

Bringing Women to the Table: Women's Inclusion in the Northern Ireland Peace Process

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Abstract

In the past century, conflict resolution has increasingly shifted towards negotiated agreements. The field of inclusive security claims to improve the durability of agreements, however, women in particular are typically excluded from negotiations. There is significant research documenting the positive influence of the inclusion of civil society on agreement durability, and there is a substantial body of literature theorizing that women's inclusion in peace negotiations contributes to the durability of the agreement. However, because of the extreme rarity of cases of women's inclusion, there is little documentation of this theory in practice. My research seeks to explore and demonstrate the effect of women's inclusion on the durability of two rounds of negotiations of the Northern Ireland Troubles: the 1973 Sunningdale Communiqué and the 1998 Belfast Good Friday Agreement. I use structured, focused case comparison (SFCC) to conduct a within-case study with an aim for providing empirical evidence for the inclusion of women, in connection with other forms of inclusion, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and international mediation. The further assessment of women's inclusion in the negotiations could support the inclusion of women in future peace processes and highlight some of the obstacles women face in getting to the table.

Introduction

The 20th century observed a shift towards peace processes and negotiations as the primary methods of international conflict resolution (Ghais 2016, 3). However, this trend was not accompanied by a rise in the inclusion of women in peacebuilding, which is problematic both for women's rights and for the durability of peace agreements (Duncanson 2016, 2). I proposed to research the role of women in conflict resolution to discover whether and how women can influence the durability of peace processes, with the ultimate goal of better understanding how to reduce global conflict, foster durable peacemaking, and build gender equity in conflict resolution.

The standard measure for the durability of a peace process is five years, but nearly 40% of peace processes resume conflict before that marker passes (Dayton and Kriesberg 2009, 1). Durability is more complicated than just the amount of time an agreement holds—it has more to do with how well it was implemented, how strong the institutions of the region experiencing conflict become, and the process of creating the agreement. While I analyzed many of the factors that contribute to durability, I chose to focus on the inclusion of women, because, despite the international push to increase the participation of women in peace processes, there are still very few women at the table.

The importance of women's inclusion in peace processes was first recognized in 2000 when the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325, which addressed the unique role that women play in peace and security as both victims of conflict and agents of peace processes (Tryggstad 2009, 540). Resolution 1325 particularly stressed “the importance of [women's] equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and

promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,” marking the first time the United Nations (and therefore the global community) acknowledged the complexity of the female experience of global conflict (UNSC Resolution 1325). Women’s inclusion is only one piece of the puzzle, and this study develops a fuller picture of the factors of durability. Therefore, my research question is “how does the participation of women in peace processes influence their durability?”

My project rests on two major normative assumptions: first, that peace processes are the preferred way of ending conflict, and second, that ending violent conflict is itself desirable. Peace accords are often shaky and uncertain, and, according to some scholars, “can *systematically* prevent the transformation of war into peace” by institutionalizing the conflict into societal structures (Luttwak 1999). However, I believe instead that working towards positive peace is a crucial aspect of ensuring human rights. It is possible that by focusing on women’s inclusion in peace processes, I neglected different forces in international politics that disregard human rights as appropriate policy goals. However, I accepted these assumptions for the duration of this research project.

Additionally, this raises the question of my own interest in the subject of women’s inclusion. My motivations for researching this topic are somewhat activist in nature—I hope that my research can be useful in improving the durability of peace processes, and contribute to feminist research in international relations. In light of that, I chose a neo-positivist approach for my project to have some amount of generalizability. However, it is very difficult to find instances of women’s inclusion, so the topic does not lend itself to large-n statistical analysis. For all of those reasons, I settled on small-n case study analysis, and then ultimately on structured, focused

case comparison (SFCC), which seeks to make fewer cases more generalizable while developing a deeply contextual understanding (George and Bennet 2004, 67).

One of the primary difficulties with studying women in peace and security is the lack of cases— even processes that are inclusive rarely consist of more than 25% women, and that refers to the entire process, not just the negotiations themselves (Beteta et. al. 2010, 4). Consequently, it is very difficult to find cases of high or even mediocre inclusion of women. However, the Northern Ireland conflict—commonly known as the Troubles—had several attempts at peace agreements, and one of them, the Good Friday Agreement, is notable for its inclusion of women. It is also remarkably durable, lasting without the presence of a peacekeeping operation and remaining relatively stable (Peace Accords Matrix). I chose one other agreement within the Troubles, the Sunningdale Communiqué, as both agreements were based on a consociational model of a power-sharing government (Ibid). By choosing two agreements within the same overall conflict I was able to mitigate the possible impact from particular historical and social contexts. I gained leverage over my question by isolating the various factors that contributed to their success or failure.

