, conflict is not only victimizing women but offers opportunities for agency and leadership. During conflict, societies are usually experiencing a rift: the warring factions and their supporters on the one side, and the non-engaging civilian population on the other side. During conflict, many state structures collapse or severely under-perform their functions, endangering citizens and vulnerable members of the society. This lack of leadership creates a power vacuum that allows and encourages new social actors to emerge. Evidently, in many conflict environments, literature has documented women's leadership in different social spaces (Berry, 2018; Ingiriis and Hoehne, 2013; Tripp, 2015) that range from provisions for food and medicine, to negotiating safe passages with armed actors. This extensive mobilization of women during conflict is equally documented even in deeply patriarchal societies.

Women are presented with more opportunities for mobilization during conflict and can expand the variety of their roles. This agency transformed women to local leaders, effective decision makers and problem solvers, attributes that are closely associated with political candidates holding higher office. Consider the case of Sierra Leone where in the pre-conflict era, 'women's election to political office has been based on tokenism and the benevolence of male leaders' (Abdullah et al., 2010). Yet, conflict redirected the course of this trend by giving the opportunity to women to reintroduce themselves as political actors. Through organizing in civil society they increased their influence, and in the

post-conflict era women's political participation improved.

Looking into societies that sexual violence was prevalent during conflict, women managed to exert leadership in civic groups and organizations. More specifically, even if women faced increased levels of insecurity, there are many examples where women demonstrated social leadership and peace activism. Women's CSOs were prominent in conflict resolution efforts. During many conflicts, they lobbied extensively with the main fighting actors in order to pressure them into peace negotiations. Through their extensive advocacy for peace, women acquired access to political actors and linked their requests for peace with gender equality reforms in social and political institutions. Hence, in the aftermath of conflict, women managed to also enter political spaces and increase their parliamentary representation.

There, I content that in conflict with prevalent CRSV, women's CSO participation during conflict affects women's representation post-conflict.

**Hypothesis 2:** In conflicts with prevalent CRSV, women's CSO participation yields a positive effect on women's representation post-conflict.

Yet, there may be another mechanism at work in conflict contexts that CRSV was prevalent. That is the influence of international actors, and more specifically of the United Nations (UN) through the deployment of a peace-keeping operation (PKO). Recent literature has established a connection between CRSV and increased mobilization by the UN Security Council. More specifically, in cases with higher levels of sexual violence reported during the conflict, the possibility of the UNSC issuing resolutions and calls for action pertaining to the conflict, increased (Benson and Gizelis, 2020). In addition,

reports of sexual violence do not only increase the possibility of a peacekeeping operation being deployed (Hultman and Johansson, 2017), but also the possibility that the mandate of the UNPKO will implement gender mainstreaming clauses (Kreft, 2017).

The UN Peacekeeping Operations department was the first UN body that adopted the Women, Peace and Security agenda and has incorporated a gender dimension structurally and horizontally as well. Apart from the focus on sexual violence, the women, peace and security agenda is conceptualized around women's lived experiences in conflict and post-conflict societies, and the need to ensure that women are enjoying equal representation in institutions of peace and security, governance, peace negotiations, peace-making activities and peacekeeping (Shepherd, 2019). UNPKOs address gender in national level institutional reforms and promote women's inclusion in national and local political institutions, consequently promoting women's presence in national legislatures and encouraging reforms that enable women's legislative representation. Approaching peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction as a multi-dimensional process, the UN may act as a broker between elites, political actors and institutions, and the local population (Gizelis, 2011). This allows CSO actors to gain access to political institutions. Women's organizations and civic groups are of particular interest to these efforts, as they represent a part of social capital that transcends ethnic or religious divisions. By implementing the principles of WPS Agenda and the UN's devotion to successful peace-building, women gain access to political office and the resources to needed to increase their political participation. As such, I argue that changes in women's legislative presence in the aftermath of conflicts that CRSV was prevalent can be the result of UN's efforts to prioritize gender in its peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

Therefore, I argue that in conflicts with prevalent CRSV where a UNPKO was de-

ployed, women's participation in CSO to have a positive impact on women's representation post-conflict.

**Hypothesis (H3):** In conflicts where CRSV is prevalent and a UNPKO was deployed, women's CSO participation has a positive effect in their post-conflict representation.

## 2.5 Illustrative case: Liberia

In order to illustrate the mechanisms presented in the previous section, I use Liberia as an illustrative case for four reasons. First, Liberia has been held as an example regarding women's representation in sub-Saharan Africa as it had the first elected female head of state, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, which established a gender-sensitive governance and gender equality as an integral part of her agenda. Second, Liberia has seen an abundance of civil society organizations and networks ran by women. Third, the international community and the UN specifically deployed a large PKO on the ground that included major military and civilian components, and engaged in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)<sup>13</sup> incorporated gender mainstreaming in all its functions and promoted women's rights. Lastly, the three different sources of CRSV in the Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict dataset (SVAC) report different levels during the second civil war.

Liberia's organizations are characterised by a big variation in terms of their objectives. Looking into women's groups and CSOs, Gizelis (2011) notes that organizations that focused on CRSV and gender based violence in general were primarily dependent on their hierarchical connection to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Their

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<sup>13</sup>For more information on UNMIL: <https://unmil.unmissions.org/>

ability to pursue their objectives outside of this hierarchical relationship was ambiguous, especially since this could create tensions with traditional societies.

The most robust women's organizations were in the capital, while many of the rural organizations were unstable and in need of connections to maintain their existence. In many parts of the country, women used traditional societies (Sande)<sup>14</sup> during conflict in order to organize in civic groups. Women's CSOs activities included addressing economic issues arising from conflict to negotiating local ceasefires (Sawyer, 2005). One of the most prominent actions of the Liberian women however, was their advocacy for peace. Liberian women leveraged their identity as mothers in order to motivate soldiers to stop fighting and organized public sit-ins and non violent protests in order to pressure military actors in peace negotiations. Although women were not invited or participated in the official peace talks, they travelled in Ghana and participated in a parallel forum lobbying for the inclusion of provisions pertaining to women's security and empowerment in post-conflict Liberia (The Golden Tulip Declaration of Liberian Women Attending the Peace Talks in Accra, 2003). Mano River Women Peace Network (MARWOPNET) also participated as a witness in the Accra Peace Agreement.

After the signing of the peace agreement, women maintained their mobilization and expanded it towards political participation. The backing of the UNPKO was of great importance for women to expand their political participation. Gender mainstreaming was an important part of UNMIL. The UN's efforts to ensure equal participation in politics to previously marginalised groups is considered successful in Liberia. Throughout the course of the operation, the UN focused on increasing women's political participation in terms of voting registration and turnout, and candidacies (Fuest, 2008; UNMIL, 2010).

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<sup>14</sup>The Sande society has been mostly active in northern, northwestern and central-western Liberia.

These efforts materialised in the post-conflict parliamentary and presidential elections in 2005, when Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President of Liberia. Women's participation in the Senate and the Parliament also increased<sup>15</sup>. Although women's voting turnout<sup>16</sup> was marginally higher than that of men in the October 2005 elections on a national level, women's turnout in four counties significantly exceeded male turnout. Interestingly enough, women's turnout was significantly higher than men's only in special internally displaced people's (IDP) polling stations. These percentages are quite important as they showcase both that women became candidates in the post-conflict elections, and that they were voted by the electorate to participate in institutionalised politics.

## 2.6 Illustrative case: Bosnia & Herzegovina

Bosnia is another case that can be used to illustrate the mechanisms presented in the previous section. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, civil war erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995. As a result of extreme ethnic divisions in the country, CRSV was prevalent. In fact, it was part of an extreme repertoire of violence that included intense fighting and ethnic cleansing (Petrovic, 1994). The majority of the victims were Muslim women, although women from other ethnic groups has been documented<sup>17</sup>. The conflict ceased with the signing of a peace agreement, while international presence was significant in the immediate secession of hostilities (United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union).

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<sup>15</sup>Women held 5 out of 30 seats and 8 out of 64 seats in each house respectively

<sup>16</sup>The information on women's voting turnout can be found in ACE Project website: <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/topics/electoral-participation/turnout/2005electionsturnout.pdf/view>

<sup>17</sup>Mapping the pattern of sexual violence against women, Wood (2008) notes that women from all different ethnic groups in Bosnia became targets/recipients of some form of sexual violence.



Although facing increased insecurity during the war, women also mobilised in various civic groups. Pertaining to CRSV specifically, women organized and ran healthcare centres, providing care for victims of sexual violence. Their connection was primarily with regional or international NGOs. One such example was Medica Mondiale, founded by Monika Hauser and a group of Bosnian women psychologists and doctors after being turned down by multiple international aid organizations<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from sexual violence, women's CSOs in Bosnia distributed food, medicine, clothing and schooling facilities. Bosnian women also founded an organization providing legal assistance for women that had fled their homes and became internally displaced and had lost their legal documents (Halimi and Kvinna, 2007). As Popov-Momčinović (2020) reports, women's organizations were able to reach out to international organizations and attract external funding and aid for their activities. The highlight of women's mobilization was their non-violent, political and anti-war focus. Building upon their identity as mothers, they demonstrated against the obligatory conscription of their children, often facing defamation from their own respective ethnic groups (Stojsavljevic, 1995).

During conflict, women also increased their interaction with government institutions and aid donors (Berry, 2018). Through these interactions, women transformed to political actors and tied their advocacy for peace to women's rights. Unlike Liberia, that women exerted a leverage in the final peace agreement even informally, women in Bosnia were left out not only in the negotiation process, but also from the final agreement signed. The priorities set by the international actors focused mainly in addressing the ethnic grievances between the different ethnic groups. UN Women established operations in Bosnia only in 2008, while gender has not been part of the political and social reconstruction efforts

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<sup>18</sup>For more information <https://www.medicamondiale.org/en/who-we-are/our-history.html>

since 1995<sup>19</sup>.

Although in the post-conflict era women aspired to transfer their agency in politics, institutions and international actors did not encourage them. Women constituted only a very small proportion of candidates in party lists (9.4%) and consequently only one of them was elected in parliament. After their exclusion, women's organizations worked towards political reform and the adoption of electoral rules that promote the participation of women. After intense campaigning and lobbying with international organizations and reach out activities to local communities, women managed to introduce quotas and a closed list system in time for the 1998 elections. This favoured women's political participation and resulted in more women being elected (28.6%) compared to the first post-conflict election and the pre-war levels of representation.

## 2.7 Research Design

### *Sample*

In this paper I suggest a positive relationship between women's mobilization in civil society during conflict with prevalent CRSV and their post-conflict legislative presence. Therefore, I construct a sample of countries where CRSV was prevalent during conflict and use the SVAC dataset (Cohen and Nordås, 2014). In studies of conflict and peace, it becomes difficult to identify the conflict and post-conflict spaces. Therefore, I employ a unique strategy. Since conflict has a recurring nature which usually takes place within the first five years since the initial termination (Collier and Sambanis, 2002; Walter, 2004), I contend that a country can be considered as post-conflict only if a conflict has not

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<sup>19</sup>The Convention for the Elimination of Any forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention of the Nationality of Married Women are part of the Annexes in the Dayton Agreement.

recurred within the first five years of conflict termination. In this way, I will be able to test the effect of conflict trajectories and changes on post-conflict outcomes.

In this paper I focus specifically on women's representation during electoral cycles only, and more specifically in the first and the second post-conflict elections. The choice of electoral cycles is quite important since vote, when controlling for other institutional factors, reveals the choice of the electorate towards women and therefore indicates if the hypothesized change in 'hearts and minds' of the citizenry and their attitudes towards women's political efficacy does exist. In order to determine election years, I use the National Elections in Democracies and Autocracies Dataset (Hyde and Marinov, 2012). The sample covers post-conflict elections between 1989 and 2015. To assess the relationship between my dependent and independent variables I employ linear regression models and clustering standard errors at country level. Since a country can appear twice in one electoral cycle (if they have experienced more than one civil conflict) I account for within-cluster correlation and therefore cluster the standard errors on country code.

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable is the change in women's legislative percentage from the year prior to the conflict to the first post-conflict election. Moreover, in order to construct the dependent variable for the second post-conflict election, I subtract women's legislative percentage a year prior to the conflict from their percentage in the second post-conflict election. In order to construct the dependent variables, I use data from the Varieties in Democracy Dataset (Coppedge et al., 2019)<sup>20</sup>. Variables "first" and "second" indicate

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<sup>20</sup>Although the V-Dem dataset is a comprehensive time series data collection, they do report many missing values, especially those on women's legislative presence before the conflict started. For the values that were missing I conducted a thorough analysis in the archives of Inter-Parliamentary Union's reports

the difference of women's legislative percentage a year prior to the conflict and the first and second post-conflict elections respectively. The form I follow for constructing them is the following:

$$difference = percentage_{ij} - percentage_{ij}$$

where (i) is the year of the election and (j) the country. For example, the year before the conflict (2003), women held 1.3% of the legislative seats in the national parliament of Haiti. After the end of the civil war in 2004, Haiti held the first post-conflict election in 2006 and the second in 2010. Therefore, for the first post-conflict election the difference is:

$$first = percentage_{2006,Haiti} - percentage_{2003,Haiti}^{21}$$

&

$$second = percentage_{2010,Haiti} - percentage_{2003,Haiti}^{22}$$

The variable labelled 'first' consists of 54 observations accounting for the difference in the first post-conflict election. The minimum value is (-.308) and the maximum value is (.368), with mean (.047) and standard deviation (.09). The variable labelled 'second' consists of 43 observations accounting for the difference in the second post-conflict. Its minimum value is (-.303) and the maximum value (.392), mean of (.075) and standard deviation (.116).

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and data. In the rare cases that the national parliament was suspended before the conflict or after the conflict, the observations on women's legislative percentage is coded as zero (0).

<sup>21</sup>First=.02 - .036 = -.016

<sup>22</sup>Second=.111 - .036 = .075

*Independent Variable*

In this paper, I examine the effect of trauma on women's representation with two independent variables, sexual violence during conflict and women's mobilization in CSOs during conflict. Beginning with sexual violence I operationalise the three different measurements that SVAC dataset v.3.0 offers for all civil wars between 1989 and 2015. Since the dataset is built on conflict-year unit of analysis, I collapse the dataset on a country level in order to acquire the maximum levels of sexual violence in the country for the three different sources. In the original dataset, systematic sexual violence was coded in lower frequencies. After collapsing the dataset on a country level, the information in data lessens even more, resulting in only a few observations for that category, but also for the others. Therefore, I adapt my variables coding CRSV prevalence and recode a new category for the highest levels of CRSV (category 2 and category 3). The new variables are now constituted by three categories: no CRSV, sporadic CRSV and systematic CRSV. The table below presents the frequency of the different categories of CRSV for both elections. A noticeable pattern across the sources is the similarity in coding between Amnesty International and U.S. State Department, especially in the highest levels of reported CRSV. The Human Rights Watch coding though reveals a different pattern in coding.

Table 1: Summary statistics of CRSV categories.

Source	No SV	Freq.	Sporadic SV	Freq.	Systematic SV	Freq.	Total
A.I.	72	74.23%	17	17.53%	8	8.25%	97
U.S.S.D.	70	72.16%	19	19.59%	8	8.25%	97
H.R.W.	75	77.32%	10	10.31%	12	12.37%	97

The second independent variable is women's CSO participation during conflict. Since the theory presented earlier in this paper is connecting civil war trajectories with post-conflict outcomes, the variable is the mean of all active conflict years of a conflict. Women's participation in CSOs during conflict is measured through the Women's Civil Society Participation Index from the Varieties of Democracy Index (Coppedge et al., 2019). Although current literature has focused on women's protest activity or peace advocacy, I find that these measures do not accurately capture the different angles and the entirety of variation of women's mobilization during conflict. Women's CSP Index is the best option since it captures women's visibility in a society in more inclusive ways. Women's Civil Society Participation Index answers the questions "Do women have the ability to express themselves and form and participate in groups?". Women's CSO presence is understood to include "open discussion of political issues, participation in CSOs and representation in the ranks of journalists" (Coppedge et al., 2019). The CSO index takes values between (0) and (1) and its minimum value is (.09), maximum value (.988), mean (.556) and standard deviation (.208).

### *Control Variables*

To account for potential omitted variable bias, I include a series of different factors in the

models presented in the next section. The first set of control variables refers to conflict specific characteristics that affect women's post-conflict representation in national legislatures. Conflict intensity is an important factor that affects both sexual violence and women's representation. On the one hand, the higher conflict intensity is the more indiscriminate violence becomes and civilians are more frequently targeted. On the other hand, the higher the intensity of the conflict, the greater the societal and political openings for women, therefore making it easier for them to get elected. Using data from UCDP I construct another binary variable that takes the value (1) when the intensity of the conflict is high and (0) if otherwise. Sexual violence appears to attract the deployment of the UN, therefore increasing the possibility of a peace-keeping operation being deployed on the ground (Benson and Gizelis, 2020; Hultman and Johansson, 2017). Using the information of the UN peacekeeping website<sup>23</sup>, I construct a binary variable that indicates the years a UNPKO was active on the ground.

The second set of control variables refers to country specific characteristics that may foster women's legislative percentage advancement. Economic development is found to assist women's legislative presence (Duflo, 2012). Using data from the V-Dem dataset, I control for the log of the gross domestic product per capita (GDP per capita) (Coppedge et al., 2019). I also control for pre-conflict fertility rates, since it is possible that women's status prior to the conflict to affect their post-conflict political representation (UN World Population prospects 2019). In countries where women have a relatively higher status it is possible that it carries on to the post-conflict era and it is not a product of conflict. Another important element of women's representation is time trends. Even when accounting for other institutional factors, women's representation appears to follow specific patterns.

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<sup>23</sup>For more information: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate>

Therefore, and in order to account for country trends I control for women's representation the year prior to the conflict started. Lastly, to account for global trends I construct a binary variable accounting whether the elections were held post-2000 or not. The summary statistics for the control variables can be found in Appendix A.

## 2.8 Results

Prior to analysing the results of the regression analysis for the first two post-conflict elections, it is insightful to examine whether conflict actually increased women's participation in civil society groups and networks. In order to determine whether violence yields an effect on WCSOs, I conduct a point-biserial correlation on a panel dataset. Point-biserial correlation is a special case of Pearson's correlation in which one variable is continuous and the other binary (Tate, 1954). This test can determine whether a treatment (conflict) has an effect on the variable of interest (WCSOs), does not require equal sample sizes or variances, and works well with uniform distributions (Bonett, 2020). It tests whether the correlation coefficient is significantly different from zero. The results of the test produce a negative coefficient<sup>24</sup> that is significant at the 1 percent level which does not provide support to the notion that intrastate conflict has a positive effect on women's CSO mobilization. However, it still remains to be seen whether the results of the regression analysis provide support for the hypothesized relationship.

Before delving into the results of the regression analysis, I conduct bivariate correlation tests to investigate the hypotheses presented earlier in this section. In order to assess the relationship between the different categories of CRSV and the dependent variable in the first and the second post-conflict elections I conduct a series of point-biserial correlations.

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<sup>24</sup>The correlation coefficient for the point-biserial correlation is approximately (-0.113).



As mentioned above, point biserial correlation is a special case of Pearson's correlation between a binary and continuous variable. Regarding H1, all different measurements of sporadic CRSV do not have a significant relationship with the dependent variable for the first post-conflict election<sup>25</sup>. However, the coefficient between systematic CRSV has a positive and significant effect at the 5% level across all sources for the first post-conflict election<sup>26</sup>. For the second post-conflict election, neither sporadic nor systematic levels of CRSV have an effect on the dependent variable<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, I also conduct Pearson's correlation test for hypothesis 2. The results propose a negative relationship between women's CSO participation and the dependent variable for both the first and second post-conflict elections<sup>28</sup>.

Moving on to the results of the analysis, Table 2 below presents the effects of sexual violence and women's civil society participation. The six models presented in the table examine their effect on the difference of women's legislative percentage in the first and second post-conflict election. Since the SVAC dataset provides me with three different sources accounting for the level of sexual violence, I also organise the elections per source: the first two models present the results using the Amnesty International sexual violence variable, the subsequent two use the U.S. State Department variable and the last two the Human Rights Watch variable. Before presenting in detail the models, it is important to note some patterns that are observed across elections. In the first post-conflict election

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<sup>25</sup>The correlation coefficient for the point-biserial correlation is: A.I. (0.046), U.S.S.D. (0.067) and H.R.W. (-0.033).

<sup>26</sup>The correlation coefficient for the point biserial correlation is: A.I. (0.328), U.S.S.D.(0.315) and H.R.W. (0.34).

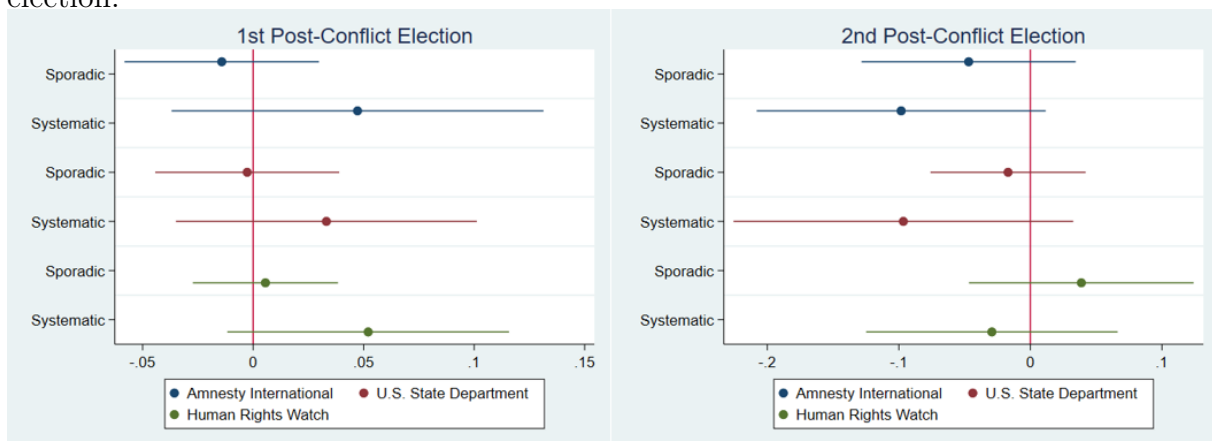
<sup>27</sup>The correlation coefficient for the point biserial correlation for the dependent variable and for sporadic CRSV is: A.I. (-0.004), U.S.S.D. (0.042) and H.R.W. (0.132). For the dependent variable and systematic CRSV the coefficients are: A.I. (-0.08), U.S.S.D. (-0.002) and H.R.W. (0.081)

<sup>28</sup>The results are (-0.096) and (-0.047) for the two elections respectively.

and across the different sources of sexual violence, neither sporadic nor systematic sexual violence are significant at all, therefore not providing support for the argument that CRSV has a positive effect on women's political participation post-conflict. Yet, since the sample used for the analysis presented here is small, the results of the regression should be received conservatively.

Throughout the models for the first post-conflict election, women's civil society participation exerts a positive and significant effect at the five percent level, while the coefficients themselves only change marginally. However, this effect does not carry on to the second post-conflict election. The results provide some initial support for the hypothesis that women's CSO presence has a positive effect on women's post-conflict legislative presence. However, since the sample used for the analysis presented in this chapter is small and the degrees of freedom low, the results of the regression analysis should be received conservatively.

Figure 1: Coefficient plots for different levels of CRSV in the first & second post-conflict election.



Another common pattern in first post-conflict elections is the negative and significant effect of high intensity on women's difference in legislative percentage. It appears, that the mechanism proposing that the higher the intensity of the conflict, the greater the societal

openings for women does not find support in the analysis presented here. This effect is not observed in the second election post-conflict as the variable loses its significance and the coefficient becomes positive. This may also indicate the short-lived societal and political openings on women's roles which stops after the end of conflict (Berry, 2018). Moving on, country-specific characteristics appear to exert an influence on women's post-conflict representation. Here, it is important to note that the sample used for the current analysis is small: (54) and (43) observations respectively. The results of such small samples call for vigilant attention, as they run the risk of over-parameterization, especially because the degrees of freedom are quite low and the independent variables more than a few. Therefore, the significance of these results is quite fragile.

