



Filling the Gaps:

A Virtual Discussion of Gender, Peace and Security Research

Module Three Summary

Hello all,

Thank you for a great final week to the 'Filling the Gaps' virtual discussion!

The goal of this last week was to identify methods and tools for filling the research gaps we have been identifying in gender and security studies. I have attempted a summary of this week's comment below I will be sending a longer summary of the entire discussion within the next week.

The line of discussion for module three was partially started in week two with comments regarding participatory-research approaches and monitoring and evaluation of gender-sensitive indicators. This week we have continued with these comments and gone further in elaborating tools to improve gender and security research and possible methods for future collaboration.

The methods and tools suggested this week broadly focus on two areas:

- Collaboration and participation from the various actors involved in peace processes;
- An expansion of data, theoretical outlooks and perspectives on gender and security including acknowledging the role that formal and informal power and discourse play in security.

Kathleen Staudt suggested sustaining and growing the network of discussion participants. One suggestion for this was to develop a **community of practice** to continue information sharing among participants. If there are enough interested participants to sustain such a network UN-INSTRAW could work to support the process of building such community. Some participants also suggested meeting up at the International Studies Association (ISA) Conference in New York in February 2009.

B. Welling Hall noted that **collaboration with policymakers** is a vital part of building more gender-responsive security policies. She asked, 'Isn't part of the "gap" we need to fill that of growing and sustaining more gender-sensitive parliamentarians and political leaders?' Njoki Wamai also pointed out the need for strong collaboration with policy makers and the development of gender-sensitive policies at both a global and national level.

Both Njoki and Niamh Reilly, among others, stressed the need for **participatory approaches**. The participatory approach is needed at all levels and with all involved in peace building, including researchers, community members and governments. Njoki discussed top-down versus bottom-up approaches with specific focus on Africa and noted that much research on the continent comes from top-down approach which fails to recognize specific security concerns of the country.

From the perspective of available data, Mariel Lucero noted that there is a **lack of sex-segregated data** available, in Mariel's case for assessing how many women were working in Armed Forces in South America.

Gloria Caballero and others commented that **language barriers** to information can limit participation and platform-building. Specifically, tools for collaboration (such as the discussion itself) which are conducted in English can leave out many voices.

Another theme of comments was **formal versus informal power** both in security studies and community responses. Obododimma Oha called for making security studies less formal, 'Programmes on Peace Education need to move closer to informal and social settings, to engage everyday lives of individuals. In this case, Peace and Security Education does not need to be studied merely as a special subject even in the formal educational settings.'

Niamh discussed the ways **power is organized** in the peace-building process and noted that women's voices are strong in local level organizing and in maintaining day to day survival during conflict but can be relegated to the sidelines during political peace-building processes. She called for 'radically rethinking the ways in which formal power is organised and held to account, and giving informal, civil society engagement real space and clout - so that women's leadership, presence, and impact (Goetz?) is promoted rather than stifled - is essential to creating conditions where 1325, CEDAW and other 'norms' can be meaningful applied in transitions from conflict. There is a real limit to how far such change can be advanced via programmatic work in the absence of broad-based civil society engagement - although programmatic initiatives are essential too of course.'

Dan Moshenberg also touched on themes of **power, naming and race**. He echoed Marion Douglas-Ungaro's concerns regarding representations of African and Afrodescendent women in security discourse. Dan asked what 'real national security' is and more importantly what becomes unreal national security or real national insecurity. He wrote, 'But what if real national security begins by focusing on something other than security (or sovereignty), something other than (and less destructive than and less inimical to women's well being than) the national... Women are described as great at creating stakeholder constituencies and at keeping neighborhoods together. But what of those who fall outside, or under, the stakeholder rubric, what of those excluded from the neighborhood and, even more those criminalized within it?'

A note on the final discussion summary: I would like to include the names and organizations of all participants in the discussion in the final summary in order to make the great regional diversity visible to others. Please let me know if you do NOT wish to be included in this list. Your email addresses and other contact information will not be included, only your name and the name of your organization. Nonetheless I am happy to circulate a

participants list with the collected contact information of all participants if you consider this useful.

Thank you again for a great discussion and looking forward to your final feedback and suggestions!

Best,

Ciara