



Filling the Gaps: A Virtual Discussion of Gender, Peace and Security Research

Module Two Summary

Hello all,

Thank you for your participation in week two of 'Filling the Gaps' in gender, peace and security research.

We're still making great strides in "Filling the Gaps" this week. In week one the goal was to create a general assessment of the work being done in gender, peace and security research. By the end of the last week we had already begun on the goal of week two, identifying research gaps, whether in data, conceptualizations, regional focus or gender perspective. I have attempted a brief summary of the gaps identified and arguments made this week. The gaps identified can be broadly summarized as the following:

- A deficiency in monitoring, follow-through, and ways to measure the impact of gender-sensitive policies;
- Lack of research and recognition of Afro-descendent individuals and communities;
- A disconnect between the work being done by local and grassroots activism and academic research, and a need for a participatory approach to security.

Steven Schoofs and Nicola Popovic both brought up questions of the impact of research and how evaluation and monitoring can be used in regards to difficult-to-quantify concepts used in gender mainstreaming efforts. Steven outlined several areas of concern in this area. First, what needs to be measured, or what qualifies as being gender-transformative peace-building interventions? How to measure sensitive and complicated concepts such as empowerment and equality? What are context-specific and gender sensitive indicators and evaluation methods that can capture the impact of gender mainstreaming? Finally, he noted that developing participatory methods of assessing the impact of gender mainstreaming in local contexts may be a way to establish indicators that guide gender-transformative interventions.

One of the major gaps most participants noted in week one was a lack of comprehensive gender analysis or perspective in academic disciplines and research. Marian Douglas-Ungaro and other participants expanded on this further by discussing the lack of ethnic analysis accompanying gender analysis and noted that many groups are affected by multiple forms of discrimination that is not comprehensively discussed in security studies research.

Marian further noted the specific lack of research on the experiences of Afro-descendent women and communities. She proposed developing a community of Afro-

descendent women and supporters to collaborate on research, information sharing and organizing in order to develop an international human rights-based framework to assess and promote the needs of Afro-descendent women and their communities. Farid Benavides noted the experiences of Afro-Colombian groups which, while making up a large percentage of the population, have not been granted the same protections as indigenous groups in the country.

Many participants discussed the need for more links between grassroots and local organizations and academia. Melanie Hoewer, Obododimma Oha and Niamh Reilly, among others, discussed this gap. Niamh called for 'a participatory approach – academic-based researchers working with CSO-based researchers and women's organizations locally' to identify obstacles to women's empowerment and develop context-specific strategies to address security concerns. Obododimma noted a South African publication, *Agenda*, which attempts to bridge academic and non-academic discourse on gender equality issues.

Most of the comments of the past two weeks bely a wider argument about the role of research in peace and security studies. There seems to be a consensus that there is an academic responsibility to acknowledge and promote diverse ways of thinking and to develop spaces for recognizing marginalized people and perspectives left out of traditional security concerns. Participants have discussed this through the expansion of the term 'security' from national security to human security; the need to include a gender analysis at all levels of security approaches which also takes into account race, ethnicity, citizenship and other means by which discrimination occurs; and a need for collaborative, participatory approaches to improve research, policy and ground-level results.

Next week we will be discussing tools to fill the research gaps that we have been identifying. I will send a comprehensive outline for Module 3 on Monday. In the meantime, participant who would still like to respond to any of the questions or comments raised so far should feel free to do so. **I would also like to remind all the participants who have not yet sent in their registration forms to do so as soon as possible.**

Thank you for your comments and participation this week!

Warm regards,

Ciara