Table 2: Linear regression for the first and second post-conflict elections.

Variables	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.
Sporadic CRSV	-0.0142	-0.0469				
(A.I.)	(0.0219)	(0.0403)				
Systematic CRSV	0.0472	-0.0982*				
(A.I.)	(0.0418)	(0.0543)				
Sporadic CRSV			-0.00269	-0.0169		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0207)	(0.0292)		
Systematic CRSV			0.0331	-0.0965		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0338)	(0.0639)		
Sporadic CRSV					0.00556	0.0387
(H.R.W.)					(0.0163)	(0.0422)
Systematic CRSV					0.0521	-0.0293
(H.R.W.)					(0.0317)	(0.0473)
WCSO	0.145**	-0.0349	0.151**	-0.0484	0.160**	-0.0675
	(0.0666)	(0.109)	(0.0695)	(0.110)	(0.0643)	(0.128)
UNPKO	0.0184	-0.0156	0.0245	-0.0652	0.0205	-0.0550
	(0.0218)	(0.0713)	(0.0238)	(0.0776)	(0.0222)	(0.0785)
High Intensity	-0.0363*	0.0163	-0.0422*	0.0339	-0.0455**	0.0222
	(0.0197)	(0.0624)	(0.0215)	(0.0624)	(0.0206)	(0.0696)
GDPpc(log)	0.0282**	-0.0177	0.0255*	-0.0227	0.0279*	-0.0255
	(0.0134)	(0.0347)	(0.0144)	(0.0357)	(0.0139)	(0.0384)
Fertility Rate	0.0252*	-0.0125	0.0263**	-0.0208	0.0272**	-0.0221
	(0.0134)	(0.0152)	(0.0131)	(0.0169)	(0.0116)	(0.0183)
Pre_conflict %	-0.588*	-0.852**	-0.570*	-0.913**	-0.563*	-0.886**
	(0.322)	(0.391)	(0.319)	(0.401)	(0.327)	(0.398)
Post2000	0.0755***	0.0818*	0.0713***	0.0765*	0.0655***	0.0657

The log of GDP per capita has a positive and significant effect in the first post-conflict election across all different sources, an effect that does not carry on to the second election. In a similar fashion, pre-conflict fertility rates have a positive and significant effect in the first election only. This does not come as a surprise as in many conflict environments women organised in civil society under their common identity as mothers, therefore ‘justifying’ their advanced social presence that can manifest in political capital. Hence, motherhood is an identity that is highlighted exceptionally, potentially due to patriarchal views of women’s roles. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ‘Mothers of Srebrenica’ have been active way past the end of war and their activism transcended national boundaries<sup>29</sup>. In Liberia, women approached fighters as mothers approaching their children, demanding that they would listen to their mothers and their advocacy for peace<sup>30</sup>. This effect also does not carry on to the second election.

Women’s pre-conflict legislative percentage has a negative and significant effect throughout all sources and both elections. The higher the percentage of women’s legislative presence before conflict, the lower the difference in the post-conflict elections. This can be interpreted in two ways. First, when women’s representation reaches a specific percentage of legislative presence it does not move beyond that, hence reaching a plateau. Second, in countries where sexual violence was prevalent during conflict, gender inequality manifests in different ways and is harder to alleviate its effects. Therefore, societies may have been averse towards women’s representation before the conflict has started. As expected, the diffusion of international norms in the post-2000 era exerts a positive and significant effect across both elections. Still, as mentioned earlier in this section, these results are a prod-

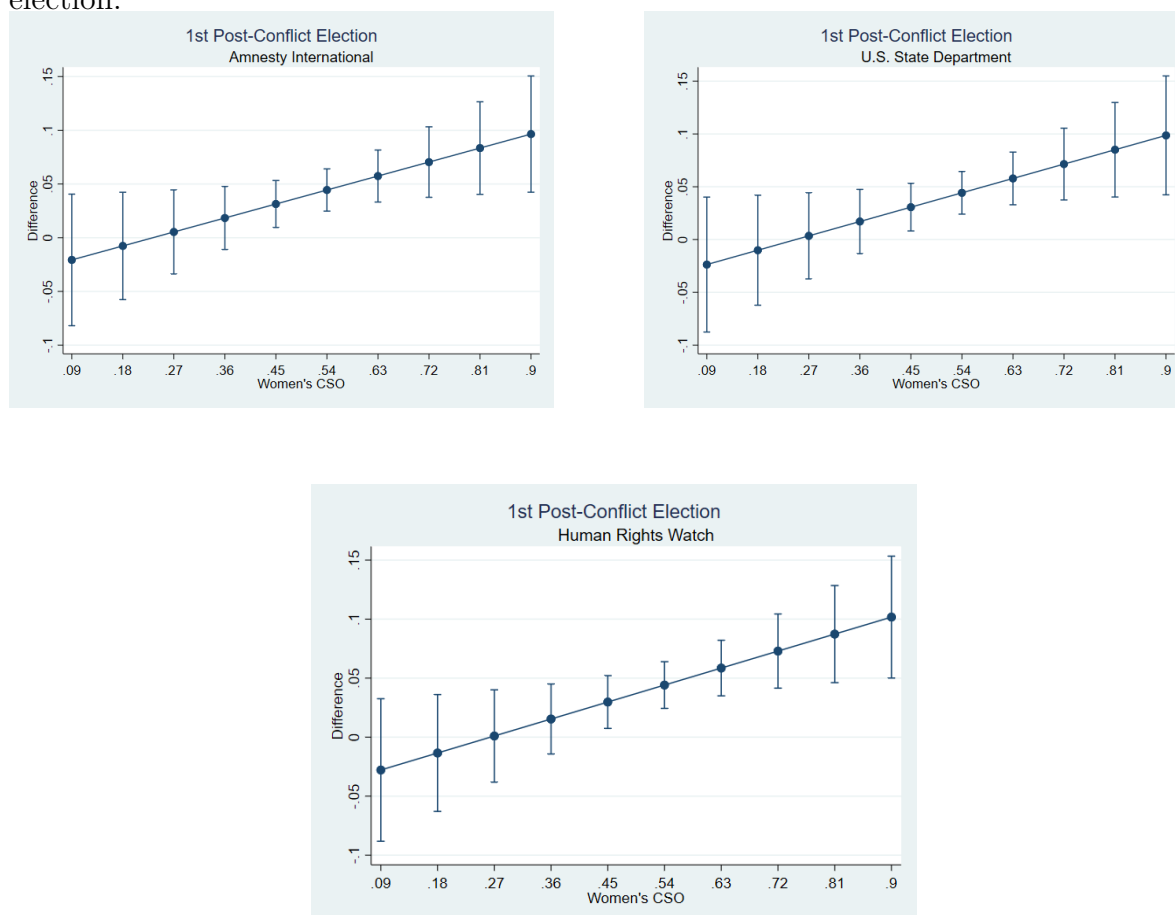
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<sup>29</sup>More information: <https://www.peaceinsight.org/ar/articles/mothers-of-srebrenica-the-fight-for-truth-and-justice/?location=western-balkans&theme=>

<sup>30</sup>More information:<http://peacewomen.org/content/analysis-motherhood-and-peace-liberia>

uct of sparse observations and the significance of the results may be disproportionately stated.

Figure 2: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women's representation in the first post-conflict election.

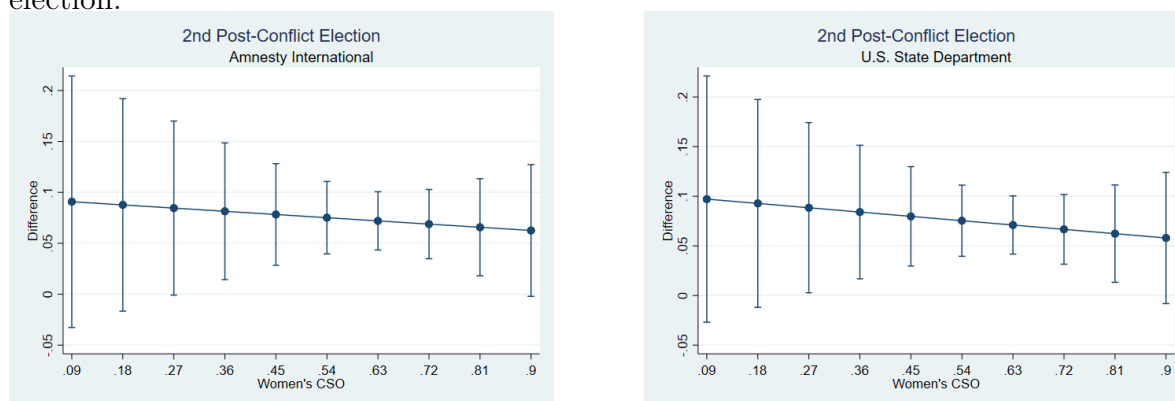


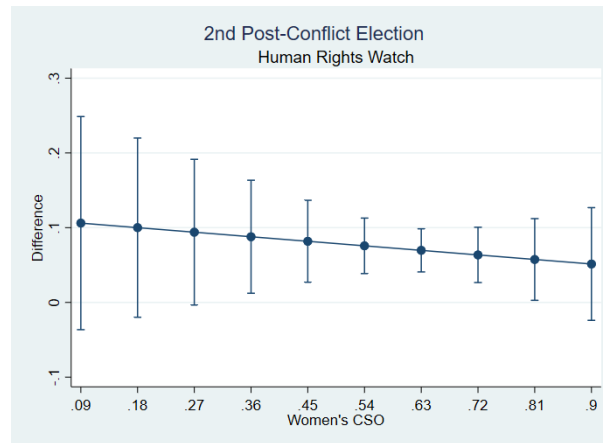
The differences in the effect of the prevalence of different levels of sexual violence in the first and second post-conflict elections are presented in Figure 1. The graphical depiction of the results suggests that even if the effect of sexual violence in the first post-conflict election is insignificant, higher levels of sexual violence appear to potentially have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. Whereas in the second post-conflict election, the effect appears negative and has a negative impact on women's representation. This might suggest that victimization has enduring legacies in gender norms in politics. Overall, the results of the analysis might indicate that in countries where sexual violence

was prevalent during conflict, views and perceptions about the appropriateness of women's roles are deeply embedded in institutionalised politics.

As many scholars have noted (Berry, 2018; Tripp, 2015), opportunities for leadership during conflict assist women in bettering their political standing in national parliaments in the immediate post-conflict phase. Indeed, women's agency appears to challenge the narrative of women's ineffectiveness in leadership positions or their general inability to perform in institutionalised politics (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Therefore, they achieve getting elected in higher numbers in the first post-conflict election. However, this effect does not appear to carry on to the second post-conflict election, where the difference in the legislative percentage compared to the pre-conflict era, is only marginally better. Figures 2 and 3 show the effect of women's mobilization on their post-conflict representation in the first and second post-conflict elections.

Figure 3: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women's representation in the second post-conflict election.





Recent literature has indicated that sexual violence may play an important role in women's mobilization in protest activity and civil society organizations (González and Traunmüller, 2020; Kreft, 2019). This implies that it is quite possible the effect of civil society participation observed in Table 2 to be mediated by the level of sexual violence. Statistical mediation analysis is a tool developed to assess whether the observed effect of an independent (IV) on a dependent variable (DV) is truly independent, or it is the product of another mediating variable (Mehmetoglu, 2018). Mediation analysis helps researchers to unpack complex relationships between the variables and determine whether the mediation is full or partial (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Since previous research has established a correlation between CRSV and women's mobilization it is important to know whether the significant effect of women's CSOs is essentially that of CRSV.

In order to tackle this issue, I employ two strategies: first, I conduct a mediation analysis for each different level of sexual violence from the three different sources. Then, I re-run the models presented in Table 2 and include an interaction term between the different levels of sexual violence (sporadic and systematic) and women's civil society participation variables. The mediation analysis results propose that the effect of women's civil society action is independent of the different levels of sexual violence (Appendix A)<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>While the traditional regression-based mediation analysis significantly underperforms structural equa-



The results of the interaction between sexual violence and women's CSOs are reported in Table 2 below.

The results in Table 3 are mixed on the effect of the interaction term between levels of sexual violence and women's civil society participation. For two out of three sources of CRSV, women's civil society action has a positive, significant and independent effect for the first post-conflict election, but not the second. Looking into the effect of sexual violence and their interactions with women's CSO presence, results are divided. When women's mobilization is paired with sporadic sexual violence, all three sources present a negative but insignificant effect for the first post-conflict election. However, for the second post-conflict election, two out of the three sources are positive but insignificant. When it comes to systematic sexual violence, the interaction with women's civil society mobilization has a positive and highly significant effect in the first post-conflict election for one of the sources (A.I.), while for the other two sources, the effects are negative and significant. For the second post-conflict election, the interactive term is negative and significant.

While these results are puzzling, the variation can be explained by the different values the dependent variable takes for each level of sexual violence<sup>32</sup> Another possible explanation for why the results of Table 3 are mixed may also be due to the small sample and tion modelling (Iacobucci et al., 2007), the models of the mediation analysis conducted here and presented in the Appendix use the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique and the medsem package in Stata 16.

<sup>32</sup>In the first post-conflict election, the dependent variable takes only positive values for systematic sexual violence in all three sources. In the second post-conflict election however, the dependent variable gets positive values for sporadic sexual violence, while for two out of three sources and systematic levels of sexual violence, the dependent variable takes only positive values. This indicates that advances in women's legislative percentage are not usually the result of women's mobilization due to sexual violence.

its inability to perform well with more independent variables (interactive terms). As the interactions between the main concepts are added, the model loses degrees of freedom. Paired with the fact that the observations used are limited, it may produce quite different results.

Table 3: Linear regression with interactive terms.

Variables	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.
Sporadic CRSV	0.0180	-0.0144				
(A.I.)	(0.0435)	(0.0847)				
Systematic CRSV	-0.519***	0.153				
(A.I.)	(0.133)	(2.273)				
Sporadic CRSV x WCSO	-0.0502	-0.0591				
(A.I.)	(0.0764)	(0.117)				
Systematic CRSV x WCSO	1.190***	-0.553				
(A.I.)	(0.295)	(5.004)				
Sporadic CRSV			0.0243	-0.0594		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0525)	(0.0850)		
Systematic CSRV			0.109	0.175		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0899)	(0.123)		
Sporadic CRSV x WCSO			-0.0470	0.0728		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0733)	(0.123)		
Systematic CRSV x WCSO			-0.137	-0.462*		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.149)	(0.238)		
Sporadic CRSV					0.0286	-0.00412
(H.R.W.)					(0.0298)	(0.0955)
Systematic CRSV					0.0216	0.166**
(H.R.W.)					(0.0891)	(0.0763)
Sporadic CSRV x WCSO					-0.0338	0.0781
(H.R.W.)					(0.0503)	(0.143)
Systematic CRSV x WCSO					0.0617	-0.418**
(H.R.W.)					(0.180)	(0.160)
WCSO	0.121	-0.0195	0.178**	-0.0800	0.163**	-0.0794
	(0.0746)	(0.124)	(0.0792)	(0.150)	(0.0713)	(0.144)
UNPKO	0.0144	0.0172	0.0100	0.0821	0.0200	0.0802

Another mechanism that has been proposed by the theory presented earlier in this paper is that women's CSOs promote women's willingness to acquire political space, which is assisted by the implementation of WPS agenda by a UNPKO. Therefore, there could be a joined effect of women's mobilization and their access to hierarchical structures through their engagement with UNPKOs that allows them to enter political spaces in post-conflict elections. Hence, I replicate the models introduced in Table 2 by including an interactive term between women's CSOs and the presence of a UNPKO during the first and the second post-conflict election. Across the different sources and different levels of CSRV, the interaction between women's CSOs and UNPKOs does not produce a significant effect. The remaining variables propose effects identical to that of Table 2 presented earlier in this section. Once more, the results in Table 4 should be taken sceptically due to the limited sample used to produce them.

Table 4: Linear regression with interactive terms.

Variables	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.	1st E.C.	2nd E.C.
Sporadic CRSV	-0.0137	-0.0483				
(A.I.)	(0.0221)	(0.0410)				
Systematic CRSV	0.0486	-0.106*				
(A.I.)	(0.0408)	(0.0584)				
Sporadic CRSV			-0.00194	-0.0152		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0205)	(0.0294)		
Systematic CRSV			0.0343	-0.0960		
(U.S.S.D.)			(0.0328)	(0.0640)		
Sporadic CRSV					0.00853	0.0387
(H.R.W.)					(0.0155)	(0.0428)
Systematic CRSV					0.0539*	-0.0291
(H.R.W.)					(0.0306)	(0.0486)
UNPKO	-0.0309	0.0569	-0.0231	-0.111	-0.0348	-0.0569
	(0.0612)	(0.135)	(0.0599)	(0.156)	(0.0621)	(0.124)
WCSO	0.138**	-0.0327	0.145**	-0.0496	0.152**	-0.0675
	(0.0656)	(0.111)	(0.0681)	(0.113)	(0.0633)	(0.130)
UNPKOxWCSO	0.0921	-0.112	0.0891	0.0723	0.103	0.00309
	(0.109)	(0.210)	(0.108)	(0.235)	(0.110)	(0.191)
Constant	-0.393**	0.323	-0.381*	0.403	-0.410**	0.442
	(0.187)	(0.384)	(0.202)	(0.405)	(0.180)	(0.441)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	54	43	54	43	54	43
R-squared	0.544	0.355	0.529	0.335	0.547	0.325

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

During further tests and models carried out during the initial analysis, I also included regime type in some of the models. The variable was coded from the Polity project dataset and accounted for all countries whose regime type was either an autocracy or an anocracy. That is because previous research has indicated that autocratic and anocratic regimes tend to have high numbers of women parliamentarians in order to increase their legitimacy (Bjarnegård and Donno, 2023; Donno and Kreft, 2019).

## 2.9 Conclusions

I started this paper by wanting to understand whether trauma and victimization have an effect on changes on women's representation in the aftermath of conflict. While during conflict women gained more visibility by entering spaces that were previously dominated by men, women's mobilization capitalised in political terms in the aftermath of conflict. As women have moved from the private to the public sphere through the openings that conflict has provided, they were able to advance their presence in national legislatures. However, this expansion is short-lived and manifests mainly in the first post-conflict election. Testing this argument in a sample of countries that sexual violence was prevalent during conflict, I find that sexual violence is not sufficient to advance women's legislative presence, even when an external actor is present (UNPKO). Yet, the results provide support for the argument that women's mobilization during conflict transfers and materializes in political representation post-conflict.

The above findings have important implications on policy making in post-conflict countries in many ways. First, even though existing data collections on the prevalence of sexual violence provide important insights in conflict dynamics and the behaviour of several actors in conflict, they cannot support the exceptional nature of CRSV as it is currently presented. Without having a 'baseline' on the levels of sexual violence before the conflict we cannot imply that CRSV is solely a conflict trajectory. Moreover, understanding CRSV outside a continuum of violence against women we risk fixating sexual violence outside the factors that allow it to manifest. This in turn constricts the responses of the international community only in these cases where CRSV has been used as a weapon of war (Mejer, 2016; True, 2012). Or in some cases, create a new 'economy' where agenda-setting becomes part of the donors' flow of aid in the country (Bano 2008).

By assigning post-traumatic growth to CRSV we may also miscommunicate evidence to the international community. Although CRSV may contribute to women's mobilization in some cases, it is not sufficient to affect changes on women's legislative presence. The mechanism is rather that in conflicts where CRSV is prevalent, women's mobilization in CSOs yields a positive effect on women's political representation post-conflict. That effect is also independent of the influence of external actors.

A possible limitation of the analysis presented in this paper may be the conceptualization of one of the main concepts presented in the theory. In this paper, I measure women's mobilization through their participation in CSO organizations. This operationalization however does not directly measure women's mobilization during conflict but rather the ability they have to participate in societal functions. This variable mostly captures the range of opportunities women have outside their domestic roles. However, it has its limitations. For example, it does not capture the general openness of a society towards women's leadership. That would be best measured by a variable that captures general attitudes and beliefs the members of a society have towards women's mobilization and political participation.

Since 2000 and the beginning of the WPS agenda, the international community has focused on promoting gender equality, especially in post-conflict contexts. Given that the UN SC is more active in conflicts with prevalent CRSV, it is possible that international actors may misread social dynamics and promote political gender equality in post-conflict contexts where women are socially invisible, expanding their vulnerability in yet another arena (Kishi and Olsson, 2019). However, by moving our attention towards women organizations that emerge during conflict and support these horizontal networks, IOs and INGOs have the potential to support local ownership and achieve long lasting peace. In



Liberia for example, where women blocked earlier drafts of the peace agreements they did not approve and forced armed actors to reach a peace agreement that included many provisions addressing women's rights and broader social issues, women's wartime networks are still existing. One of the most prominent examples is the 'Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET)' which was formally formed during the 2003 Accra peace talks and is still operating, promoting peaceful co-existing above ethnic or political differences, the promotion of women's rights, peace and civic education, and micro credit schemes and the formation of cooperatives. Hence, women's networks are an important social capital that exists above ethnic and political lines and can bridge the trust gap towards political actors. This paper wants to reiterate that despite the lack of systematic data on women's experiences during conflict and the numerous discriminatory practices women in politics face, their resilience and transformation to social leaders, has prompted an influx of women in national legislatures.

### 3 Civil War & Women's Post-Conflict Representation: What are the Connections?

#### Abstract

Yearly data released by the Inter-Parliamentary Union propose that countries emerging from civil wars achieve relatively high numbers of women parliamentarians. Statistical evidence and recent literature both suggest that civil wars have a positive impact on women's livelihood in the aftermath of conflict and more specifically on their post-conflict descriptive representation. However, the mechanisms that drive this change remain unclear. In this paper I argue that civil wars are a destructive opportunity that enforce changes on social capital, gender norms and state institutions that subsequently grant women access to higher level political office. During conflict women acquire leadership positions in social spaces that were previously closed to them, such as civil society and rebel groups. Consequently, they reconfigure gender and social relations. While civil war deconstructs previous political networks and elites, it becomes easier for women to transfer this capacity in the post-conflict era and manifest it in higher presence in national parliaments. The results indicate that women's participation in civil society and proportional representation systems have a positive and independent effect on women's post-conflict representation, while female combatants do not exert any effect, *ceteris paribus*.

#### 3.1 Introduction

Are countries emerging from civil strife more gender equal and therefore elect more women in their national parliaments? As of January 2022, the global average of women in parliaments and lower chambers around the world is around 26 percent. In the meantime,

in countries like South Africa, Mozambique and Rwanda, women occupy more than 40 percent of the parliamentary seats. How did these countries achieve electing such high numbers of women? In this paper I argue that conflict forces a reconfiguration of social relationships and social capital, transforming women into political actors. Women's roles in frontline fighting and civil society organizations offer women the ability to acquire leadership skills and change the stereotypical roles reserved for them, hence provoke an influx of highly qualified women in politics. At the same time, violence also shakes up previous political bonds and breaks down elite networks that dominate the political arena, opening up the space for new social actors to emerge. Therefore, women achieve electoral successes in post-conflict elections, increasing their political presence.

Women's status in a society is of great importance in studies of conflict and peace as it can influence the possibility of conflict occurrence, conflict resolution and successful post-conflict reconstruction. Caprioli (2003, 2005) was the first to indicate that there is a connection between gender norms and hierarchies, and the occurrence of violence. Since then, more studies have confirmed that increased female representation in national parliaments and lower chambers decreases the possibility of violence, both internally and externally (Dahlum and Wig, 2020; Melander, 2005). However, women's socio-political and economic status is important after the experience of a civil conflict as well. Gizelis (2009, 2011) shows how the success of post-conflict reconstruction under the auspices of the UN is conditioned upon women's higher socio-economic status and legislative representation. Further research corroborates the finding of the effect of female parliamentarians on the durability of peace (Demeritt et al., 2014), and especially after a negotiated settlement (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017).

The above-mentioned studies indicate that women's status plays a crucial role in

studies of conflict and peace. Notably, conflict provokes societal and political changes that allow women to acquire greater presence in these domains. Quantitative research has explained these changes on women's political representation by focusing on top-down institutional explanations such as the adoption of quotas or reserved seats, the ideological background of the ruling political party or coalition, and the level of democratisation within the country. While these explanations offer a critical insight, they do not provide information on the reasons women choose to run for an electoral cycle or get elected in political positions. A substantial amount of country-case studies have proposed a direct link between women's mobilisation during conflict and their post-conflict political status, a theoretical argument that remains statistically untested. In this paper I bring together both top-down institutional changes and bottom-up normative changes that allow women to get elected and achieve changes on their legislative presence (compared to their pre-conflict status).

In this paper, I examine the changes on women's legislative percentages in national legislatures in the short, medium and long term. I do so by estimating the change between pre and post-conflict legislative percentages in the first three post-conflict elections. Women's percentage in parliaments does not usually change on a yearly basis. Focusing in electoral years allows me, by controlling for other institutional factors, to review whether the electorate collectively chose to vote female candidates and further their political participation.

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the growing literature that links civil war onset and women's post-conflict representation by examining the transformative force of civil wars on gender identities and state institutions. The aim of this paper functions in three levels: first, by contributing to the literature on the connections between the social

processes of civil war onset and women's post-conflict representation by conducting a large statistical analysis; second, by focusing on the roles that women acquire during conflict and how they transfer and manifest to the post-conflict era; third by bridging the gap between three large scholarly fields: that of gender, civil wars and political participation.

I proceed in the next sections by reviewing relevant literature on the explanations on changes on women's post-conflict representation. Moving on, I analyse my theory in two parts. The first part focuses on women's mobilization during conflict and the changes it brings on gender identities and perceptions about women's roles. I then proceed in the second part by suggesting that civil war offers a breakthrough opportunity for women to transfer their agency in the post-conflict era by provoking institutional changes in political institutions. I continue by introducing the conceptual framework of this paper, the research design I employ and then presenting the results of my analysis. The statistical evidence in this paper propose that women as female combatants do not have an effect on the electorates' choice to vote for women. Furthermore, women's mobilisation in civil society appear to exert a small and significant effect, however only in the first post-conflict election. Proportional representation systems and quotas have a positive and independent effect, *ceteris paribus*.

### **3.2 Women's Representation in Post-Conflict Settings**

Emanating from the perspective of civil war as a critical juncture that deconstructs pre-war societal and political structures that allows women to acquire greater presence in these domains, recent research has proposed that wartime dynamics weaken prewar patriarchal structures and create a window of opportunity for women to advance their status post-conflict. Attempting to uncover the factors that advance women's political presence in countries outside of the industrialized West, Hughes (2009) suggests that long and

large scale civil wars that challenge the political system or target the alteration of government composition have the best prospects creating opportunities for women to gain parliamentary seats. Her research proposes that civil wars have a large and positive impact on women's representation above what can be explained by electoral institutions and democratization alone. More recently, Gurses et al. (2020) proposed that civil war intensity and duration allow for these transformations to take place. Their analysis finds that indeed, civil war is linked to women's advancements in terms of social and political rights. Following this line of thought, Webster et al. (2019) propose that pre-war militarization processes and war onset offer opportunities for women to acquire more social space and leadership roles that manifest in gains on women's empowerment in the short and medium term after the termination of the conflict.

Various studies looking into what promotes women's greater political participation globally have concluded that institutional changes are mainly responsible for advancing women's legislative numbers (Barnes, 2012; Caul, 1999; Chen et al., 2010; Barnes and Holman, 2020; O'Brien et al., 2012; Krook, 2003, 2005, 2007; ?; Krook et al., 2009; Krook and Schwindt-Bayer, 2013; Lovenduski and Hills, 1981; Lovenduski and Norris, 1993; Matland, 1998; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, 2005; Norris, 2006; O'brien and Rickne, 2016; Paxton et al., 2010; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Tremblay, 1998). Therefore, many scholars have examined if this effect applies in post-conflict societies as well and find that indeed quotas are an important institutional design that advances women's legislative numbers (Guariso et al., 2017).

Another avenue that research has indicated being at hand introduces post-traumatic growth as a mechanism. According to this process, wartime violence has a positive effect on individuals that are found to exhibit higher levels of political activation and partici-

pation in civil society organizations (Koos, 2018). Conducive with this mechanism is the study of Peru where civil war violence appeared to have a significant impact on women's engagement in local politics. More specifically, the adoption of quotas has been more successful in municipalities that were exposed to violent insurgency than in those that remained unaffected by the civil war (García-Ponce, 2017). Interestingly enough, this pattern of political activation is consistent among the female but not male population. The analysis hints of two mutual processes happening simultaneously. On the one hand, women participated more in local politics and on the other hand, institutional changes allowed them to transfer their agency in the post-conflict era and materialize in terms of political representation. In Colombia, sexual violence mobilized women politically advancing their demands towards greater representation in politics, to which the state responded by adopting quotas (Agerberg and Kreft, 2020).

Another mechanism that leads to the adoption of quotas is the influence of external actors. Peace agreements are one pathway that allows for international norms advocating for women's inclusion in domestic politics to diffuse nationally and materialise in quotas or reserved seats. (Anderson and Swiss, 2014) find that peace agreements and their accords link women's rights and the transition from war to peace and affect post-conflict political dynamics. Bush (2011) introduces another international actor that promotes women's greater inclusion. She theorises that the presence of a peace operation and its support to political liberalisation promote the adoption of quotas indirectly by encouraging countries, especially those dependent on foreign aid, to signal their commitment to democracy.

Apart from quotas, other institutional changes provoked by the war may also assist women's equal political participation. Examining the high numbers of women in sub-Saharan African parliaments, Hughes and Tripp (2015) suggest that except for quotas,

proportional representation systems and further democratisation processes are amongst other dominant explanations. Their findings show that the advancement of women's legislative numbers materializes only after 2000, due to mainly the institutionalisation of international norms advocating for women's greater political inclusion, namely the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Hughes (2007) previous research had also examined what drives women's representation in regimes with limited political rights and civil liberties. She finds that one broad mechanism is elite turnover, either through elections or other legislative interruptions.

Although these studies have successfully shed light on the factors that promote women's greater inclusion in domestic politics in the post-conflict era, there is another avenue that has not been examined yet. Attempting to fill this gap, in the next sections I theorize how civil wars enforce changes in social and political capital, and present a moment of opportunity for women to increase their presence in national parliaments in the post-conflict era. Women's mobilization during conflict is dependent on the opportunity that war creates to increase their presence in civil society organizations and rebel groups. In the aftermath of conflict, this opportunity also extends to political institutions, where women have the opportunity to increase their presence in national parliaments.

### **3.3 Women's Mobilization During Conflict**

Women's mobilisation during conflict is evident in a variety of different of spaces. In this paper, I categorise women's mobilization during conflict in two different groups: combatants<sup>33</sup> and civil society groups. Beginning with civic groups and professional networks,

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<sup>33</sup>Although women's roles in rebel groups are multifaceted and focus in non-combat activities, in this paper I choose to focus on their roles as active fighters.



during both World Wars<sup>34</sup>. In many different contexts, the role of breadwinner and “head of the household” is traditionally reserved for a male. However, during war due to the forced conscription of male citizens, a gap is created. During that time, women are forced to take upon more responsibilities. Although these responsibilities are focused on an individual level, women’s agency does not only concentrate on household leadership but also on community services, covering a wider part of the vulnerable population not participating in the warfare.

For example, in El Salvador, women founded organizations advocating for the release of political prisoners and in Liberia the trading roles that women acquired during the civil war allowed them to maintain lines of communication and move relatively free across the country (Gizelis, 2011; Viterna, 2013). In Rwanda, the threatening conditions created by the genocide and civil war initiated a grassroots mobilization process among women during which they founded and joined community organizations (Berry, 2015). In Syria and in Bosnia and Herzegovina women thrust in leadership positions of running health centres, organizing schools and distributing food and medicine (Asaf, 2017). In Syria women negotiated local ceasefires.

Although war making has been fought primarily from men and women’s involvement in national forces was based upon demands for additional (para)military personnel, rebel groups in civil wars specifically targeted the recruitment of women in fighting roles. Consequently, women constituted a significant percentage of a rebel group’s force (Gold-

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<sup>34</sup>After these wars though, women were sent back to their domestic lives, as their roles as principal income generators and soldiers was seen as a necessity in times of emergency or due to prevailing gender norms (Acemoglu et al., 2004; Shaw, 1991) women were massively incorporated in the workforce and served both as supportive military personnel and frontline fighters (Noakes, 2006; Shatnawi and Fishback, 2018)

stein Joshua, 2001; Segal, 1995; Thomas and Wood, 2018). While universally there is not a single profile of female combatants, the motives to participate in armed rebellion greatly vary (Darden et al., 2019; Eggert, 2018; Viterna, 2006). For instance, women have participated in armed groups even when these groups were hostile towards the female population or engaged in violence against women.

The mobilization of individuals in non-state armed groups is context specific. In the micro-individual level feelings are found to be great motivators for people's involvement in social movements and armed rebellion. Feelings of isolation and disaffection drove for instance western women to migrate and become part of ISIS (Loken and Zelenz, 2018). In El Salvador fear, displacement and loss prompted women to form an alliance with FMLN in order to stay alive (Viterna, 2013). Women may also decide to take on arms to end colonial rule or to participate in wars of liberation, freedom from oppression and social justice (Bennett et al., 1995; Henshaw, 2016; Reardon, 1993). For instance, anti-state nationalisms of liberation appear to attract greater involvement by women in contrast to 'state nationalisms' and these conflicts often have high numbers of female combatants (Alison, 2009).

On the macro-group level, rebel groups may employ women in their military structure for a variety of reasons. For instance, Thomas and Wood (2018) find that more than half of rebel groups include women in their structure and more than one third of them employ as female combatants. Thomas and Bond (2015) find that the size of the group, the recruitment platforms and tactics of recruitment are more closely related to women's participation in violent political groups. In Colombia, Sanín and Carranza Franco (2017) find that when FARC adopted a highly hierarchical, self-contained and militaristic organizational model, it simultaneously targeted the massive recruitment of women in combat

roles. Israelsen (2018) on the other hand finds that conflict intensity, gender inclusive ideology and gender inclusive policies and the decision to recruit female combatants is conditioned by the groups' conflict phase.

Another reason why groups may target recruiting women is due to the high mortality levels of their male recruits (Wood, 2019). In El Salvador, FMLN needed women guerrillas because of the shortage of personnel (Viterna, 2013) and in Sri Lanka women were recruited as fighters due to an insufficiency of male combatants (Alison, 2009). The political ideology of the rebel group may also be a significant factor. Wood and Thomas (2017) find that Marxist-oriented and leftist ideologies appear to increase the presence of female fighters in a group, whereas Islamist ideologies seem to exert the opposite effect, which highlights the importance of the ideology of the group. In contrast with that finding, Marks (2017) identifies a considerable overlap between groups that have no clear ideological platform, groups that forcibly conscript and groups with female members. Furthermore, Thomas and Wood (2018) find that women's economic, social and political status prior to the conflict influences<sup>30</sup> group's decision to employ women in combat roles.

### **3.4 Women's Agency & Institutional Change**

As Yadav (2016, 2021), the examination of institutional factors (top to bottom approach) on women's representation irrespectively of the transformation of social roles and processes (bottom-up approach), ignores the reality observed in post-conflict societies and the very nature of civil wars specifically. Although more inclusive institutions and state structures

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<sup>30</sup>Female combatants do not have a necessarily pacifying effect on rebel group's behaviour. When it comes to the assumption that female combatants may have a negative effect on sexual violence employed by the rebel group, research does not support that argument. Female combatants are found to perpetrate acts of sexual violence during conflict alongside their male peers (Cohen, 2013; Loken and Zelenz, 2018)

ensure equality of representation, the supply side (candidates) is also of great importance. Stable societies are usually characterized by an institutional solidification that hinders their development and make states reluctant to change (Olson, 1982). As state institutions develop undisrupted over time the elites that dominate them are harder to permeate and a certain elite group enjoy their benefits. Focusing particularly on political institutions, this solidification becomes more evident as political and administrative elites dominate the political sphere and continue suppressing already excluded societal groups (Eisner, 2010; Tilly, 1975).

However, a powerful shock of a civil war tends to destroy societal structures, traditional networks and special interest organizations that monopolize state resources and systematically exclude “outsiders” from entering state structure. War demolishes these interest groups and structures, giving the opportunity for new social actors to emerge. According to Putnam (1976), the higher the degree of elite turnover, the greater the number of people that have the channel and the opportunity to enter formal political institutions<sup>35</sup>. The breakdown of social fabric enforces a shuffle of traditional political actors, resulting in excluded groups to enter social and political spaces that were previously dominated by traditional political actors.

Current research examining women’s lives and rights during conflict and in the aftermath of it, focuses on women’s vulnerability. War has undoubtedly a negative effect on women’s health (Ormhaug et al., 2009), life expectancy (Plümper and Neumayer,

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<sup>35</sup>Pitkin (1967) idea on political representation states that representation appears to be conditioned on existing practices and application of representation. In this sense, society’s understanding of representation is intimately tied to the way people are being represented. Since the social context in which the electorate operates changes and in addition to the emergence of new social forces during civil war, it would be expected for this change to be mirrored in the political arena as well.

2006) and maternal mortality rates (Urdal and Che, 2013). However, organized violence, apart from targeting and victimizing women, offered opportunities which allowed them to function outside positions that traditional gender norms usually dictate, and increase their public presence (Andrabi, 2019; Berry, 2017; Handrahan, 2004; Manchanda, 2005; Pankhurst, 2002; Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002; Wagha, 2014). Consequently, these normative changes on perceptions towards the appropriateness of women's roles change through the new division of labour. Civil conflict disrupts gender norms, hierarchies and relationships which generally assume women's natural benevolence and a perceived incongruity between the female gender and decision-making positions in political, military, societal and economic structures (Bauer et al., 2016; Barnes and O'Brien, 2018; Caprioli, 2000; ?; Goldstein Joshua, 2001; Sjoberg, 2016).

Since gender is performative, women's mobilization during conflict challenges the traditional paradigm of women as victims. This mobilization incites an appropriation of feminine values or women's presence in traditionally masculine roles. This is in fact a re-conceptualization of traditional gender identities that introduce women as relevant societal and political actors and propose women's agency in various formal settings (Coulter et al., 2008; Gowrinathan, 2021; Wagha, 2014; Wood, 2008). Women's participation in frontline fighting deconstructs patriarchal structure in two levels: first, inside the rebel group's hierarchy by occupying traditionally "masculine" roles than being just bush wives<sup>36</sup>, camp

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<sup>36</sup>Connell (1987) observes that the practice of labour (organization of housework, childcare, paid and unpaid, men's jobs, women's jobs, discrimination in promotion, unequal wages) and the practice of power through the hierarchy of institutions, domestic authority, sexual regulation and surveillance and how their crossing creates gender norms that create gender hierarchies in society. These gender hierarchies are usually also reflected and mimicked by the rebel group. Moreover, during conflict female fighters attract large attention because when women act aggressively such behavior stands out because it opposes the dominant narrative of women as spoils of war and victims in need of protection (Barth, 2002; Coulter

followers, cooks and sex slaves. Second, against the gendered hierarchies embedded in state institutions that exclude them from formal decision making (Shekhawat, 2015). New social norms emerge where women's presence outside of the private sphere is normalized and widely accepted (Kaufman and Williams, 2010; KC, 2019).

Since the supply of potential candidates is shifting, I believe that electoral institutions will be more successful in electing more women in national parliaments. I propose that civil wars have the potential to create a window of opportunity for women to transfer their advanced agency during conflict and materialize it in post-conflict political gains due to the institutional deconstruction and reformulation of the state (Kampwirth, 2014). Therefore, I expect that

**Hypothesis (H1):** Higher mobilization by women during conflict has a positive effect on women's post-conflict representation.

**Hypothesis (H2):** Higher levels of female combatants in rebel groups during conflict have a positive effect on women's post-conflict representation.

### 3.5 Methodology & Research Design

#### *Research Design*

The results of the analysis conducted in this paper are produced through ordinary least squares (OLS) models with clustered standard errors on the country level. The dependent variable is the difference between women's pre and post-conflict legislative percentages in et al., 2008). Women that oppose female stereotypes in war are often regarded as deviant or unnatural and female fighters both challenge and confuse the gender stereotypes of "woman the victim" and "man the perpetrator" on multiple levels (Coulter et al., 2008).

election years. The choice of legislative percentages through elections only is strategic for two reasons. First, elections are the main tool through which it can be examined if the proposed agency of women is accepted from the electorate. In this way, elections indicate if the alteration of gender norms regarding women's position in a society are accepted and sustained, holding constant other institutional factors. Although the voting choice for a specific candidate is individual, the legislators are elected from the sum of individual responses through elections as a group, the electorate. Second, women's legislative percentages are unlikely to change through different means. Although countries adopt different institutional designs and unforeseen circumstances may force legislators to be removed and substituted in the national parliament, women's legislative presence changes through elections for the vast majority of the sample<sup>37</sup>.

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable I operationalise for my analysis is the difference in women's legislative presence post-conflict and pre-conflict. Women's legislative presence a year before the conflict started is subtracted from the post-conflict legislative percentage, they achieved in an election year. The variable is labelled difference and takes the functional form:

$$difference = percentage_{ij} - percentage_{ij}$$

where (i) is the year of the election and (j) the country.

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<sup>37</sup>In the sample, there is only one country that follows this pattern. Suriname held its first national parliamentary election 10 years after the end of the conflict. During this decade, the MPs were selected through a proportional formula according to the size of the municipality. For the purpose of this paper, Suriname is excluded from the sample.

In my analysis I am looking into the differences in the first three post-conflict elections. The variable labelled ‘difference’ groups the difference in women’s legislative percentage from the first three post conflict elections in one variable that consists of 222 observations (91 first, 78 second and 53 third). Below, are the summary statistics for the different dependent variables. Interestingly enough, in all three post-conflict elections the difference is positive.

Table 5: Summary statistics of the dependent variable.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Difference	222	.101	.091	0	.563
First	91	.092	.088	0	.488
Second	78	.102	.092	0	.563
Third	53	.116	.094	0	.36

### *Independent Variable*

The theoretical argument presented in this paper advocates for effect of women’s mobilization during conflict to influence their post-conflict representation. I do so by operationalising two different variables: women’s civil society participation and the presence of female combatants in rebel groups during conflict. For women’s participation in CSOs, I employ Women’s Civil Society Participation Index from Varieties of Democracy (Coppedge et al., 2019). The index answers the question “Do women have the ability to express themselves and to form and participate in groups?” and is understood to include open discussion of political issues, participation in civil society organizations and representation in the ranks of journalists. For the present analysis the value of the variable is the mean during active



conflict years. The variable consists of 222 observations with a mean of (.536), standard deviation of (.213), minimum value (.084) and maximum value (.392).

To account for the presence of female combatants, I use the latest version of Women in Armed Rebellion dataset by (Thomas and Wood, 2018). The dataset includes binary and categorical indicators accounting for female combatants. In order to establish stronger relationships between my independent and dependent variable I use the stricter binary and categorical variables that only include female combatants and do not account for women associated with armed groups in other roles such as bush wives, cooks and support personnel. These variables also exclude the presence of women as suicide bombers, mainly because they do not undergo the same training and their presence in rebel group hierarchy is short lived (Thomas and Wood, 2018)<sup>38</sup>. In my analysis I only include rebel groups that were active only in civil wars and then collapse it to a country-year level. The summary statistics for the binary and categorical indicators are found below.

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<sup>38</sup>In the Appendix, I use the variables that take female suicide bombers into account for robustness checks.

Table 6: Summary statistics of female combatants variables.

Variable	Value	Frequency	Percent
FC (binary)	0	172	77.48
	1	50	22.52
FC Category 1	0	204	91.89
	1	18	8.11
FC Category 2	0	190	85.89
	1	32	14.41
FC Category 3	0	216	97.3
	1	6	2.7

Analysing the institutional factors that have the potential to foster women's representation, I account for the presence of a proportional representation system or the presence of legislative gender quotas. I construct a binary variable that accounts for the presence of a proportional representation system being adopted that election year. The binary variable accounts for any type of proportional representation system<sup>39</sup> or a mixed system. I also exploit the presence of quotas as an alternative institutional design that advocates for women's election in national legislatures. Although quotas and reserved seats for women are a specific gendered practice, they also tend to polarise women's election and in the medium and long term hinder their advancements in the political sphere. PR systems are less polarised and a more general institutional framework which allows societies to

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<sup>39</sup>In a report published in 2007 comparing the systems that have the best prospects for advancing women's representation, the authors find that generally, PR systems without quotas are the systems that tend to provide the most favourable conditions for the election of women (Laserud and Taphorn, 2007).

diversify their representatives. PR system was present in (74) elections while quotas were in place in (38) post-conflict elections.

### *Control Variables*

The models also control for other confounders. The first set of control variables included in the models are related to conflict characteristics and dynamics. Following recent literature (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021; Gurses et al., 2020), high intensity of the conflict has the potential to create larger openings in terms of social capital and allow women to advance their presence in the society. Moreover, higher intensity of the conflict has the potential to provoke greater elite turnovers and open up the political space for women to conquer. To measure high intensity, I utilise data from UCDP (Kreutz, 2010) and construct a binary variable that takes the value (1) if the intensity of the conflict is high and (0) otherwise. I also control for the post 2000 period where a greater incorporation of gender perspective has been part of international involvement in post-conflict societies and accounts for the diffusion of international norms advocating for greater political gender equality.

The termination of a civil conflict often contributes to an increase on female representation and the way a civil war was terminated has a potential impact on women's representation in the post-conflict era. In this paper I control for rebel victory and peace agreements, as those ways of conflict termination have the best prospects of advancing women's legislative presence. In the case of rebel victory, rebels that have achieved victory over state forces have incentives to promote greater participation of women and differentiate themselves from the oppressive opponent and the exclusionary patriarchal political practices of the state. Termination by peace agreement offers the best prospects advancing women's legislative representation and this advancement follows from changes

in post-conflict state's political institutions combined with efforts by international actors to increase women's presence in formal politics (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021; Hughes, 2009; Hughes and Tripp, 2015; Tripp, 2015; Reid, 2021).

The second set of control variables is compiled of societal and institutional level characteristics that may affect women's representation. Decolonization is found to leave important legacies in post-colonial countries regarding institutional design and economic and political ties with the former colonized countries. Women are more likely to be included as combatants in liberation movements. Hence, in my models, I control whether the state was under former colonial rule or not. The models also control for the log of GDP per capita, as economic growth may also affect women's representation (Duflo, 2012). Lastly, I also account for country specific trends and women's status prior to conflict by controlling for women's pre-conflict legislative percentage, a year before the conflict started. The summary statistics of the control variables are presented in the table below.

Table 7: Summary statistics of control variables.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
GDPpc(log)	222	8.212	.921	5.594	10.538
Pre-conflict %	222	.05	.06	0	.344

Table 8: Summary statistics of control variables.

Variable	Value	Frequency	Percent
High Intensity	0	194	87.39
	1	28	12.61
Rebel Victory	0	198	89.19
	1	24	10.81
Peace Agreement	0	185	83.33
	1	37	16.67
Former Colony	0	125	56.31
	1	97	43.69
Post2000	0	138	62.16
	1	84	37.84

### 3.6 Results

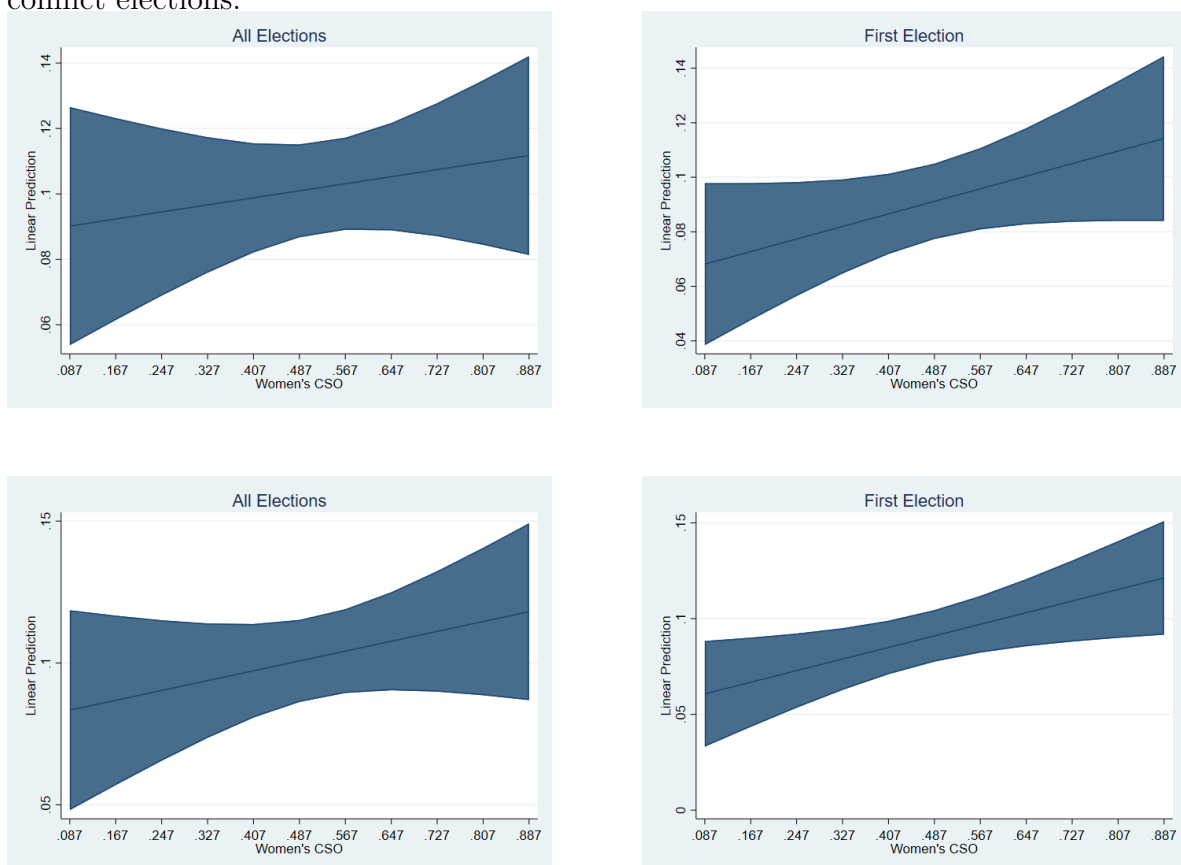
Moving on to the results of the analysis, Table 9 below operationalizes the binary variable accounting for female combatants. The table is organized as follows: the first two models use proportional representation system as institutional change and the last two quotas. Moreover, Models 1 and 3 group all the elections together in one variable in order to find any observable patterns, whereas models 2 and 4 show the results of the regression analysis for the first post-conflict election respectively. Looking into the effect of female combatants, the results do not find an effect on the dependent variable, neither for all elections nor for the first post-conflict election. Further, women's CSO participation appears to only have a small and significant effect in the first post-conflict election which is rather fragile. Proportional representation system exerts a positive and significant effect at the 5% level in the model accounting for all elections but not for the first election. Quotas, yield positive and significant effect at the same level for both models on all three elections and the first election specifically.

Looking into the control variables included in the models, rebel victories have a consistently negative and significant effect on women's representation post-conflict for all models. It would be expected that in the case of rebel victory, a change in the political status quo could potentially assist women in advancing politically. However, rebel victories, even when gender is an element of the conflict, it does not have a positive effect. Moreover, women's pre-conflict legislative percentage has a positive effect on changes in women's representation in post-conflict elections across all models. Another pattern across all models is that changes in women's representation are also more prominent in the post-2000 era, indicating the possibility of an effect from international norms advocating for women's political empowerment. It is also worth mentioning that in the alternative

models tested conflict type (incompatibility) was used in the models. Yet, neither governmental nor territorial conflict appeared to have any effect on the dependent variable.

Overall, the results of Table 9 indicate that the results do not provide support for the hypotheses proposed in the theory section of this chapter. There is some support for hypothesis 1, however, it is only present in the first post-conflict election. It appears that women's mobilization is penalised when it concerns participation in traditionally masculine positions. Nevertheless, when women occupy social space and communal service roles, they may be rewarded in terms of political representation. Figure 4 presents the marginal effects of women's CSO participation for the models in Table 9.

Figure 4: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women's representation in the first three post-conflict elections.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels

Table 9: OLS Regression for the first three post-conflict elections.

Variables	All elections	1st Election	All Elections	1st Election
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
FC (binary)	0.00450 (0.0172)	-0.000945 (0.0169)	0.0227 (0.0176)	0.00973 (0.0173)
WCSO	0.0270 (0.0381)	0.0576* (0.0333)	0.0434 (0.0376)	0.0757** (0.0317)
PR System	0.0487** (0.0202)	0.0360 (0.0221)		
Quota			0.0545** (0.0206)	0.0959*** (0.0331)
High Intensity	-0.0185 (0.0269)	-0.0369 (0.0256)	-0.0257 (0.0256)	-0.0341* (0.0199)
Rebel Victory	-0.0684*** (0.0201)	-0.0682*** (0.0243)	-0.0454** (0.0178)	-0.0447** (0.0197)
Peace Agreement	0.00860 (0.0217)	0.00686 (0.0200)	0.0162 (0.0238)	-8.13e-05 (0.0210)
GDPpc(log)	-0.00278 (0.00843)	-0.0126 (0.00991)	-0.00160 (0.00961)	-0.0107 (0.00931)
Former Colony	0.0230 (0.0147)	0.0246 (0.0156)	0.0175 (0.0139)	0.0228 (0.0142)
Pre-conflict%	0.337* (0.169)	0.417** (0.192)	0.310** (0.151)	0.327** (0.156)
Post2000	0.0682*** (0.0123)	0.0704*** (0.0170)	0.0534*** (0.0106)	0.0454*** (0.0134)
Constant	0.0489 (0.0669)	0.108 (0.0799)	0.0402 (0.0778)	0.0896 (0.0758)
Observations	222	91	222	91
R-squared	0.374	0.481	0.364	0.560

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations and for the first post-conflict elections using PR system and quotas respectively.

Moving on, I replicate the models of Table 9 but this time including the different levels of women's participation in rebel groups, rather than the binary variable. The results in Table 10 are rather similar to Table 9. More specifically, out of the different levels of female combatants, only the second category has a small effect on women's representation in all elections and the first post-conflict election (Models 3 and 4). Women's CSO participation exerts a positive and significant effect only at the 10% level and only in the first post-conflict election. Proportional representation systems and quotas have a positive and significant effect on all elections. In a similar fashion, rebel victory yields a negative and highly significant effect on women's representation post-conflict. In addition, women's pre-conflict legislative percentage has some effect on the dependent variable, whereas advancement in women's political representation advanced mostly after 2000 due to international norms promoting women's participation.

Table 10: OLS Regression for the first three post-conflict elections.

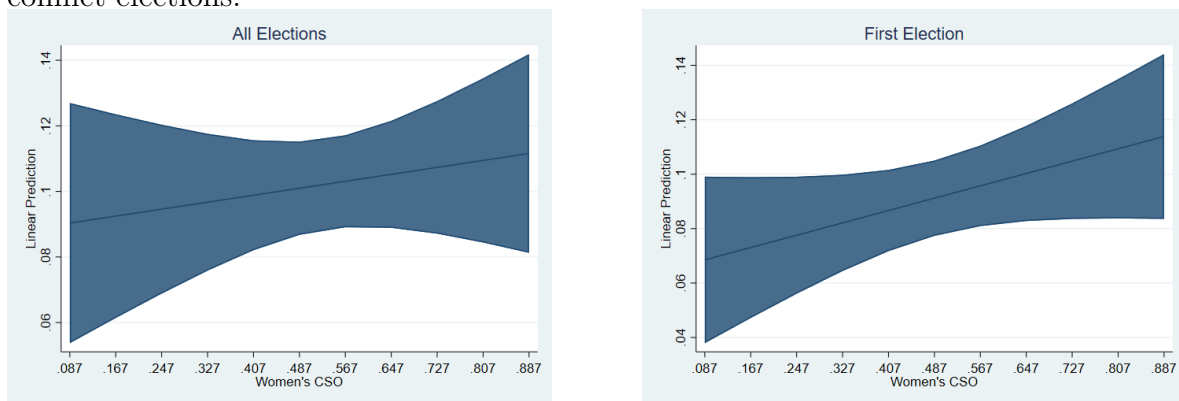
Variables	All elections	1st Election	All Elections	1st Election
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Category 1	0.00110 (0.0196)	-0.000112 (0.0247)	0.00826 (0.0177)	-0.000544 (0.0236)
Category 2	0.0134 (0.0237)	0.00314 (0.0216)	0.0436* (0.0257)	0.0318* (0.0173)
Category 3	-0.0250 (0.0294)	-0.0191 (0.0355)	-0.0214 (0.0348)	-0.0382 (0.0451)
WCSO	0.0292 (0.0370)	0.0572* (0.0337)	0.0516 (0.0352)	0.0790** (0.0308)
PR System	0.0479** (0.0200)	0.0355 (0.0228)		
Quota			0.0608*** (0.0213)	0.104*** (0.0342)
High Intensity	-0.0190 (0.0263)	-0.0365 (0.0266)	-0.0278 (0.0236)	-0.0361* (0.0187)
Rebel Victory	-0.0685*** (0.0204)	-0.0683*** (0.0248)	-0.0452** (0.0180)	-0.0445** (0.0203)
Peace Agreement	0.0112 (0.0228)	0.00824 (0.0210)	0.0185 (0.0247)	0.000150 (0.0209)
GDPpc(log)	-0.00415 (0.00882)	-0.0133 (0.0106)	-0.00341 (0.00990)	-0.0124 (0.00965)
Former Colony	0.0212 (0.0151)	0.0233 (0.0165)	0.0160 (0.0139)	0.0204 (0.0145)
Pre-conflict%	0.356* (0.185)	0.436* (0.222)	0.328** (0.161)	0.358** (0.173)
Post2000	0.0687*** (0.0125)	0.0711*** (0.0174)	0.0527*** (0.0108)	0.0464*** (0.0138)
Constant	0.0586 (0.0707)	0.113 (0.0860)	0.0497 (0.0803)	0.100 (0.0788)
Observations	222	91	222	91
R-squared	0.378	0.482	0.378	0.575

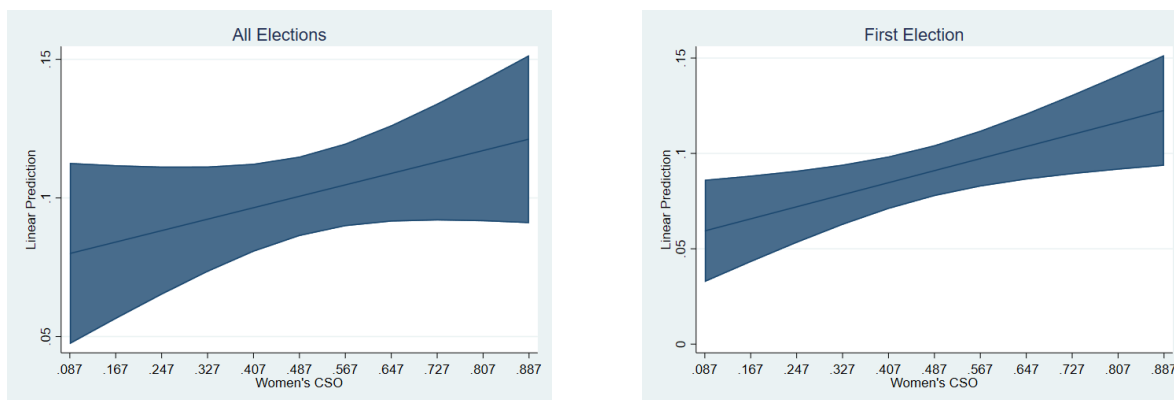
Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Overall, the results do not provide strong support for the hypotheses stated in the previous section. Women’s mobilization in rebel groups does not exert a notable effect, while women’s mobilization in CSO organizations only yields a small positive effect in the first elections in the aftermath of conflict. This finding agrees with findings in the relevant literature that propose that any advancement in women’s status during conflict are short-lived. PR systems and quotas both have a positive effect on women’s representation, with the effect of quotas being stronger. Contrariwise to the expectation that a rebel victory could potentially have a positive effect on women’s representation through status quo change in political actors, that is not the case. The results propose that the effect is negative and highly significant. Figure 5 depicts the effect of women’s CSO participation on the dependent variable for all elections and the first election respectively, based on the models of Table 10.

Figure 5: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women’s representation in the first three post-conflict elections.





Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations, and further disaggregated by electoral cycle using quotas.

Overall, the results provide useful insights on the social and political processes of civil wars and their subsequent effect on women's representation in the aftermath of conflict. Beginning with women's mobilization, we observe that when it concerns communal labour and safeguarding, it contributes more to women's representation but only in the first post-conflict election. When women mobilise as in armed rebellion and occupy fighting roles however, it does not exert a positive effect. Concerning the effects of institutional designs and their potential to assist more women getting elected, the results suggest that quotas increase women's representation in the immediate post-conflict period. Contrariwise, proportional representation systems have a long term positive effect on women's representation, proposing that changes in the wider electoral system may be more beneficial for women in the long haul.

### 3.7 Robustness Checks

I conduct a variety of robustness checks and diagnostics that can be found in detail in Appendix B section of this paper. An important note that needs to be addressed are the

cases of Rwanda and Burundi. Both these countries experienced genocide that resulted in extreme male human losses, therefore creating imbalances in the male/female ratio. These two cases also resulted in high percentages for female parliamentarians and this trend in battle related deaths could potentially drive spurious relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, in Tables 6 and 7, I run the original models this time excluding four observations that correspond to Rwanda and Burundi. I also provide the graphical depiction of the effect of the main variables.

The results in Table 6 correspond to the findings presented in the previous section. Overall, proportional representation systems have long term effects on women's representation, contrary to the effect of quotas that is evident in the immediate post-conflict period. In the models with PR systems, women's CSO participation has a positive and significant effect on women's representation in the first post-conflict election. Moreover, women's pre-conflict political status has a positive effect on their post-conflict representation, however only in the first post conflict election. Rebel victory also exerts a negative and highly significant effect across all models. In the models where PR systems are substituted by quotas, female combatants exert a positive effect on the dependent variable on the second post-conflict election, while women's CSO participation effect is prominent in the first post-conflict election. The effect of quotas is also noticeable in the immediate post conflict phase. Furthermore, conflict's high intensity also has a negative effect. Across all models, the post 2000 period exerts positive and highly significant effects on changes on women's legislative presence.

In Table 7, I replicate the results of Table 3 using the categorical variable for the different levels of women's participation in rebel forces. The results again propose that the effect of PR systems is long term, while that of quotas is mostly evident in the imme-

diate post-conflict election. Moreover, women's presence in CSOs yields a positive and significant effect in the first post-conflict election. In general, women's participation in rebel forces does not appear to influence the dependent variable. The only exceptions are the category 3 that exerts a negative and significant effect on the dependent variable in the long term, while category 2 exerts a positive and significant effect on the short term only.

### **3.8 Conclusions**

This paper's goal was to examine the changes that civil wars provoke on social and political capital and their effect on post-conflict political participation. Exploiting data on women's mobilisation in rebel groups as well as their presence in civil society groups during conflict paired with institutional changes, the results indicate that women's mobilization during conflict does not exert an effect in the subsequent three post-conflict elections. There is some indication that women's mobilization in CSOs has some effect in the first post-conflict election, however, it is only at the 10% level and rather fragile. PR systems and quotas also appear to have an effect on the dependent variable, while contrary to the expectations, rebel victories exert a negative effect that is negative and highly significant.

The finding that women's agency in conflict has the ability to manifest and produce positive outcomes on women's lives in the post conflict period does not come as a surprise. In many post-conflict contexts, women's organisations have been utilised in processes targeting advancing women's rights by international actors. Many transnational organisations outside the UN structure have formed connections with national and sub-national women's organisations in order to promote the advancement of women's status in post-conflict countries through either educational or vocational programs or even financial assistance towards women entrepreneurs. As Gizelis (2009) notes, women's civil

society builds informal networks that act as corridors towards increasing social capacity and lead to successful peacebuilding. By providing more assistance to women on the local level can be as helpful as encouraging national level institutional changes targeting women, such as quotas or reserved seats. Although these institutional designs do increase women's presence in national legislatures in the short term, they may also have adverse effects such as the introduction of a specific group of women that have access to political power and the exclusion of more women from electoral positions.

The analysis proposes that changes in gender roles during conflict might alter attitudinal changes in the electorate which consequently may choose to elect more women in national parliaments. The results provide new avenues in the ways we understand conflict and its connection to gender. Excluding Rwanda and Burundi as two cases with severe male deaths during conflict that resulted in extremely high numbers of female parliamentarians has allowed the current analysis to reveal interesting patterns. Paying attention to gender can sharpen the focus of social sciences, improve public policy and inform and change the way we look at things (Jenkins et al., 2020).

## 4 Women's Post-Conflict Political Participation: The Importance of Women's CSOs

### Abstract

Current research suggests that peace agreements offer opportunities for women to advance their political status post-conflict. More specifically, they suggest that when gender provisions are included, they have a positive and significant effect. However, little do we know about the specific provisions that have this effect and how they advance women's political participation post-conflict. Exploiting the variation in the types of gender provisions, I propose an opportunity and willingness framework which incorporates women's civil society participation as an important piece of the puzzle. While gender provisions are an opportunity that mitigates the obstacles women face in politics, a robust CSO presence by women is also important. Women are usually a marginalized group in politics, that during conflict though, they transform to political actors through social leadership. Therefore, a robust civil society by women is important as they can advance democratization processes promoted by peace agreements and enhance women's post-conflict political standing. I test my theoretical model in a sample of countries where gender provisions were included in the peace agreement. The results indicate that women's CSO presence during conflict has an independent, positive, and statistically significant effect. Provisions that indirectly promote women's status exert a positive and significant effect, *ceteris paribus*. However, provisions that focus explicitly on women's political participation yield a positive and significant effect, only in the cases that women's political participation exceeds the 30 percent threshold.



## 4.1 Introduction

What affects women's political participation in the aftermath of civil conflict? In this paper I employ a willingness and opportunity framework and argue that in countries that achieved conflict resolution by peace agreement, women's advanced civic presence during conflict has the best prospects in increasing women's political participation post-conflict. I contend that women's mobilization in CSOs during conflict transforms them to political actors that aim to better their political status in the aftermath of violence. The resolution of a conflict presents a moment of opportunity that can assist women in improving their political status post-conflict through the adoption of gender provisions. Gender sensitive peace agreements mitigate the obstacles women face in politics and aid them in improving their political participation post-conflict.

In this paper, I draw direct linkages between women's mobilization during conflict and their post-conflict political participation. During conflict, women acquire greater social space and achieve higher visibility (Andrabi, 2019; Asaf, 2017; Berry, 2015, 2017; Handrahan, 2004; Mageza-Barthel, 2016; Manchanda, 2005; Pankhurst, 2002; Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002; Viterna, 2013; Wagha, 2014) which in turn allows them to function outside traditional manifestations of gender norms and transform into political actors. The more space women occupy during conflict, the more they want to keep and further it post-conflict. While women have the willingness to participate in politics, the opportunities presented by the implementation of gender provisions, give women the opportunity to realize this goal. Through their active engagement in civil society organizations, women achieve greater visibility, social outreach and trust in their leadership skills, thus making gender a salient component of negotiated settlements. Evidently, women's organizations have been valuable partners, consultants and watchdogs of the planning and implemen-

tation processes of peace agreements. This interaction allows women to manifest their agency from civil society towards greater political presence.

Examining the relationship between gender and conflict resolution, research has provided thoughtful insights on the inclusion of women in peace processes. While the statistics show that in the post 2000 era women still remain severely under-represented in elite peace processes, their participation has increased. Dayal and Christien (2020) for example find that even when women are not represented in formal peace processes, women still find a way to advocate for peace. In the rare occasions that women are included in formal peace processes and as official signatories, their participation has a positive and significant effect on the durability and quality of post-conflict peace. This finding is in line with Nilsson (2012) proposition that including more societal and civil society actors in peace accords, such as women's organizations and human rights groups, also increase the durability of peace.

According to Gizelis (2009, 2011), women's status in the aftermath of conflict has a positive association with successful peace-building. Moreover, increased female representation within national parliaments is found to prolong peace after conflict termination by a negotiated settlement (Shair-Rosenfield and Wood, 2017). While women's participation in protest activity or frontline fighting has received extensive scholarly attention, women's civil society participation during conflict and its effect on post-conflict outcomes has remained untested. While civil wars reconfigure gender relations and women's position in the society, this change has the potential to transfer in post-conflict societies. Through their participation in civil society, women's groups can affect the peace processes by lobbying and influencing the adoption of gender provisions in comprehensive peace agreements. Subsequently, these provisions may crystallize women's demands for

political gender equality and assist them in increasing their political participation post-conflict.

Here, women's participation in CSOs reflects their participation in civic networks during conflict and their social leadership. It mirrors women's social capital and its ability to function as political actors in the post conflict era. Further, the gender provisions included in peace agreements are aggregated in two distinct types. The first, is provisions that directly promote women's participation in politics and governance, either by general language or by introducing the adoption of quotas or reserved seats. The second type, recognizes women's increased chances of victimization and focus on their protection and bodily autonomy. Both of these types are important as they have the ability to create legal frameworks that promote women's rights in social and political terms. These two elements compose the willingness and opportunity framework that is proposed in this paper and has the best prospects on improving women's political participation post-conflict. In the present study, women's political participation includes both their representation in national parliaments and an equal share in the overall power distribution.

The results presented in a later section in this paper find that women's presence in CSOs during conflict has a positive, significant and independent effect on women's political participation post-conflict. Moreover, the results also suggest that provisions indirectly promoting women's rights have also an independent, positive and significant effect. However, provisions that directly advocate for women's inclusion in politics and governance exert a positive and significant effect only when women's political participation post-conflict exceeds the 30 percent threshold. The results indicate that including gender provisions with a limited understanding of national gender practices and excluding local civil society actors may have reverse effects, resulting in the decline of women's political

participation. This paper contributes to current literature by confirming the importance of gender sensitive peace agreements in improving women's political participation. More importantly, it introduces an additional factor: the influence of women's civil society organizations as an independent avenue leading to improved female political participation post-conflict.

In the following pages I proceed as follows: first, I review relevant literature on linkages between civil wars and women's post-conflict political status, focusing more on the mechanisms research has drawn between peace agreements and women's post-conflict political participation. Next, I introduce the theoretical contribution of this paper, highlighting how a willingness and opportunity framework that explores different types of gender provisions and women's CSO presence. Moreover, I introduce four cases to illustrate my argument. Moving on, I introduce the research strategy I employ and interpret the findings. I conclude this paper by introducing relevant implication on policy making in post conflict countries.

## **4.2 Peace Agreements & Women's Political Participation**

Focusing particularly on the empowering potential of peace agreements, research has examined a variety of mechanisms associated with positive post-conflict outcomes on women's political participation and political rights. Joshi et al. (2020) for example, show how social ruptures created by civil war conditions allow for pressures from women's groups and international actors simultaneously to materialise in post-conflict political rights improvements. Their findings propose that even when controlling for the presence of gender provisions in peace agreements, the negotiation and implementation of comprehensive peace agreement offers the best prospects for improvements on women's

political rights, compared to other conflict termination types. Another recent study by Bakken and Buhaug (2021) further look into the ways conflict termination materializes societal openings into empowerment for women. Their study finds that peace agreements that include gender provisions result in improvements on women's empowerment, namely political participation, and civil liberties.

Looking further into the content of peace agreements, research has found that context matters. Gender provisions included in peace agreements are the main tool through which women's rights and their post-conflict status are mainstreamed in peace processes. Anderson and Swiss (2014) find that the inclusion of gender provisions in peace agreements leads to a more rapid adoption of gender quotas for women in national parliaments. Subsequently, the adoption of quotas provides a tool through which women can increase their parliamentary presence. Building on the effect of peace agreements, Reid (2021) finds that comprehensive peace agreements that include gender provisions create legal frameworks and generate new societal norms and gender practices that increase the possibility of improving women's political rights in the aftermath of conflict.

Differentiating from the literature that understands gender provisions in binary terms (whether they exist or not, or whether they advocate for quotas for women), Ellerby (2013) analyzes peace agreement provisions on women under a different framework. She theorizes that provisions promoting women's rights do so in different levels and provide women with different opportunities to improve their political participation post-conflict. One such example is provisions promoting women as decision makers. Some peace agreements include provisions that explicitly advocate quotas on a specific percentage, others do not include an explicit percentage, while some only include general language advocating for women's inclusion in politics and governance.

Another strand of literature looks into the effect institutional factors may have in women's representation. The strongest impact on women's legislative presence is mainly driven by the introduction of quotas or reserved seats in national parliaments. In a variety of post-conflict contexts, quotas are a constant robust predictor (Guariso et al., 2017; Hughes and Tripp, 2015). As Bush (2011) finds, quotas are adopted in countries emerging from conflict through two pathways: either by the deployment of peace operations or through encouraging countries, especially those who are dependent on foreign aid, to adopt quotas for women in their national parliaments. Examining the mechanisms of post-traumatic growth, research has also found that quotas have been adopted faster in countries where sexual violence was prevalent (Agerberg and Kreft, 2020) and in municipalities that were directly affected by insurgent violence (García-Ponce, 2017).

In her comparative analysis of high, medium and low-income countries, Hughes (2009) finds that long and large scale civil wars that challenge to alter governmental structure, offer the best opportunities for women to acquire more parliamentary seats. Following the path of civil war trajectories, Gurses et al. (2020) find that the ideology of the insurgent group also has an impact on women's rights following the termination of the conflict. Their findings complement Hughes (2009) research by indicating that longer civil wars exert a positive and significant effect on women's political rights, while the insurgent group's ideology yields a positive effect on women's economic and social rights. Webster et al. (2019) findings indicate that conflict onset (specifically the experience of ongoing and recent war) have a positive effect on women's empowerment.

The above-mentioned scholars have offered a comprehensive and intuitive insight into the institutional processes of war. These processes however are usually accompanied by social processes (Wood, 2008) that the studies above examine independently. Women's

everyday advocacy and engagement with local population and communities is an important indication of women as social capital. Through that engagement, women achieve challenging and changing social gender practices and norms. Simultaneously, their advocacy and agency has the best prospects in affecting change when conflict resolution is achieved by peace agreement and through the adoption of gender provisions.

Examining the effect of the negotiation and implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement independently of the local element can potentially produce misleading results that do not reflect the entirety of the country's image. Moreover, while peace agreements/processes and the gender provisions they include have generally been appraised for assisting an upwards movement for women in institutionalized politics, we still do not know which kind of provisions have this positive effect. Bearing in mind the importance of the local element –which for the purposes of this study is reflected by women's civil society organizations- and the variation that can be observed in the different kinds of gender provisions that can be found in peace agreements, I proceed in the next section by laying out in detail my theoretical argument. Following my hypothesis, I present four illustrative cases that explore the variation that can be observed both on the levels of women's civic presence during conflict and the inclusion of gender provisions.

### **4.3 Willingness & Opportunity**

During conflict political leaders redirect resources towards their military efforts which is usually correlated with budgetary decreases in social welfare. Simultaneously, substantial capital flees the country and natural resources are being destroyed (Collier et al., 2003). Consequently, the impact of conflict is both immediate but also long term, not only on national but also individual level (Gates et al., 2012; Lopez and Wodon, 2005). The state cannot administer the essential functions to the citizens, such as medical assistance and

education for example. This lack of leadership creates a power vacuum that accentuates women as political leaders through their leadership in CSOs providing social services. Therefore, women's CSOs reflect an important part of social and political capital that indicates women's ability and willingness to lead.

Research on armed conflict has concluded that civil wars are a critical juncture that transforms actors, institutions and social relationships (Wood, 2008). Scholars have documented the transformation of communities and the new opportunities for women to increase their social presence. Examining women's mobilization during conflict, scholars have documented various types of mobilization. In many civil wars, women have mobilized in armed groups not only as paramilitary personnel, but as frontline fighters (Alison, 2009; Braithwaite and Ruiz, 2018; Darden et al., 2019; Henshaw, 2016; Thomas and Wood, 2018; Wood, 2008). Nonetheless, women's mobilization has become evident in non-combat roles as well. In many conflict affected states women's mobilization has focused in a variety of areas. In El Salvador for example women formed organisations for the release of political prisoners (Viterna, 2013). In Syria and Bosnia women led organizations focusing on health and medicine, schooling, and distribution of aid (Asaf, 2017). In Liberia women led negotiations with armed groups and moved relatively free around the country (Gizelis, 2011). In Bougainville, women organised to encourage soldiers to return to their homes (Howley, 2002).

Overall, women's organizations cover a wide area of operations. Although these organizations and networks are usually informal, meaning that they do not have the usual organizational structure and technical capacity of similar groups as we know them outside conflict, they can be broadly defined as civil society. Here, women's civil society participation is understood as participation in a broad and considerable collection of community



groups, networks, NGOs, religious and indigenous groups. The different functions of women's organizations during conflict also increases social trust towards their abilities to lead since they do not participate in violence but aim at mitigating its effect towards the vulnerable population. For example, women negotiated and brokered local ceasefires during the Syrian civil war in order to take care of the wounded. As (Mulalic, 2012) writes 'women's organizations in Sarajevo and Tuzla provided services such as food, clothing and shelter for refugees and counselling and medical care for war victims, especially rape victims'. Women's leadership during war has encouraged them to advance their social skills. Above all, women's CSOs enhance social connectivity and synergies in times of grave polarization between different ethnic or social groups. Their ability to reach isolated communities has also advanced them to valuable partners for the UN in order to distribute aid. Moreover, the engagement of international actors granted them access to formal political networks and high-level decision-making actors. Through their advocacy and agency, women's participation in CSOs contributed to altering gender norms and social practices that accompany them. This is not to say that war cured gender inequality but rather it created opportune conditions for women to better the socio-political status.

Taking advantage of this newfound social and political space, women tied their mobilizing activities with notions and demands of political and social rights and representation. Looking into the Liberian context for example, women were able to occupy a larger social space during conflict. Their CSO participation advanced to the point that they extensively lobbied and pressured armed actors to participate in peace negotiations. Liberian women CSO leaders also pushed for and ensured that the opposing armed actors remained in the negotiating table until they signed a comprehensive peace agreement. Women's movement for peace (Women in White)<sup>40</sup> outlines the ability of women to unite under

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<sup>40</sup>For more information on Women in White: <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2018->

a common purpose, regardless of religious, ethnic or political differences, and worked against societal divisions that could potentially ignite further societal fractionalisation. In the aftermath of conflict, women's advocacy materialised politically and resulted in increased voter turnout by women and the subsequent election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf which then adopted a detailed agenda of achieving gender equality (Bauer, 2009). The evidence above is conducive to the fact that conflict does not only act as a catalyst to women's mobilization, but also that women's social capital during conflict is an important element of the transformations in gender norms.

The argument I posit here is that women's CSO participation during conflict can influence on a positive fashion, women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict. Women's CSO participation here functions as a political capital that materializes post-conflict in terms of political participation. Women moving from the private to the public sphere and dominating social spaces advances their status to political actors, decision makers and political stakeholders. As such, women pose the willingness to transfer their agency from the social to the political space. Hence, they participate more in political activities and use these openings to increase their political participation.

However, although women may pose the willingness to advance their political presence post-conflict, they still have to compete in a system that does not provide many opportunities for women. In order to overcome the structural barriers for women in politics, the mode of conflict termination becomes an opportunity. In contrast to military victories, the termination of a conflict by the negotiation and implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement provides the most opportune conditions for women to transfer their agency in the post-conflict era. Peace agreements are nested on the principle of resolving the

differences of former adversaries through power-sharing provisions (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003). Hartzell and Hoddie (2003) have identified four distinct types of power sharing provisions: political, military, territorial and economic.

Although power sharing refers mainly to the warring parties and provisions on women have been historically scarce, there has been an increase in the post 2000 era. More specifically, there is a rise in peace agreement references to women, and especially when the UN is involved (Bell and O’rourke, 2010). This phenomenon appears to be the result of two processes: the diffusion of international norms (namely the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda<sup>41</sup> and its landmark resolution 1325<sup>42</sup>), and women’s participation in elite peace processes (True and Riveros-Morales, 2019). However, peace processes include two different procedures: Track I and Track II. The difference between the two different levels is that Track I is the formal application of armed actor-to-armed actor negotiations and has a specific protocol. It is considered the primary peacekeeping tool and carried out by diplomats, high-ranking government officials, and heads of states or leaders of armed

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<sup>41</sup>The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS) refers to all the efforts initiated by the UN to ensure women’s priorities to peace and security decisions at all levels. To achieve this goal, the UN has adopted 10 Security Council Resolutions that promote the perspective of gender in all decision making levels. The principles of the WPS Agenda also focus on the rights of women and girls emerging from conflict, their protection from sexual violence during conflict and a gender perspective in all peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts. For more details <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/a-short-history-of-the-csw-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1153>

<sup>42</sup>Resolution 1325 is the first of 10 resolutions adopted from the UN Security Council that focus on acknowledging and implementing a gender perspective on all UN activities in countries emerging from conflict, the promotion of women’s rights in social, political and economic functions and the protection of women’ and girls’ physical security. For more details on the Resolutions <http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>

groups (Mapendere, 2005). Women's participation at this level is quite rare although research has indicated that when women do participate as signatories, it increases the durability of peace (Krause et al., 2018).

Yet, women's participation in the second level of diplomatic talks is remarkable. Track II diplomatic process is complementary to the first level and encompasses developing strategies, engaging locals, and organizing human and material resources to assist the resolution of the conflict (Mapendere, 2005). As Christien (2020) writes "While Track I diplomacy refers to official government peace processes, Track II is the variety of non-governmental and unofficial forms of conflict resolution activities between the representatives of former adversarial groups that aim at de-escalating conflict, improving communication and understanding between the parties, and developing new ideas to be used in the official peace processes". More than half of peace processes between 1989 and 2017 included both levels, while more than 70% of Track II processes included women's groups (Dayal and Christien, 2020). In essence, peace processes and the agreements they produce are an opportunity for women to affect the overall peace process and the inclusion of gender provisions.

Gender provisions in peace agreements can be either the product of the diffusion of international norms and advocacy of external actors during the peace negotiations, women's CSOs that participate in the negotiation process, or a joint product of the two. Nevertheless, gender provisions are an opportunity to bring forth women's social, economic and political rights. During the Liberian peace process for example, women release the "Golden Tulip Declaration of Liberian Women Attending the Peace Talks in Accra" where they raised several issues regarding women's livelihood and their rights in the post-conflict phase. The declaration was signed from various women's organization,

the UN and the transitional government of Liberia as well.

Recent research has found support for the notion that gender provision have a positive effect on women's post-conflict political representation and civil liberties (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021), and women's political rights (Joshi et al., 2020; Reid, 2021). Yet, the variation of gender provisions is quite wide and not all may produce identical outcomes. Untangling the different types of gender provisions, three large thematic areas can be detected: (a) the promotion of women in politics (quotas, party membership), (b) the protection of women from different types of violence (signing of CEDAW, sexual violence, violence against women), and (c) women's social rights (land ownership, indigenous rights, nationality<sup>43</sup>). These provisions can either promote women's political participation directly, or indirectly. Therefore, gender provisions are an opportunity for women to increase their political participation post-conflict because they become formal features of the final peace agreement and its subsequent implementation.

Therefore, I expect that women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict can be analysed through a willingness and opportunity framework, that engages local actors interacting with institutional designs to increase women's participation in politics.

*Hypothesis (H1):* In the presence of gender provisions, women's participation in CSOs during conflict has a positive effect on women's post-conflict political participation.

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<sup>43</sup>Kara Ellerby (2013) provides a classification detected in peace agreements between 1990 and 2010. She identifies four distinct categories derived from Resolution 1325: (a) advancing women's representation in all high decision-making levels, (b) women's incorporation in existing bureaucratic structures, (c) the protection of women from gender-based violence and discrimination, and (d) gender mainstreaming in post-conflict policy making.

#### 4.4 Illustrative Cases

Bearing in mind that women's civil society participation is characterized by a large variation, as well as the differences in gender provisions, the matrix below demonstrates the variation that can be observed both in levels of civil society activity and the presence (or absence) of gender provisions. The two columns different types of gender provisions that may promote women's political participation (direct and indirect), and the two rows represent different levels of women's civil society participation. Each combination is represented by a country that adopted a comprehensive peace agreement. Interestingly enough, the data do not provide a case study where women's participation in CSOs was low and had any gender provisions advocating for women's political participation.

<u>Gender Provisions in PAs</u>		
<u>WCSO</u>	<u>Direct</u>	<u>Indirect</u>
Low	-	Guatemala (.824)
High	Liberia (.897)	Bosnia (.521)

However, when it comes to provisions that promote women's political participation indirectly, Guatemala is a representative case. The Guatemalan civil war ended in 1996 with the signing of many partial and a comprehensive peace agreement. The CPA signed includes only one provision in reference to women. Although during conflict women's participation in CSOs was low, women were active fighters which subsequently resulted in

Luz Mendez (former combatant of the URNG) being invited to the negotiation table and becoming an official signatory. Through their access to elite processes, women created linkages with women's civil society groups in order to influence the adoption of gender provisions. Consequently, women's political participation in the immediate aftermath of conflict was high (0.824). However, it gradually decreased during the decade (0.738), although it is still considered high.

The next case is that of Liberia, in which women's civic presence was extremely high during and after conflict, and the peace agreement included many gender provisions regarding women. The second civil war in Liberia started in 1999 and ended in 2003 and the main warring parties were the Government of Liberia led by Charles Taylor and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Women were massively involved in the negotiation and implementation process of the peace agreement, however in a parallel forum and not during official negotiations with armed actors. Women's civic presence was an essential element in conflict as women managed to maintain lines of communication with rebel forces and move relatively free in the country. In fact, women's activism became a tool of pressure towards Taylor and forced him to agree in negotiating a peace agreement with the two rebel groups. Moreover, women civil society groups travelled to neighbouring Ghana where the peace talks were taking place and intensively lobbied for women's issues to be incorporated in the peace agreement. The peace agreement includes several clauses that detail women's inclusion in political institutions, electoral politics and protection from violence. During the post-conflict period in Liberia, women's political participation reached significant levels. Starting from (0.897) the year after the peace agreement was signed, it reached (0.945) in 2006, and slightly decreased in 2011 (0.934). Overall, women's political

participation in Liberia scores among the highest levels for any post-conflict country.

The last case is that of Bosnia where the civil war took place between 1992 and 1995 as a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the severe ethnic fractionalization of the society. Although traditional cultural and gender identities were influential, women's groups were socially active during the war, mostly to provide food, clothes and other necessities, caring for the most vulnerable members of the society. The Dayton peace agreement adopted in 1995 partitioned Bosnia according to the three warring parties, ensuring representation for each ethnic group. However, it does not have any provisions regarding women or their participation in political institutions. Gender is mainly mentioned in non-discrimination clauses and the signing of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In the first post-conflict elections women's representation was low, as was the overall share of power between men and women in politics. Women for example were left out of party lists during the first elections. Women's political participation data scores at (0.521). Nonetheless, women continued mobilizing in post-conflict Bosnia and flooded political parties and election lists, something that gradually increased their political participation to (0.867).

## **4.5 Research Design**

The purpose of this paper is to examine women's post-conflict political participation in the aftermath of the negotiation and signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. Therefore, the dataset constructed for this paper includes only post-conflict country-years after a comprehensive peace agreement. In order to define the term post-conflict, I build upon previous findings that indicate a five-year threshold for civil war renewal (Collier and Sambanis, 2002). Hence, if a conflict recurs within the five-year period, it is not included in the dataset. The threshold for which a country may be perceived as post-conflict



is that of ten years (Davenport et al., 2018). The result of this research framework is an unbalanced panel dataset, from 1980 to 2015, consisting of (27) countries and (269) post-conflict years.

Since the dataset is unbalanced cross-sectional time-series, I conduct tests for serial correlation and cross-sectional dependence. The results suggest that there is first order autocorrelation, a usual characteristic of panel datasets (Drukker, 2003; Wooldridge, 2002). Therefore, I use a linear model for unbalanced panel datasets that models AR(1) disturbances (Baltagi and Wu, 1999). Since the main independent variable is time invariant, I use random effects that produce unbiased generalized least squares (GLS) estimators.

The variable of interest is Women's Political Participation Index (v2x\_genpp) from the Varieties of Democracy Dataset (Coppedge et al., 2019). This index is constructed in order to capture women's descriptive representation in national legislatures and an equal share in the overall distribution of power. The index ranges from (0) to (1) and is formed by taking the average of the indicators for women legislators in the lower chamber and power distributed by gender. The variable is consisted of (269) observations with minimum value (0.266), maximum value (1), mean (0.742) and standard deviation (0.203). An important element of women's political participation is that of critical mass. The term 'critical mass'<sup>40</sup> theorizes that the size of a minority group is important and for women specifically, implies that a fundamental change can happen before women achieve equal participation in politics. For this reason, I further examine the theoretical argument of this paper and I test my hypothesis when women's political participation reaches a threshold

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<sup>40</sup>The concept of critical mass, borrowed from nuclear physics, refers to the quantity needed to start a chain reaction, an irreversible take off into a new situation or process. By analogy, it is said that a qualitative shift will take place when women exceed a proportion of about 30% in an organization. A large minority can make a difference, even if still a minority (Dahlerup, 1988).

of (0.3) and above. That variable consists of 259 observations, taking the minimum value of (0.292), maximum value of (1), with mean (0.756) and standard deviation of (0.183).

The independent variable accounting for women's participation in civil society organizations is also from the comprehensive data collection from the Varieties of Democracy. Women's civil society participation is understood to include open discussion of political issues, participation in civil society organizations and representation in the rank of journalists. Using this index allows me to grasp the extent to which women are incorporated in existing horizontal networks in the society and the degree of their societal outreach in the local community. Moreover, while institutionalised politics are hierarchical, civil society participation represents horizontal outreach that is an important element of achieving local peace. Since the theoretical framework presented earlier on this paper advocates for women's advanced agency during conflict, this variable takes the mean of the values of all conflict years and therefore is time invariant. The variable takes minimum value (0.121), maximum value (0.825), with mean (0.491) and standard deviation (0.197).

Additionally, in this paper I delve more into the existence of gender provisions in comprehensive peace agreements. While recent research has indicated that gender provisions have a positive effect on women's post-conflict political participation (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021), there is a large variation in what kind of provisions can be found in the text of peace agreements (Ellerby, 2013). In this attempt, I operationalise three different variables accounting for gender provisions. The first comes UCDP/PRIO Peace Agreement Dataset and is a binary indicator that takes the value (1) if any provisions relating to women or gender are mentioned in the peace agreement. As Pettersson and Öberg (2020) write "For the sake of this dataset, it is accepted that a given document will refer to people generally, without specifying their gender, or that it will refer to men and male

subjects. For this reason, specific mention of men and boys as well as male-gendered terms such as ‘sons, brotherhood, policemen’ etc. or the use of male pronouns are not coded. To qualify for a gender variable, a provision may include men and boys, but must include either women, female pronouns, or reference specifically to gender”.

As mentioned above, there is a large variation on which kind of gender provisions can be found in peace agreements. In this paper, I untangle this variation by incorporating variables from the PAX Dataset (Bell, Christine, Sanja Badanjak, Juline Beaujouan, TimEpple, Robert Forster, Astrid Jamar, Sean Molloy, Kevin McNicholl, KathrynNash, Jan Pospisil, Robert Wilson, and Laura Wise, 2021). PAX database “lists all the peace agreements between 1990 and 2021 which have provisions on women, girls, gender or sexual violence”. Its coding differentiates from that of the UCDP Peace Agreements dataset in the sense that it codes its gender indicators depending on their context. Therefore, in its collection can be found variables that account for the participation/incorporation of women in political decision-making positions in bureaucratic structures, the protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence, women’s social and economic rights, etc. For the purposes of the current analysis, I exploit two binary indicators: women’s political participation and incorporation in decision making positions and women’s protection from any forms of violence. Both these types of provisions promote the visibility of women and the importance of their rights directly and indirectly respectively.

The variable accounting for women’s political participation (WggPar) takes the value (1) if the peace agreement mentions any of the three following: (a) advocacy for a specific quota commitment or specifying particular numbers of women that are to participate, (b) more general language of women’s effective participation in governance and the inclusion of non-numeric commitments regarding women’s representation and political gender

equality, and (c) any reference to women and citizenship that appears in the peace agreement. The variable accounting for women's protection (*WggVio*) takes the value (1) if any of the following are present in the peace agreement text: (a) any specific prohibition or mention of sexual violence, rape, sexual harassment, (b) any specific prohibition or mention of other forms of gender-based violence, and (c) any protection measures for women which are general in nature and present in the agreement.

In my analysis I further control for the effect of other potential confounding variables. Since high conflict intensity has the potential to create more societal and political openings for women's incorporation in institutional structures (Bakken and Buhaug, 2021; Gurses et al., 2020), I operationalise the binary variable from UCDP/PRIO Peace Agreement Dataset that accounts for cumulative intensity and takes the value (1) signifying high intensity of the conflict and (0) if otherwise. Economic growth is found to positively affect women's political participation (Duflo, 2012), therefore I control for the natural logarithm of gross domestic product per capita. In order to establish a robust relationship between the variables of interest I control for women's pre-conflict status by controlling for the pre-conflict fertility rates. Fertility rates accurately capture a woman's position in a society as higher values indicate more traditional roles of women as mothers than breadwinners and their increased presence in the private rather than public sphere. The data for women's fertility rates are from the UN Department of Statistics (UN Population Prospects 2019).

Since 2000 and the passing of UNSC Resolution 1325 there has been an increase in institutional responses to women's issues. In order to establish a robust relationship between my independent and dependent variable, I control for these reforms and generate a binary variable that accounts whether the year is post 2000, to contain the effect of

the diffusion of international norms. I also control for the presence of signatories in final CPAs as they may have an effect on the adoption of gender provisions and affect women's political participation post-conflict. I use data from Krause et al. (2018). In the dataset, only in three countries women were present as female signatories in comprehensive peace agreements.

## 4.6 Empirical Analysis

In this section, I present the results of my analysis. I begin by examining whether (a) conflict resolution by the negotiation and implementation of a CPA is positively correlated with women's political participation post-conflict, and (b) whether the interaction between women's CSO and comprehensive peace agreements has an effect on women's political participation. The results in Table 11 demonstrate the findings. Women's CSO is found to have a positive and significant effect on women's post-conflict political participation at the highest level. In Model 2 PAs are indeed the conflict termination type that has the best prospects of advancing women's political participation post-conflict. Fertility rates appear to exert a negative effect, while in line with the expectations, women's political participation experiences a growth in the post-2000 era. In Model 3, I test the interaction between comprehensive peace agreements and women's CSO participation on the dependent variable using a nested sample. This sample only includes observations of country-years that conflict terminated via peace agreement. It appears that the neither the independent terms nor their interaction yield any effect on the dependent variable. Here, female signatories appear to have a rather small and negative effect on women's political participation, while GDP per capita and post 2000 era also exert a positive effect at the lowest level.

It is important to note that in Model 2, the sample includes observations from differ-

ent conflict termination types. As such, the CPA variable distinguishes between conflict termination by the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement and other conflict termination types, namely government and rebel victories. Moving on to Model 3, the observations drop significantly. This reflects a change in the sample which now includes country-year observations only for countries that experienced conflict termination through the implementation of a peace agreement. This is because, by default, only peace agreements can contain gender provisions and not other conflict termination types (e.g. decisive victories). This drop in the sample may of course affect the confidence in the results (Gerber et al., 2001).

Table 11: GLS models with random effects.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
WCSO	0.513*** (0.107)	0.376*** (0.101)	0.0903 (0.09)
PA		0.163*** (0.0286)	
CPA			-0.153 (-0.24)
CPA x WCSO			0.261 (0.26)
Female Signatories		-0.0500 (0.0322)	-0.072* (-1.81)
High Intensity		-0.0507 (0.0543)	-0.00882 (-0.15)
GDPpc(log)		0.000992 (0.0157)	0.0455* (1.58)
Fertility Rate		-0.0239*** (0.00778)	0.0217 (1.50)
Res1325		0.0350*** (0.0106)	0.0338* (1.96)
Constant	0.351*** (0.0549)	0.475*** (0.148)	0.273 (0.44)
Observations	923	923	309
Number of ccode	79	79	31

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Proceeding to Table 12, I examine the relationship of interest under the model specification I proposed in the earlier section. Overall, across all models, the variable accounting for women's CSO participation during conflict has an effect that is positive and statistically significant. Furthermore, the results indicate that gender provisions do have an effect on women's participation. However, this effect is driven by provisions advocating for the protection of women. These results do not provide support for the hypothesized relationship but rather propose that the effects of women's participation in CSOs and gender provisions are independent.

Contrary to the expectation that participatory provisions in peace agreements have a positive effect on women's political participation, the results of the current analysis do not support this notion. In the model presented in Table 12, provisions that directly promote women in politics do not have an effect. This can be due to the coding choices in the PA-X data set. The data used for the current analysis, code the participation variable to include not only the provision for quotas but also generic language that advocates for women's equal participation in politics. For example, the Arusha peace accords do not include a specific provision of quotas for women, but rather a rule outlining that for each five names in a party list, one must be a woman<sup>44</sup>. In Liberia, the Accra Peace Agreement, although containing many provisions advocating for the inclusion of women in the political sphere, it does not state a specific quota for the national assembly. Women achieved the adoption of quotas through extensive lobbying after the adoption of the peace agreement<sup>45</sup>.

Regarding the control variables, across Models 2, 3 and 4, the variable capturing

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<sup>44</sup>After extensive advocacy from women's civil society organizations, the new constitution of Burundi included a quota provision for women. More details: <http://peacewomen.org/resource/women-and-post-conflict-political-order>

<sup>45</sup>For more details: <https://peaceaccords.nd.edu/accord/accra-peace-agreement>



the presence of female signatories has a consistent negative effect. Although previous research provides support for the positive relationship between female signatories and peace durability, this effect does not extend to women's political participation. This negative relationship may be explained by the fact that the inclusion of individual women or women's CSO groups may be the product of pressure from external actors and not from the main actors included in the conflict. As mentioned earlier, women's groups are traditionally excluded from elite peace processes and their participation in the negotiating table is quite rare. However, women do participate in large numbers in parallel diplomatic processes (Christien 2020) which is making it quite hard for them to affect the provisions of signed CPAs. Liberia is a very representative example of this. While women's advocacy did eventually force the conflicting parties to negotiate and sign a peace agreement, they were excluded from formal peace talks no matter how much pressure they put.

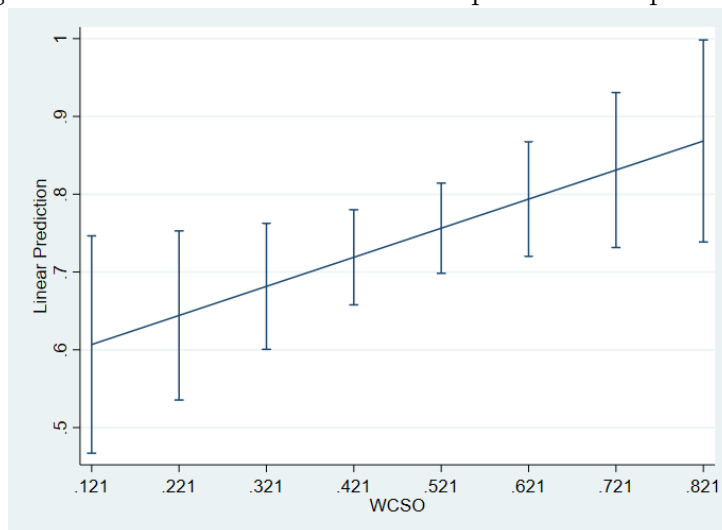
The negative relationship between female signatories and women's post-conflict political participation should however be taken cautiously. As detailed in Krause et al. (2018), the peace agreements in which women participated as signatories were only six. Through the methodological choices made in this paper, that number further reduces to only three countries, making the number of cases even smaller. The small number of observations does not allow for overconfidence in this finding and it should be rather be interpreted cautiously.

Table 12: GLS models with random effects.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
WCSO	0.310*	0.444**	0.374**	0.440**
	(0.164)	(0.174)	(0.178)	(0.179)
Gender	0.0789*	0.164***		
	(0.0476)	(0.0519)		
Direct			0.0985	0.732
			(0.0656)	(1.601)
DirectxWCSO				-1.277
				(3.251)
Indirect			0.154*	0.373
			(0.0832)	(0.231)
IndirectxWCSO				-0.462
				(0.459)
Female Signatories		-0.138***	-0.122**	-0.129**
		(0.0455)	(0.0483)	(0.0514)
High Intensity		-0.0309	-0.0188	-0.00165
		(0.0575)	(0.0587)	(0.0594)
GDPpc(log)		0.0505*	0.0481	0.0437
		(0.0295)	(0.0306)	(0.0302)
Fertility Rate		0.0224	0.0264*	0.0270*
		(0.0145)	(0.0148)	(0.0150)
Post2000	0.0335*	0.0333*	0.0323	0.0332*
	(0.0196)	(0.0196)	(0.0199)	(0.0200)
Constant	0.540***	-0.0255	0.0363	0.0267
	(0.0906)	(0.297)	(0.303)	(0.303)
Observations	269	269	269	269

There is also a positive and significant relationship between economic growth and women's political participation post conflict (Duflo, 2012). However, this effect appears to disappear when in Model 3 where I disaggregate between different types of provisions. Fertility rates become significant, indicating that women's pre-conflict status does have enduring legacies in their post-conflict participation in politics. In Model 4, I introduce the interaction terms between women's participation in CSOs and direct and indirect provisions respectively. Again, the results corroborate that women's participation in CSOs has an independent effect that is different than zero and significant, while the coefficients of the interaction terms are insignificant. Female signatories are again negatively associated with the dependent variable. Women's pre-conflict status, captured by pre-conflict fertility rates, has a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable. Women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict is also following an upward trend in the post 2000 era.

Figure 6: Marginal effect of WCSOs on women's post-conflict political participation



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals. The graph is based on Model

3, Table 7.

Overall, the findings from the analysis presented in Table 7 do provide support for the hypothesis. They indicate that women's CSOs are an important element when considering women's political participation post-conflict. Figure 6 presents graphically the effect described on the results above. When women's CSO participation is at its highest-level during conflict, women's political participation post-conflict increases by 37 percent. The results presented above indicate that women's CSOs have the capacity to use the societal openings they were presented with during conflict in order to advance their political status post-conflict and increase their access to policy making positions. After controlling for all other factors that may affect this relationship and introducing potential joint effects with different types of gender provisions, the effect of women's CSOs remains independent.

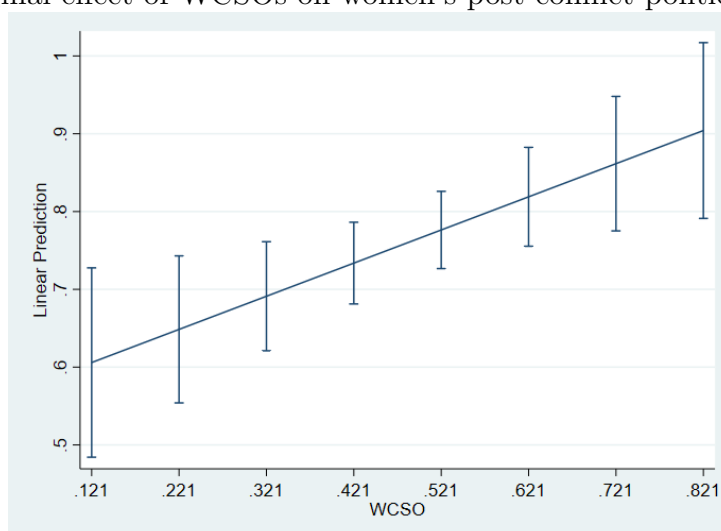
As mentioned in the research design, another important element when it comes to women's political participation is the concept of critical mass. As Dahlerup (1988) writes, it is said that a qualitative shift will take place when women exceed a proportion of about 30% in an organization. A large minority can make a difference, even if still a minority. Therefore, I replicate the results of the models introduced earlier but only on the values of the dependent variable that rise above and 30 percent threshold. This results in only 10 observations being dropped from the sample. Table 8 presents the results. Across models 1 to 4, women's CSOs are significant at the highest level and yield a positive effect on women's political participation post-conflict. When it comes to the different types of gender provisions, those that promote women's political participation directly yield a positive and significant effect at the 10 percent level, while other provisions, have a positive but insignificant effect.

Table 13: GLS models with random effects (WPP 30%).

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
WCSO	0.393*** (0.134)	0.520*** (0.147)	0.426*** (0.156)	0.457*** (0.161)
Gender	0.166*** (0.0525)	0.198*** (0.0501)		
Direct			0.160* (0.0823)	-0.562 (1.710)
Direct x WCSO				1.502 (3.564)
Indirect			0.118 (0.0727)	0.297 (0.211)
Indirect x WCSO				-0.384 (0.410)
Female Signatories		-0.0881* (0.0500)	-0.0979* (0.0525)	-0.113** (0.0548)
High Intensity		-0.0524 (0.0506)	-0.0372 (0.0534)	-0.0302 (0.0567)
GDPpc(log)		0.0486* (0.0255)	0.0497* (0.0281)	0.0454 (0.0283)
Fertility Rate		0.0262* (0.0135)	0.0318** (0.0143)	0.0294** (0.0145)
Post2000		0.0359* (0.0205)	0.0313 (0.0209)	0.0311 (0.0210)
Constant	0.506*** (0.0777)	-0.0655 (0.266)	-0.00999 (0.285)	0.0177 (0.286)
Observations	259	259	259	259

As for the control variables, another consistent finding is the negative and significant effect of female signatories on women's political participation. While one would expect an opposite effect, that is not the case. Another persistent finding is the positive and significant effect of women's pre-conflict fertility rates on women's post-conflict political participation. Economic growth also exerts a positive and significant effect on the outcome variable across all models, but the last that includes interaction terms (Model 4). Interestingly enough, post 2000 era and the diffusion of international norms advocating for gender equality has a positive coefficient, it does not reach any significance levels. The interaction terms in Model 4 between WCSOs and direct and indirect provisions respectively, do not reach any significance. Although the interaction between WCSOs and provisions directly addressing women's political participation has a positive coefficient, it is not significant. On the contrary, the interaction between WCSOs and provisions indirectly promoting women's participation is negative, it also does not reach any significance levels.

Figure 7: Marginal effect of WCSOs on women's post-conflict political participation.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation above the 30% threshold at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals.

The graph is based on Model 3, Table 8.

In a similar fashion to Table 7, the results of Table 8 propose that women's CSO capacity during conflict is an important predictor of women's post-conflict political status. These results also indicate the existence of a continuum between women's status during conflict and its connection to women's post-conflict political status. While provisions that advocate specifically for improvements on women's political participation have a significant effect, they have less explanatory power than women's social status. Figure 7 above presents this effect of women's CSOs on women's political participation above the 30 percent threshold and graphically demonstrate that when women's CSO capacity is at its highest level, women's political participation increases by almost 43 percent, exceeding the critical mass threshold.

To sum up the research findings of the empirical analysis, the evidence suggests that women's CSO capacity can increase women's post-conflict political participation, *ceteris paribus*. Women's CSOs are an important element of social and political capital that has the potential to affect changes on women's socio-political status in the aftermath of conflict termination by a CPA. It is also accurate to say that even in the presence of gender provisions that may promote women's political participation directly or even indirectly, women's CSO capacity has an independent effect. Although for instance many scholars have indicated that the advances women made during conflict are only short-lived, this can be averted in the context of a CPA being signed and implemented. For instance, in Nicaragua, Bosnia, Liberia and Burundi, where women's CSO capacity was well above the mean, women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict was well above the mean too.

## 4.7 Robustness Checks

To complement my analysis, I also conduct alternative model specifications and run a simple linear regression model with random effects that uses the generalized least square estimator. The results are presented in Appendices B and C. Beginning with the results in the full sample, the significance of women's CSOs is present across all models and the effect is independent. Women's mobilization during conflict has a positive effect on women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict, *ceteris paribus*. Moreover, gender provisions that promote women's political participation directly and indirectly also yield a positive and significant affect, however at the lowest level. The interactive terms between the independent variables, have negative coefficients but do not reach any level of significance. The results again highlight that the effect of the explanatory variables is indeed independent of each other.

Regarding the control variables, there are also some patterns. Across all models, female signatories in CPAs have a negative coefficient that is significant at the 1 percent level. This finding is also in line with the results in the main analysis. The inclusion of women as signatories does not seem to exert a positive effect on women's political participation, indicating a pushback on women's participation in elite and high-level political processes. Women's pre-conflict status (fertility rates) and the post 2000 era also exert a positive effect on the outcome variable.

In Appendix C I also present the results on the alternative dependent variable where I only include these observations that exceed the 30 percent threshold (critical mass). The results reiterate that women's CSOs yield a positive, significant, and independent effect on women's political participation post-conflict. In this sample, provisions that directly target improving women's political participation have a significant effect above zero, while



indirect gender provisions have a positive while insignificant effect. the interaction terms between the different types of gender provisions and women's CSO capacity do not exert a significant effect on the dependent variable. Regarding the control variables, the results paint a similar picture. Female signatories have negative and highly significant effect on women's post-conflict political participation, while in this sample, economic growth, women's pre-conflict status and post 2000 era have a positive and significant effect.

## 4.8 Conclusions

Recent research has established the important role of conflict resolution when examining women's political participation in the aftermath of conflict. In this paper, I pursued to increase our knowledge on that front by examining the effect of civil war's trajectories in the context of comprehensive peace agreements. Employing an aggregation between different types of gender provisions that can be found in peace accords, the results presented in this paper do not support the theoretical argument proposed in this paper. Women's presence in civil society organizations during conflict has an important and independent effect on their post-conflict political status, providing support to the notion that observed changes in gender hierarchies during conflict have important legacies in the post-conflict societies. In addition, the results find that the type of gender provisions that are included in CPAs are also important. Provisions that directly promote women's political participation exert a positive and significant effect but only when women's political participation exceeds the critical mass threshold. Provisions that indirectly promote women's participation have an effect in the full sample but not when women's political participation is above 30 percent.

Most importantly, this paper illustrates the importance of women's CSOs. The opportunities that civil wars present for women's participation in civil society transform women to important societal actors. While literature has indicated that any advances in women's

political and societal participation are short lived in the immediate aftermath of conflict, the findings of this paper indicate another pathway that can help women sustain their gains during conflict and expand them post-conflict. Furthermore, the results provide a clear linkage between conflict trajectories and how they affect post-conflict outcomes. Creating such links helps us understand those elements of conflict that have the potential to transform or alter post-conflict societies. Even though the focus of the current analysis has been the effect of women's CSOs on women's post-conflict political participation, future research shall also focus on the interaction between international actors involved in the peace process. Yet, future research can expand our understanding by looking at sub-national variations in the main concepts of interest of the research field.

Finally, the findings of this paper have important policy implications. This paper presents systematic evidence that the capacity of local political stakeholders is an important element of improving women's political status and their access to political power. This bottom-up approach can be successful and increasing its capacity can have a spill over effect from the social to the political space. Providing support to local women's initiatives assists them in bettering women's status that consequently leads to advances in different areas. Women's CSOs formed during conflict have an important role on bettering women's political status post-conflict.

## 5 Conclusions

This dissertation aimed at examining the social and political processes of civil wars that allow women to better their political status post-conflict. It contributes to the current literature by providing an insight as to how the national capacities of women's organizations and the ways they interact with other conflict or political trajectories influence women's status and political gender equality in the aftermath of violence. The findings of the first paper examine the outcome of sexual and gender based violence against women on their post-conflict representation. Although we know that victimization sometimes increases political participation in civil society groups, literature did not have evidence of this effect in political structures. The findings propose that sexual violence does not have positive gendered outcomes, even when it interacts with international organizations. However, the agency women exert during conflict does. This finding points towards examining women's mobilization during conflict and therefore, in the second paper, I examine different forms of women's mobilization, in either rebel combat forces or local CSOs. While the presence of women in rebel forces directly challenges the traditional masculine identity of armed forces and institutionalised politics, it does not exert any effect on women's legislative presence post-conflict. In contrast, women's mobilization in civic groups, appear to direct more votes towards women and increase the changes in their legislative representation post-conflict. Yet, while both papers point towards the positive effect of women's participation in CSOs on changes on women's legislative percentage in post-conflict elections, this result is evident in the immediate post-conflict phase, usually 5 years since conflict termination.

Following the results of the first two papers, the third paper is studying the mecha-

nism through which women's mobilization in local CSOs transforms women into political actors and under which scope conditions has an effect on their post-conflict political participation. Employing a willingness and opportunity framework, this paper identifies that conflicts that ended with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) that included specific gender provisions, and the interaction with women's CSOs, created the most opportune conditions for positive changes on women's political status. This paper theorises that the context of these provisions also matters. However, the findings indicate that women's CSOs have an independent effect on women's political participation. That effect is not dependent on either types of gender provisions. I specifically find that apart from women's participation in civic groups, provisions that indirectly promote women's rights, such the protection from any form of physical, sexual and gender-based violence, have the best prospects of advancing women's political participation. Provisions that directly advocate for women's presence in national legislatures, such as the adoption of quotas on a legislative or party level, affect women's political participation, but only when it exceeds the critical mass threshold (30%). Consequently, the findings propose that the context of gender provisions matter, even though at a lower level than women's social capital.

The findings of the three papers relate to the literature that advocates for the importance of a country's social capital. In his seminal work, (Putnam, 1993) highlighted the importance of civic engagement by the citizens for a prosperous society. Participation in civil society groups strengthens social relationships, enhance trust and reciprocity amongst individuals, and fosters political participation. During conflict, women have increased visibility in the society which allows them to reconfigure their social relationships and introduce themselves as political actors. The relationships formed during conflict

affect, to some extent, the post-conflict social and political spheres. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that conflict related trajectories have an effect post-conflict.

Yet, this dissertation has important limitations. First, the research design and methodological approaches employed in the three papers of the thesis produce correlational results. Although these results contribute to this thesis external validity, we cannot be absolutely certain that changes in the independent variables *cause* changes in the outcomes studied. A future research avenue would be to identify causal strategies in order to understand what increases women's representation in the aftermath of conflict. Another limitation of this study concerns its internal validity. More specifically, endogeneity is always a great concern in correlational studies (Jackson, 2008). Although the methodological approach in each of the papers aimed at avoiding selection bias and identifying the most important covariates, there may be an unobserved latent variable that affects both women's participation in CSOs and women's representation in national legislatures. Moreover, women's status prior to the conflict may affect their status during conflict and consequently have an effect on post-conflict political outcomes.

Lastly, this thesis is looking primarily on group data and does not examine individual characteristics. For example, we cannot infer with certainty that women run for office because of their increased agency during conflict. Nor can we rule out that certain women had more resources and better access to political parties than others. The data on parliamentary representation are aggregated by gender. However, other indicators, such as race or income/economic status, could offer additional information on which type of women are elected and how representative of the real population they are. Such example is the case of Afghanistan, where international actors had very limited understanding of the local context and building upon the narrative of Afghani women needing to be saved from

the oppression of Afghani men, introduced quotas for women. Although the Jolesi Jirga managed to elect women, it was unclear how much power these women had (Reynolds, 2006; Sultan et al., 2005). Additionally, many of these women were relatives of male political actors and were appointed due to their familial connections rather than their political ambition.

Despite several data limitations, this dissertation provides answers to many important questions. Although the three papers are not policy papers, they inform policy makers on different levels. All papers point towards one direction: the importance of women's CSO groups as an important aspect of social capital that affects their post-conflict political status. This finding is relevant for every organization or agency that designs policies or empowering activities targeting women's representation in post-conflict societies. Engaging with women's organizations and civic groups allows IOs and (I)NGOs to have a better understanding of the local concept of gender relationships and dynamics.

When it comes to informing policy makers the third paper is potentially the most important. In this paper, I not only examine women's organizational capacity in conflict contexts, but also the gendered nature of peace agreements. Peace agreements have developed over time to be more inclusive in terms of engagement of social actors, mainly because peace failed when only armed actors were included. As such, they have evolved into the most diverse and inclusive documents that involve a variety of local and international actors, from the negotiating process to the implementation of its provisions. As the findings of the third paper show that the context of the gender provisions matters, it is important to carefully select and design these provisions. A recent research brief on the implementation of gender provisions in Colombia, suggests that in general, gender provisions are implemented at a lower rate than the other types of provisions. However,

it also provides evidence that when international actors interacted with local CSO groups of women, the implementation of such provisions improved (Joshi et al., 2020).

Finally, this dissertation provides future interesting insights towards future research avenues. It is quite interesting to examine the interaction between international actors and conflict actors. More specifically, the initiatives and policies introduced by the UN and UN led peacekeeping operations have come under scrutiny for their engagement with local actors and the promotion of an agenda that is sometimes not country specific. Such research questions could examine the different activities UNPKOs undertake in order to promote and strengthen women's political participation.

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## A Appendix

### A.1 Summary Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
GDPpc(log)	97	8.163	.999	5.595	10.538
Fertility Rate	97	4.671	2.014	1.52	7.8
Pre conflict %	97	.06	.061	0	.344

Variable	Value.	Freq.	Total
High intensity	0	83	85.57
	1	14	14.43
UNPKO	0	83	85.57
	1	14	14.43
Post2000	0	46	47.42
	1	51	52.58

### A.2 Mediation Analysis on the effect of CRSV on women's CSO on the 1st post-conflict election

Table 8: Mediation Analysis.

VARIABLES	A.I.		U.S.S.D.		U.S.S.D.		H.R.W.	
	1st Election	WCOS	1st Election	WCOS	1st Election	WCOS	1st Election	WCOS
WCOS	0.140** (0.0624)		0.146** (0.0634)		0.156** (0.0617)			
Sporadic CRSV	-0.0123 (0.0240)	-0.0385 (0.0711)						
Systematic CRSV	0.0529 (0.0338)	-0.0872 (0.0953)						
Sporadic CSRV			0.00145 (0.0231)	0.00972 (0.0695)			0.00965 (0.0296)	0.102 (0.0869)
Systematic CRSV			0.0363 (0.0339)	0.0113 (0.0891)			0.0547* (0.0294)	-0.0513 (0.0813)
Sporadic CRSV								
Systematic CRSV								
High Intensity	-0.0336 (0.0283)		-0.0375 (0.0294)					
GDPpc (log)	0.0239* (0.0126)		0.0197 (0.0132)				0.0231* (0.0126)	
Fertility Rate	0.0231*** (0.00864)		0.0240*** (0.00868)				0.0253*** (0.00820)	
Pre Conflict %	-0.611*** (0.154)		-0.599*** (0.157)				-0.587*** (0.154)	
Post 2000	0.0726*** (0.0185)		0.0673*** (0.0201)				0.0627*** (0.0191)	
Constant	-0.334** (0.148)	0.570*** (0.0321)	-0.307** (0.156)	0.552*** (0.0333)	-0.347** (0.147)	0.550*** (0.0310)		
Observations	54	54	54	54	54	54	54	54

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

### **A.3 Mediation Analysis on the effect of CRSV on women's CSO on the 2nd post-conflict election**

Table 9: Mediation Analysis.

VARIABLES	A.I. 2nd Election	A.I. WC SO	U.S.S.D. 2nd Election	U.S.S.D. WC SO	H.R.W. 2nd Election	H.R.W. WC SO
WC SO	-0.0325 (0.0963)		-0.0412 (0.0989)		-0.0594 (0.0998)	
Sporadic CRSV	-0.0484 (0.0410)	-0.0165 (0.0880)				
Systematic CRSV	-0.101 (0.0633)	-0.115 (0.128)				
Sporadic CRSV		-0.0186 (0.0401)	0.0365 (0.0838)			
Systematic CRSV		-0.0729 (0.0734)	0.0689 (0.155)			
Sporadic CRSV					0.0288 (0.0527)	0.00996 (0.112)
Systematic CRSV					-0.0259 (0.0519)	-0.0782 (0.102)
High Intensity	0.0107 (0.0397)		0.00618 (0.0409)		0.00127 (0.0425)	
GDPpc (log)	-0.0154 (0.0211)		-0.0122 (0.0215)		-0.0160 (0.0219)	
Fertility Rate	-0.0111 (0.0135)		-0.0153 (0.0138)		-0.0173 (0.0138)	
Pre-conflict %	-0.843*** (0.242)		-0.864*** (0.249)		-0.852*** (0.250)	
Post2000	0.0814** (0.0320)		0.0710** (0.0330)		0.0627* (0.0331)	
Constant	0.290 (0.246)	0.568*** (0.0368)	0.287 (0.253)	0.548*** (0.0370)	0.336 (0.257)	0.566*** (0.0363)
Observations	43	43	43	43	43	43

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

## A.4

Main analysis with binary measurements of CRSV.

In this appendix I replicate the tables included in the main analysis by using CRSV as a binary variable (whether CSRV was prevalent during conflict or not). Hence, in Table 10 I present the results examining the independent relationship between CRSV and women's civil society participation on the dependent variable in the first and second post-conflict elections. Again, the results present similar patterns. Here, CRSV does not have an effect either on the first or the second post-conflict election. Women's participation in CSOs during conflict however has a positive and significant effect at the 5 percent level. High intensity has also a negative and significant effect on the first post-conflict election but not in the second, implying that the societal and political openings that enable women to expand their roles are short lived. Quotas also have a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable, an effect that does not carry on to the second post-conflict election. The variables GDP per capita, fertility rates and elections in the post 2000 timeframe have a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable, although this effect does not appear to hold in the second post-conflict election. Women's pre-conflict legislative presence exerts a negative effect on the dependent variable during both elections.

Table 14: Table 10: Linear Regression Models.

VARIABLES	A.I.		U.S.S.D.		U.S.S.D.		H.R.W.	
	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election
CRSV	0.00228 (0.0241)	-0.0590 (0.0390)						
CRSV			0.00671 (0.0213)	-0.0305 (0.0301)			0.0293 (0.0196)	0.00318 (0.0342)
CRSV							0.0190 (0.0225)	-0.0387 (0.0801)
UNPKO	0.0248 (0.0222)	-0.0189 (0.0677)	0.0237 (0.0238)	-0.0425 (0.0790)			0.155** (0.0682)	-0.0539 (0.118)
WCOS	0.161** (0.0733)	-0.0367 (0.109)	0.159** (0.0729)	-0.0448 (0.109)			-0.0439* (0.0221)	0.0110 (0.0706)
High Intensity	-0.0333 (0.0205)	0.0130 (0.0579)	-0.0337* (0.0192)	0.0170 (0.0672)			0.0258* (0.0148)	-0.0182 (0.0349)
GDPpc (log)	0.0289* (0.0162)	-0.0151 (0.0330)	0.0280* (0.0162)	-0.0169 (0.0342)			0.0272** (0.0125)	-0.0188 (0.0168)
Fertility Rate	0.0286* (0.0146)	-0.0132 (0.0150)	0.0283** (0.0137)	-0.0178 (0.0164)			-0.559* (0.315)	-0.864** (0.404)
Pre-conflict %	-0.578* (0.306)	-0.857** (0.390)	-0.575* (0.307)	-0.869** (0.400)			0.0725*** (0.0204)	0.0615 (0.0403)
Post 2000	0.0782*** (0.0229)	0.0801* (0.0407)	0.0764*** (0.0239)	0.0732* (0.0414)			-0.386* (0.196)	0.360 (0.390)
Constant	-0.419* (0.222)	0.301 (0.365)	-0.410* (0.219)	0.341 (0.382)				
Observations	54	43	54	43			54	43
R-squared	0.516	0.345	0.517	0.319			0.530	0.309

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



Moving on, I also replicate the main results using binary indicators for CRSV and the results in Table 11 do not change significantly. CRSV does not have an independent effect and neither does the interaction term with WCSOs. However, women's CSO presence yields an independent and significant effect in the first post-conflict election. Although the coefficient for the second post-conflict election is positive, it is yet insignificant. The results do not differ from Table 10 and paint a similar picture. In Table 12 I analyse the effect of an interaction term between women's CSOs and the presence of a UNPKO, while operationalising a binary indicator for CRSV prevalence. Again, the interaction term is insignificant, while women's CSO presence exerts a positive and significant effect in the first post-conflict election. The interaction yields a null effect on the dependent variable in the second post-conflict election as well.

Table 15: Table 11: Linear Regression Models.

VARIABLES	A.I.	A.I.	U.S.S.D.	U.S.S.D.	H.R.W.	H.R.W.
	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election
CSRV	0.0269 (0.0432)	-0.0269 (0.0865)				
CRSV x WCSO	-0.0476 (0.0670)	-0.0364 (0.118)				
CRSV			0.0408 (0.0534)	-0.0408 (0.0792)		
CRSV x WCSO			-0.0592 (0.0717)	0.0178 (0.108)		
Sexual Violence					0.0563 (0.0442)	0.00185 (0.0720)
CRSV x WCSO					-0.0491 (0.0666)	0.00255 (0.104)
WCSO	0.176** (0.0830)	-0.0132 (0.130)	0.186** (0.0824)	-0.0512 (0.139)	0.170** (0.0762)	-0.0545 (0.136)
UNPKO	0.0237 (0.0224)	-0.0308 (0.0677)	0.0216 (0.0242)	-0.0412 (0.0780)	0.0174 (0.0226)	-0.0386 (0.0802)
High Intensity	-0.0303 (0.0211)	0.0147 (0.0589)	-0.0328* (0.0185)	0.0168 (0.0677)	-0.0410* (0.0218)	0.0108 (0.0695)
GDPpc (log)	0.0292* (0.0163)	-0.0153 (0.0342)	0.0281* (0.0163)	-0.0169 (0.0347)	0.0261* (0.0148)	-0.0182 (0.0354)
Fertility Rate	0.0291* (0.0148)	-0.0138 (0.0155)	0.0287** (0.0139)	-0.0179 (0.0169)	0.0275** (0.0126)	-0.0188 (0.0171)
Pre-conflict %	-0.580* (0.309)	-0.897** (0.380)	-0.574* (0.314)	-0.871** (0.403)	-0.563* (0.320)	-0.865** (0.410)
Post 2000	0.0785*** (0.0230)	0.0656 (0.0424)	0.0739*** (0.0256)	0.0734* (0.0423)	0.0729*** (0.0205)	0.0615 (0.0407)
Constant	-0.432* (0.226)	0.291 (0.383)	-0.427* (0.221)	0.345 (0.400)	-0.399* (0.198)	0.361 (0.405)
Observations	54	43	54	43	54	43
R-squared	0.518	0.356	0.520	0.320	0.532	0.309

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 16: Table 12: Linear Regression Models.

VARIABLES	A.I.	A.I.	U.S.S.D.	U.S.S.D.	H.R.W.	H.R.W.
	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election	1st Election	2nd Election
CRSV	0.00293 (0.0239)	-0.0596 (0.0399)				
CRSV			0.00755 (0.0211)	-0.0295 (0.0300)		
CRSV				0.0318* (0.0183)	0.00493 (0.0345)	
UNPKO	-0.0203 (0.0619)	-0.00505 (0.144)	-0.0225 (0.0636)	-0.0708 (0.140)	-0.0393 (0.0603)	-0.110 (0.155)
WCOS	0.155** (0.0719)	-0.0363 (0.111)	0.153** (0.0711)	-0.0456 (0.112)	0.147** (0.0667)	-0.0545 (0.120)
UNPKO x WCOS	0.0846 (0.112)	-0.0214 (0.216)	0.0866 (0.114)	0.0446 (0.215)	0.109 (0.108)	0.111 (0.243)
High Intensity	-0.0366* (0.0194)	0.0132 (0.0590)	-0.0370** (0.0174)	0.0165 (0.0683)	-0.0488** (0.0191)	0.00977 (0.0716)
GDPpc (log)	0.0295* (0.0164)	-0.0152 0.0286* (0.0335)	-0.0168 (0.0165)	0.0264* (0.0346)	-0.0181 (0.0149)	(0.0353)
Fertility Rate	0.0295* (0.0151)	-0.0133 0.0292** (0.0152)	-0.0176 (0.0143)	0.0283** (0.0166)	-0.0182 (0.0130)	(0.0168)
Pre-conflict %	-0.572* (0.309)	-0.859** (0.403)	-0.570* (0.310)	-0.865** (0.412)	-0.551* (0.318)	-0.854** (0.418)
Post 2000	0.0806*** (0.0247)	0.0799* (0.0419)	0.0787*** (0.0261)	0.0737* (0.0427)	0.0752*** (0.0223)	0.0630 (0.0418)
Constant	-0.426* (0.224)	0.302 (0.370)	-0.417* (0.222)	0.339 (0.387)	-0.394* (0.198)	0.355 (0.393)
Observations	54	43	54	43	54	43
R-squared	0.519	0.345	0.520	0.320	0.536	0.310

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The graphs below present the relationship between CRSV and the dependent variable in the first and second post-conflict elections respectively. It becomes clear, that CRSV is associated with the dependent variable in a mostly negative fashion, especially in the second post-conflict election.

Figure 8: Coefficient plots for different levels of CRSV in the first & second post-conflict election.

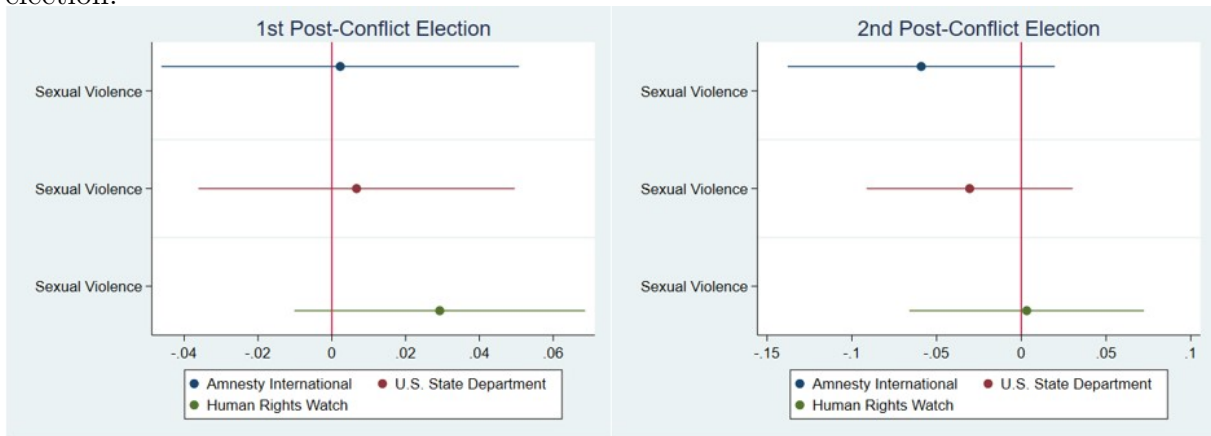
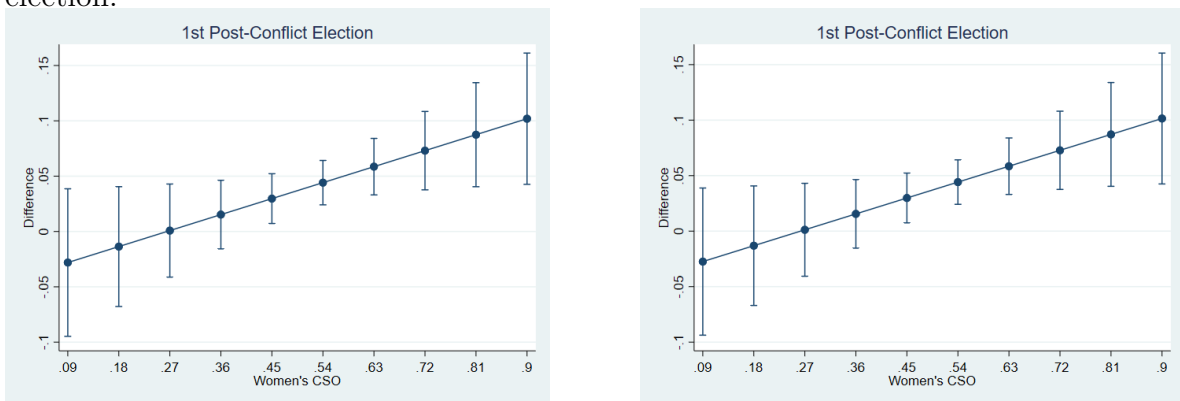


Figure 9: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women’s representation in the first post-conflict election.



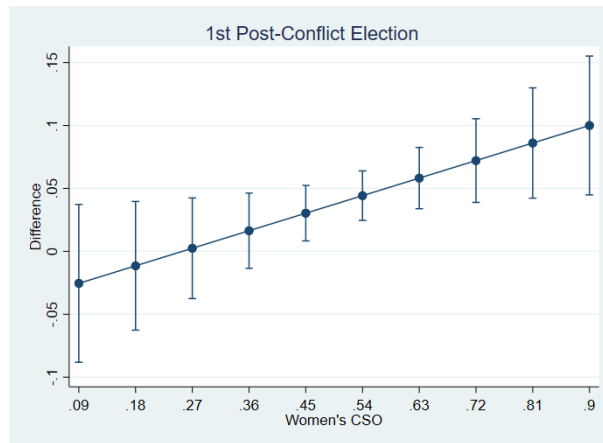
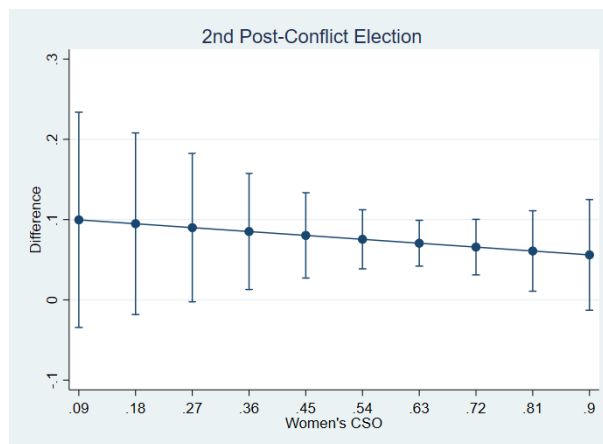
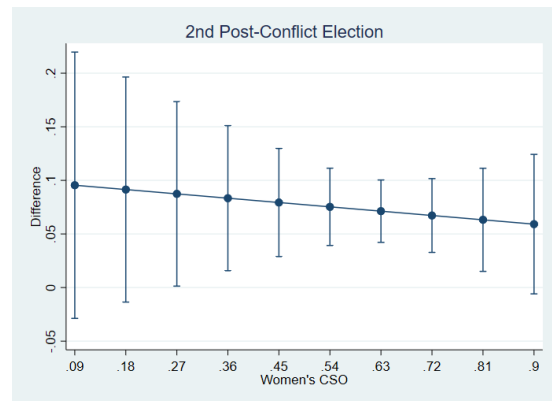
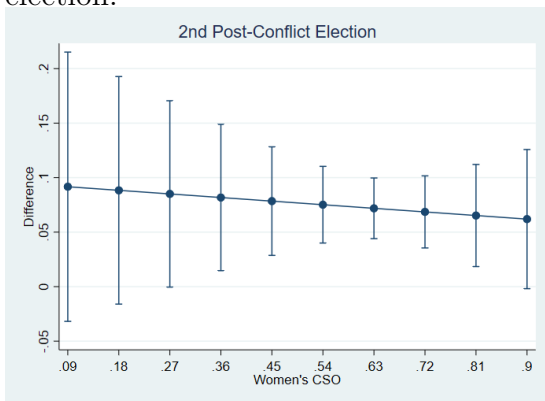


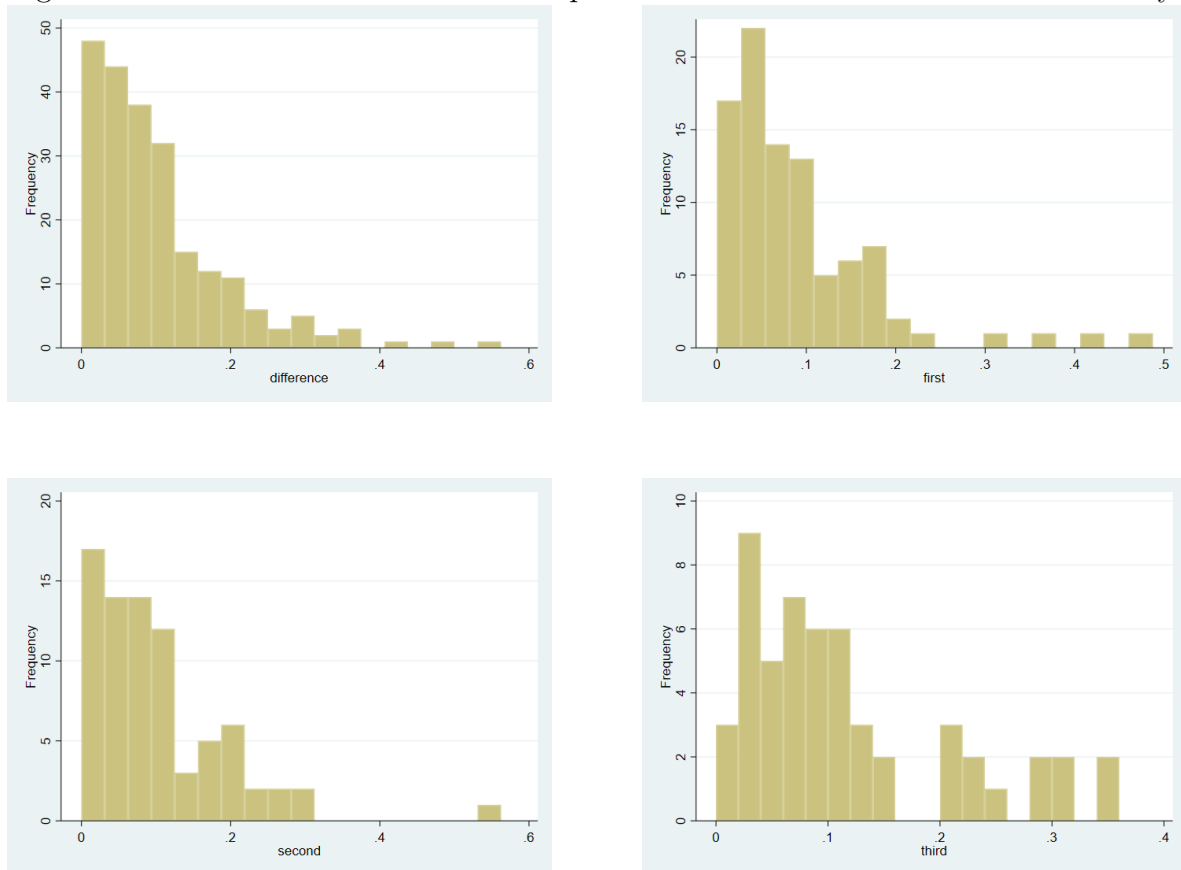
Figure 10: Marginal effects of WCSOs on women’s representation in the first post-conflict election.



## B Appendix

### B.1 Distribution of dependent variables.

Figure 11: Distribution of the different dependent variables included in the main analysis.



### B.2 Regression analysis excluding the observations corresponding to Rwanda & Burundi.

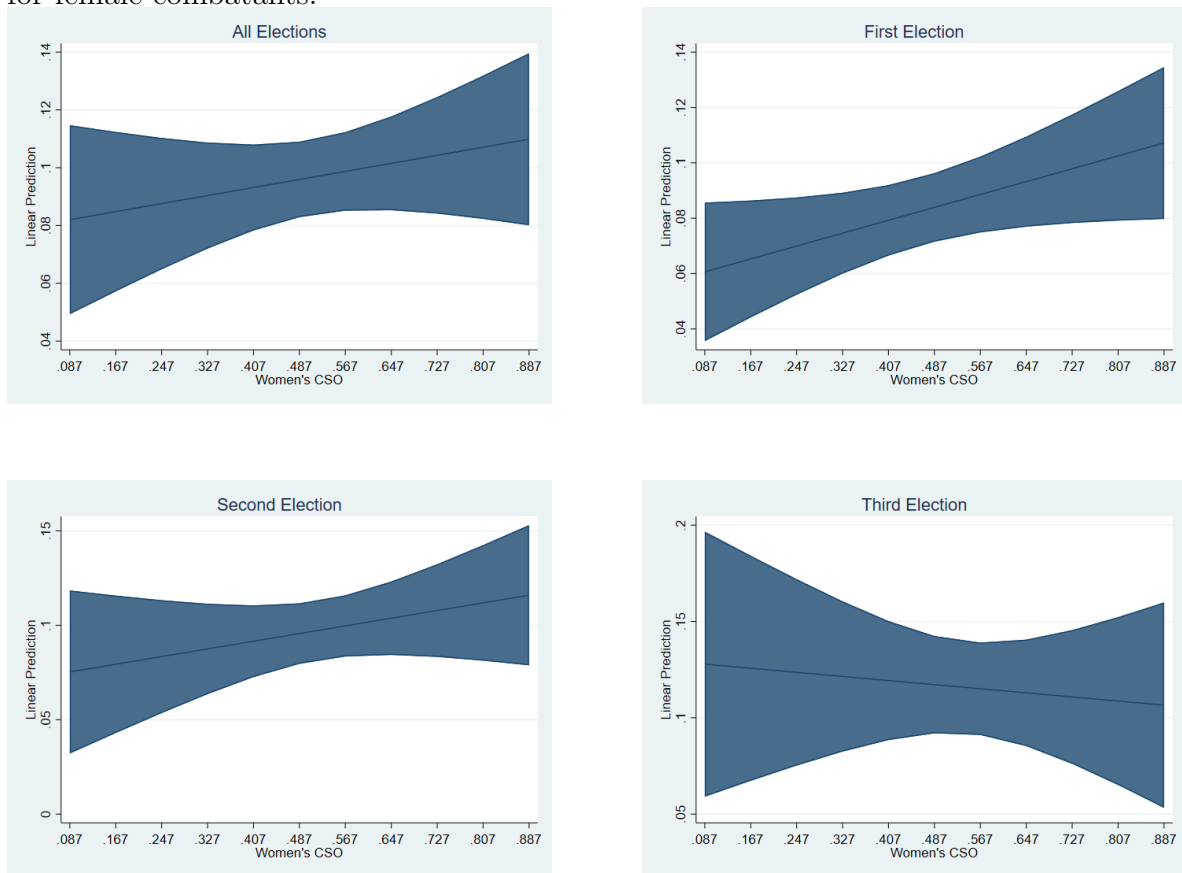
Table 17: OLS Regression on the difference on women's legislative numbers in the first three post-conflict elections with clustered standard errors on the country level.

Variables	All elections		1st Election		2nd Election		3rd Election		All Elections		1st Election		2nd Election		3rd Election		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 2	Model 1	Model 3	Model 3	Model 4	Model 4	Model 5	Model 5	Model 6	Model 6	Model 7	Model 7	Model 8	Model 8	
Female Combatants	0.00800 (0.0159)	-0.00107 (0.0136)	0.0315 (0.0228)	-0.00131 (0.0299)	0.0213 (0.0167)	0.00611 (0.0140)	0.0213 (0.0167)	0.00611 (0.0140)	0.0395* (0.0221)	0.0257 (0.0364)	0.0316 (0.0385)	0.0721** (0.0311)	0.0150 (0.0189)	0.0316 (0.0385)	0.0316 (0.0385)	0.0316 (0.0385)	0.0316 (0.0385)
WCSO	0.0348 (0.0356)	0.0582** (0.0290)	0.0508 (0.0462)	-0.0266 (0.0698)	0.0481 (0.0365)	0.0734** (0.0309)	0.0481 (0.0365)	0.0734** (0.0309)	0.0576 (0.0464)	-0.0148 (0.0740)							
PR System	0.0340* (0.0173)	0.0170 (0.0205)	0.0200 (0.0213)	0.0631** (0.0303)													
Quota																	
High Intensity	-0.0209 (0.0252)	-0.0345 (0.0211)	-0.0350 (0.0329)	0.0102 (0.0434)	-0.0262 (0.0245)	-0.0328* (0.0178)	0.0102 (0.0434)	-0.0328* (0.0178)	-0.0391 (0.0331)	-0.00217 (0.0468)							
Rebel Victory	-0.0539*** (0.0145)	-0.0526** (0.0203)	-0.0502*** (0.0171)	-0.0733*** (0.0252)	-0.0371** (0.0152)	-0.0381** (0.0185)	-0.0733*** (0.0252)	-0.0371** (0.0152)	-0.0417** (0.0163)	-0.0445 (0.0291)							
Peace Agreement	0.0143 (0.0213)	0.0132 (0.0160)	0.0204 (0.0328)	0.00434 (0.0413)	0.0202 (0.0236)	0.00681 (0.0174)	0.00434 (0.0413)	0.0202 (0.0236)	0.0243 (0.0355)	0.0187 (0.0459)							
GDPpc (log)	0.00339 (0.00739)	-0.00371 (0.00831)	0.00241 (0.0119)	0.00668 (0.0159)	0.00434 (0.00832)	-0.00319 (0.00776)	0.00668 (0.0159)	0.00434 (0.00832)	0.00230 (0.0126)	0.00478 (0.0178)							
Former Colony	0.0169 (0.0140)	0.0181 (0.0162)	0.0140 (0.0180)	0.0170 (0.0282)	0.0128 (0.0133)	0.0181 (0.0143)	0.0170 (0.0282)	0.0128 (0.0133)	0.00931 (0.0167)	0.00304 (0.0261)							
Pre Conflict %	0.228* (0.121)	0.346* (0.183)	0.178 (0.116)	0.209 (0.146)	0.206* (0.104)	0.274* (0.154)	0.209 (0.146)	0.206* (0.104)	0.170 (0.106)	0.199 (0.137)							
Post2000	0.0607*** (0.0106)	0.0604*** (0.0160)	0.0433** (0.0195)	0.0768*** (0.0263)	0.0504*** (0.0103)	0.0428*** (0.0128)	0.0768*** (0.0263)	0.0504*** (0.0103)	0.0363* (0.0198)	0.0735** (0.0306)							
Constant	0.00346 (0.0583)	0.0433 (0.0668)	0.0162 (0.0965)	-0.00217 (0.125)	-0.00468 (0.0670)	0.0339 (0.0632)	-0.00217 (0.125)	-0.00468 (0.0670)	0.0196 (0.104)	0.0237 (0.145)							
Observations	218	88	77	53	218	88	53	218	77	53							
R-squared	0.339	0.434	0.292	0.359	0.334	0.506	0.359	0.334	0.285	0.298							

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

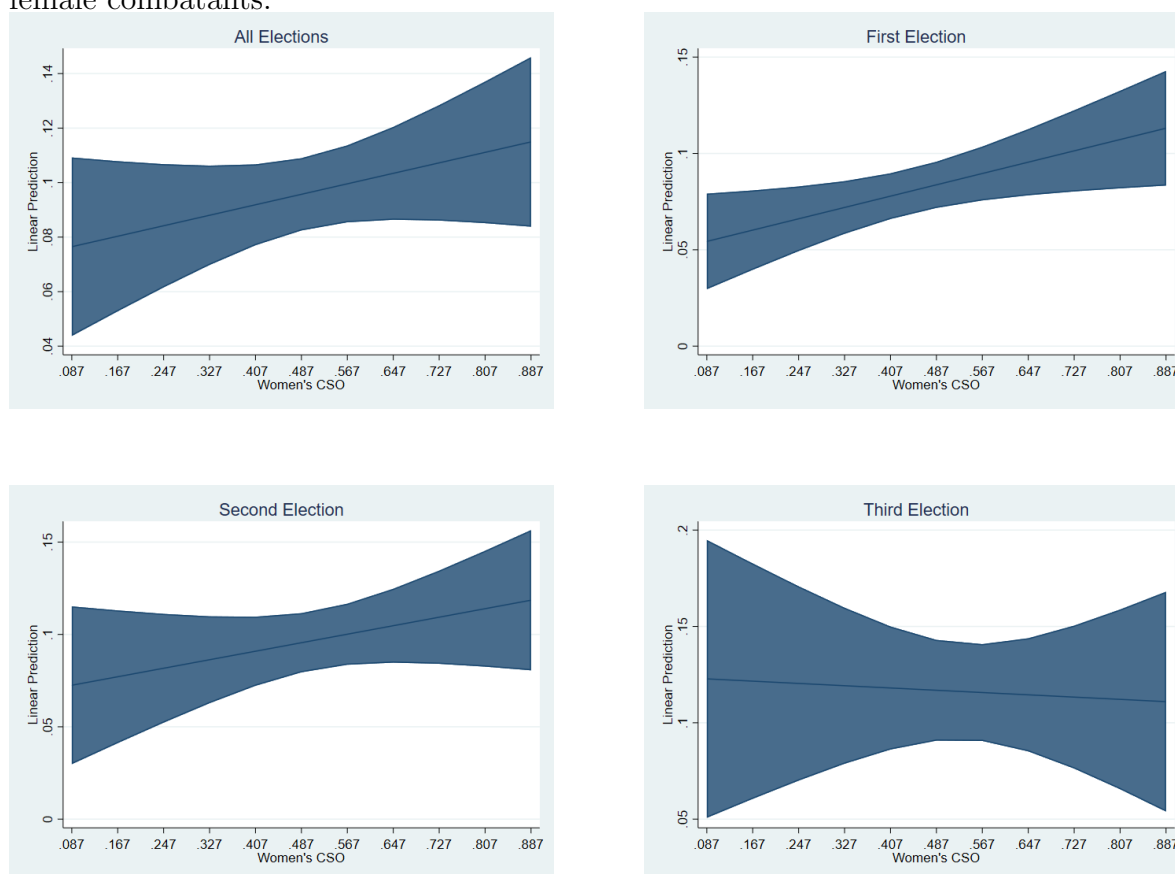
Figure 12: Marginal effect of WCSO participation on changes on women's legislative percentage in the first three post-conflict elections using PR systems and binary indicator for female combatants.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations, and further disaggregated by electoral cycle.



Figure 13: Marginal effect of WCSO participation on changes on women's legislative percentage in the first three post-conflict elections using quotas and binary indicator for female combatants.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations, and further disaggregated by electoral cycle.

### B.3 Regression analysis excluding the observations corresponding to Rwanda & Burundi.

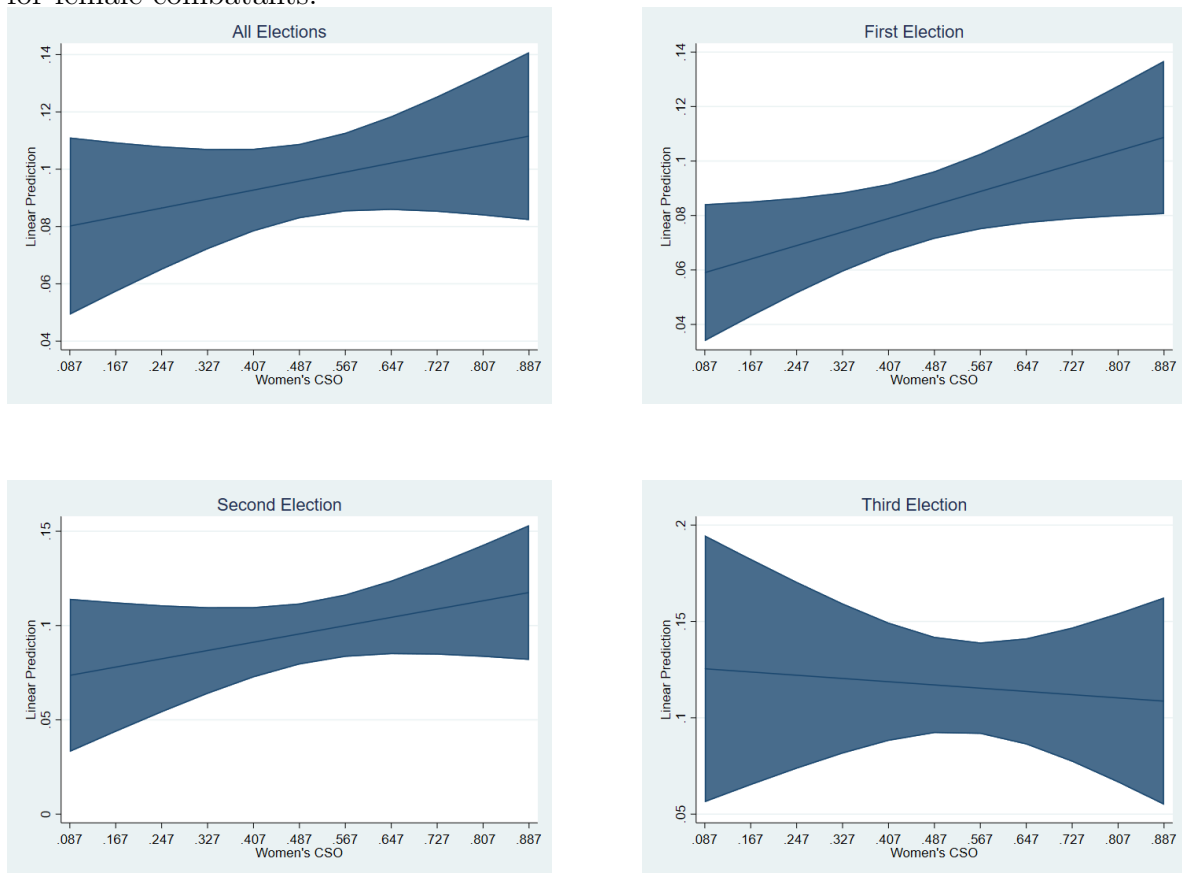
Table 18: OLS Regression on the difference on women's legislative numbers in the first three post-conflict elections with clustered standard errors on the country level.

Variables	All elections		1st Election		2nd Election		3rd Election		All Elections		1st Election		2nd Election		3rd Election	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 6	Model 7	Model 7	Model 8	Model 8	Model 8	
FC Category 1	-0.00219 (0.0164)	-0.0161 (0.0155)	0.0223 (0.0255)	-0.00892 (0.0484)	0.00339 (0.0154)	-0.0130 (0.0185)	0.0297 (0.0236)	0.0119 (0.0463)								
FC Category 2	0.0191 (0.0227)	0.0110 (0.0188)	0.0385 (0.0334)	0.0138 (0.0349)	0.0408 (0.0248)	0.0280* (0.0160)	0.0503 (0.0353)	0.0445 (0.0459)								
FC Category 3	-0.00617 (0.0253)	0.00754 (0.0272)	0.0343 (0.0447)	-0.120** (0.0472)	-0.00398 (0.0262)	-0.0131 (0.0341)	0.0302 (0.0503)	-0.0793 (0.0593)								
WCISO	0.0393 (0.0341)	0.0621** (0.0296)	0.0549 (0.0434)	-0.0210 (0.0706)	0.0566 (0.0343)	0.0780** (0.0304)	0.0634 (0.0429)	-0.00463 (0.0764)								
PR System	0.0333* (0.0172)	0.0147 (0.0206)	0.0205 (0.0216)	0.0645** (0.0304)												
Quota					0.0443** (0.0168)	0.0779** (0.0316)	0.0181 (0.0399)	0.0335 (0.0399)								
High Intensity	-0.0221 (0.0242)	-0.0388* (0.0213)	-0.0353 (0.0325)	0.00416 (0.0424)	-0.0286 (0.0227)	-0.0373** (0.0176)	-0.0398 (0.0322)	-0.00817 (0.0459)								
Rebel Victory	-0.0537*** (0.0147)	-0.0520** (0.0206)	-0.0501*** (0.0175)	-0.0748*** (0.0260)	-0.0368** (0.0154)	-0.0382** (0.0190)	-0.0413** (0.0168)	-0.0444 (0.0310)								
Peace Agreement	0.0144 (0.0230)	0.0104 (0.0171)	0.0185 (0.0385)	0.0148 (0.0415)	0.0200 (0.0251)	0.00362 (0.0173)	0.0242 (0.0413)	0.0278 (0.0470)								
GDPpc (log)	0.00278 (0.00779)	-0.00322 (0.00904)	0.00284 (0.0139)	0.00377 (0.0157)	0.00338 (0.00867)	-0.00383 (0.00817)	0.00202 (0.0146)	0.00202 (0.0180)								
Former Colony	0.0165 (0.0144)	0.0193 (0.0170)	0.0153 (0.0200)	0.0120 (0.0284)	0.0128 (0.0134)	0.0181 (0.0145)	0.00971 (0.0182)	-0.00106 (0.0278)								
Pre Conflict %	0.235* (0.132)	0.332 (0.209)	0.171 (0.125)	0.242 (0.158)	0.212* (0.111)	0.279 (0.170)	0.168 (0.114)	0.225 (0.140)								
Post2000	0.0615*** (0.0108)	0.0618*** (0.0165)	0.0440** (0.0209)	0.0779*** (0.0274)	0.0499*** (0.0104)	0.0444*** (0.0133)	0.0356 (0.0213)	0.0738*** (0.0329)								
Constant	0.00602 (0.0619)	0.0381 (0.0722)	0.0103 (0.114)	0.0185 (0.125)	-0.00212 (0.0703)	0.0361 (0.0663)	0.0186 (0.121)	0.0410 (0.150)								
Observations	218	88	77	53	218	88	77	53								
R-squared	0.343	0.439	0.294	0.391	0.346	0.522	0.288	0.327								

Standard errors in parentheses

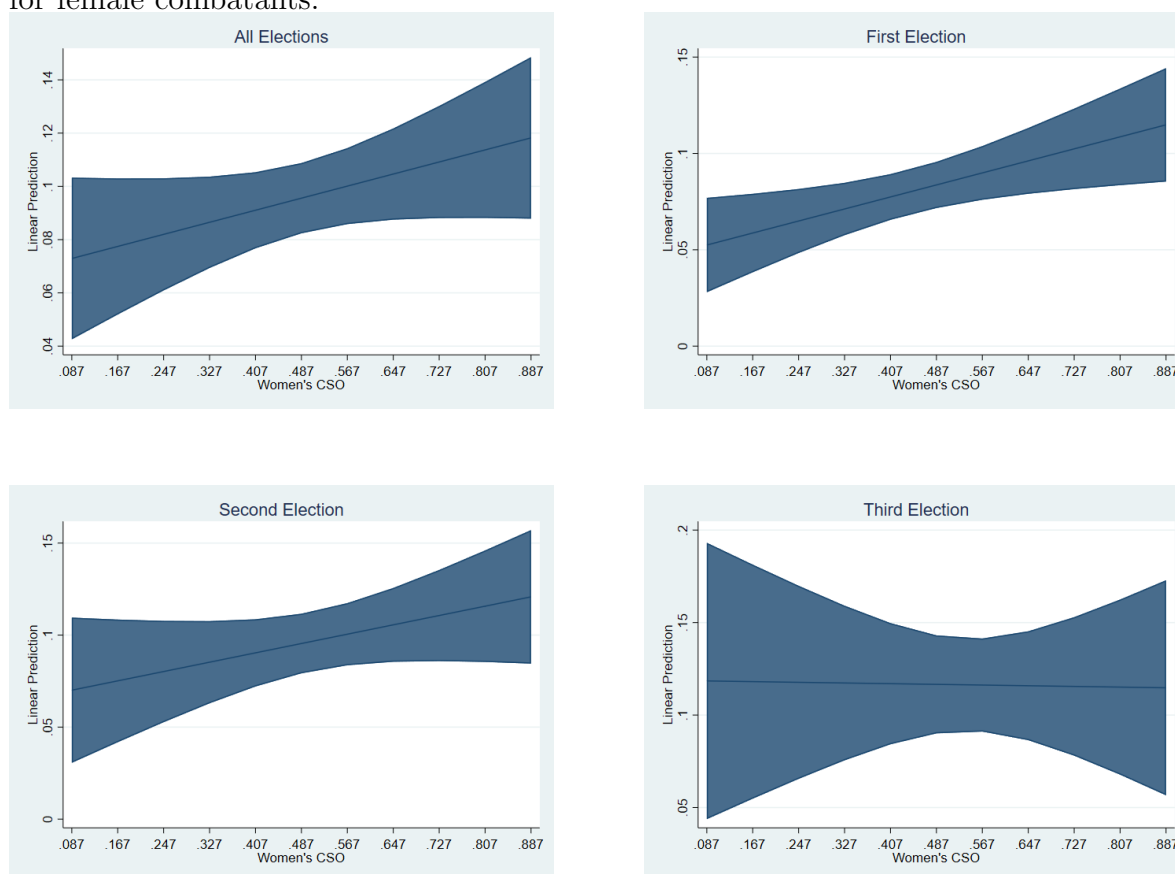
\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Figure 14: Marginal effect of WCSO participation on changes on women's legislative percentage in the first three post-conflict elections using PR system and categorical indicator for female combatants.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations, and further disaggregated by electoral cycle.

Figure 15: Marginal effect of WCSO participation on changes on women's legislative percentage in the first three post-conflict elections using quotas and categorical indicator for female combatants.



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals for the entirety observations, and further disaggregated by electoral cycle.

## C Appendix

### C.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Women PP	269	0.742	0.203	0.266	1
Women PP (30%)	259	0.756	0.183	0.292	1
Women CSO (mean)	269	0.491	0.197	0.121	0.825
GDPper capita (log)	269	7.226	0.981	5.362	9.512
Fertility rate	269	5.1	2.053	1.52	7.8

Variable	Value.	Freq.	Total
High intensity	0	206	
	1	63	269
Gender Provisions	0	158	
	1	111	269
Participatory Provisions	0	230	
	1	39	269
Protectionist Provisions	0	234	
	1	35	269
Post2000	0	76	
	1	193	269
Female Signatories	0	247	
	1	22	269

## C.2 Linear regression models with clustered standard errors.

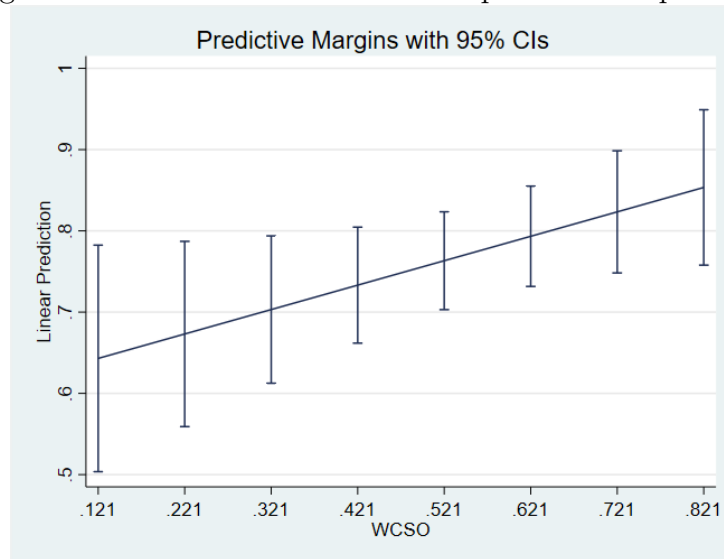
Table 19: GLS models with random effects.

VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
WCSO	0.332*** (0.126)	0.397** (0.163)	0.307** (0.150)	0.383** (0.161)
Gender	0.0610 (0.0568)	0.173*** (0.0474)		
Direct provisions			0.0827* (0.0454)	1.372 (0.855)
Direct x WCSO				-2.590 (1.751)
Indirect provisions			0.153* (0.0821)	0.375** (0.170)
Indirect x WCSO				-0.469 (0.344)
Female Signatories		-0.146*** (0.0521)	-0.128*** (0.0325)	-0.130*** (0.0374)
High Intensity		0.00769 (0.0318)	0.0325 (0.0283)	0.0356 (0.0293)
GDPpc (log)		0.101*** (0.0364)	0.0818** (0.0346)	0.0763** (0.0339)
Fertility Rate		0.0166 (0.0115)	0.0208* (0.0110)	0.0219* (0.0113)
Post2000		0.0563* (0.0324)	0.0590* (0.0324)	
Constant	0.565*** (0.0808)	-0.321 (0.286)	-0.168 (0.274)	-0.177 (0.292)
Random Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	269	269	269	269
Number of ccode	27	27	27	27

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Figure 16: Marginal effect of WCSOs on women's post-conflict political participation



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals. The graph is based on Model 3, Table 14.

### C.3 Linear regression models with clustered standard errors (WPP 30%).

Table 20: GLS models with random effects.

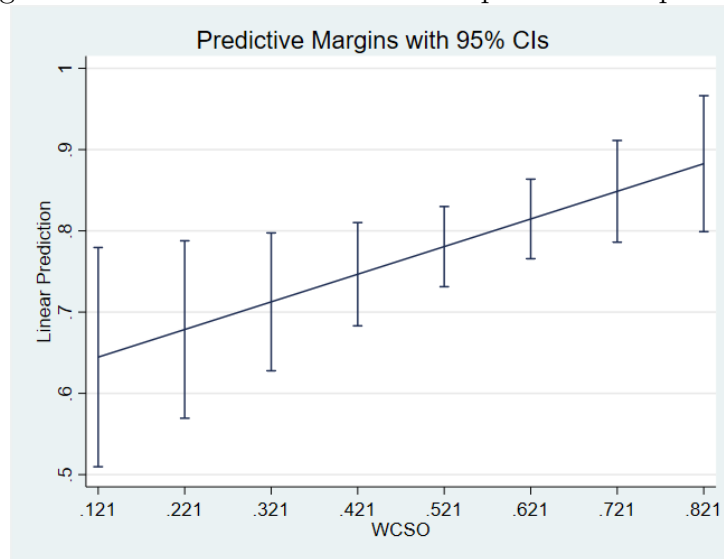
VARIABLES	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
WCSO	0.415*** (0.148)	0.476*** (0.154)	0.355** (0.145)	0.393** (0.160)
Gender	0.169*** (0.0592)	0.209*** (0.0614)		
Direct provisions			0.175*** (0.0561)	-0.254 (0.470)
Direct x WCSO				0.904 (0.971)
Indirect provisions			0.104 (0.0745)	0.305** (0.141)
Indirect x WCSO				-0.422 (0.260)
Female Signatories		-0.0798*** (0.0106)	-0.0916*** (0.0158)	-0.108*** (0.0175)
High Intensity		0.00440 (0.0296)	0.0139 (0.0293)	0.0207 (0.0303)
GDPpc (log)		0.0664*** (0.0257)	0.0718** (0.0325)	0.0737** (0.0332)
Fertility Rate		0.0209* (0.0110)	0.0240* (0.0126)	0.0223* (0.0116)
Post2000		0.0614* (0.0333)	0.0584* (0.0333)	0.0579* (0.0337)
Constant	0.498*** (0.103)	-0.177 (0.219)	-0.122 (0.284)	-0.146 (0.291)
Random Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	259	259	259	259
Number of ccode	26	26	26	26

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$



Figure 17: Marginal effect of WCSOs on women's post-conflict political participation



Note: The graph presents the marginal change in women's political participation at different levels of women's CSO participation during conflict with 95% confidence intervals. The graph is based on Model 3, Table 15.