To give a brief overview of the conflict itself, its roots lie in the colonization of Ireland by the British, ending with the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 that established the Republic of Ireland (McCartney 1999, 12). Northern Ireland was separated from the Republic of Ireland and allowed to establish its own devolved (and primarily Protestant) government until the Troubles began in 1968, at which point the British government ruled the region directly until the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 (Ibid, 15). The conflict was essentially over the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, with one side, which is generally Catholic, pushing for a united island of

Ireland, and the other side, which is generally Protestant, pushing for continued inclusion in the United Kingdom (Ibid). While the conflict was more focused on national identity than religion, and using the terms “Catholic” and “Protestant” does not encapsulate the complex perspectives on each side of the conflict, for the sake of simplicity I use “Catholic” to describe those in Northern Ireland who wish to join the Republic of Ireland and “Protestant” to describe those who wish to remain in the United Kingdom (Ibid, 13).

The rest of this paper includes a more in-depth review of the literature, covering several competing schools of thought that contribute to durability. I discuss the theories of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), international mediation, and inclusive security. I provide a deeper explanation of my methodology, SFCC, and a justification for my case selection. Finally, I explore my findings and their implications.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, International Mediation, and Inclusive Security: Reviewing the Literature

There are several explanations for the durability of peace processes, but the most important schools of thought I identified advocate for the use of DDR programs, international mediation, and inclusive security, which breaks down into the inclusion of armed groups, civil society, and women respectively. All three of these schools of thought are generally considered individually as explanations for the durability of an agreement, but I argue instead that all three contribute in varying degrees of influence. Moreover, while I address the role of gender in negotiation tactics, I do not discuss the origins of gender, as that is outside the scope of this project. I do not make the argument that women are inherently more peaceful than men. Instead I focus on the different experiences and perspectives women bring to the table as the result of their

typically assigned societal gender roles, so as to avoid essentializing women's experience of conflict and potential contributions to conflict resolution as that of a victim or as an agent of peace. In this literature review I discuss the schools of thought in the order of the significance of their contribution to durability.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration

At its most basic, DDR is intended to reduce the violent aspects of conflict and foster trust between warring parties, increasing the likelihood of success for the peace process. As Ollek describes it, the disarmament aspect of DDR seeks to remove the vehicles of violence, such as small arms, ammunitions, and explosives, with the ultimate goal of rebuilding trust in conflict-torn societies (Ollek 2007, 9). Demobilization—"the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants"—is particularly integral to durability because the continued presence of troops strains the peacemaking process by degrading the fragile trust of the other parties in the conflict that a ceasefire will hold (Ibid). Finally, reintegration, which is the transition from combatant to civilian status, is, according to Spear, the part of DDR that contributes the most to durability, as it reduces the likelihood that individuals will resume violence by reintegrating them into society with services such as job placement or short-term skills training (176).

There is some debate within the field over the effectiveness of DDR. Anderlini argues that frequently, DDR programs are limited to disarmament and demobilization, "with an assumption that the 'R' will happen one way or another" (97). The neglect of reintegration undermines the effectiveness of the disarmament and demobilization aspects, and Anderlini further suggests that the reintegration step come first rather than last (Ibid 109). Ex-combatants are much more willing to give up their arms—often their only sense of security—when they feel

safer about their place in society. However, DDR is ultimately a small piece of the puzzle and, despite its issues, serves to encourage trust in non-violent means of conflict resolution by reducing violent action. More significant in the actual negotiating process is the role of international mediation.

International Mediation

The end of the Cold War led to a new era of international interventionism, both in terms of military action and conflict mediation (Macqueen 2016, 599). Many scholars, such as Fisher and Ury, argue that mediation of conflicts is helpful for their resolution because it facilitates communication between actors that otherwise have difficulty cooperating during negotiations (Barash 2010, 72). Furthermore, an international mediator is more likely to be objective and neutral, and therefore easier for the parties involved in the conflict to trust, than someone from within the conflict (Ibid). There is debate over whether outside mediators have enough familiarity with the culture and history tied to the conflict, or whether they use the mediation to press their own agendas (Doyle 2015, 29). This ties in to a larger debate over the validity of international interventionism, particularly by the U.S., which tends to act unilaterally.

In the Northern Ireland case, the U.S. role in the conflict came about because of the Northern Ireland diaspora (Thompson 2014, 295). Decades of lobbying by both Catholic and Protestant members of the diaspora pushed President Clinton to appoint Senator George Mitchell as an economic advisor to Northern Ireland, which ultimately led to his mediation of the Good Friday Agreement (Ibid). As Mitchell's role was accepted by the majority of the political parties and the British and Irish governments, and he was joined by a Canadian (John de Chastelain) and

a Finn (Harri Holkeri), it can be characterized as international mediation rather than a potentially problematic U.S. intervention (Mitchell 1999, 27).

The final argument for international mediation rests on the concept of ripeness, which is loosely defined as a mutual vulnerability felt by the parties involved in the conflict—in other words, mediation will fail unless the parties acknowledge that negotiation is the only way to prevent further violence (Hancock 2001, 195). Otherwise, there is no incentive for parties to abide by whatever agreement results from the process. Ripeness is a situation the mediator has to cultivate. According to Zartman and Touval, the mediator must convince all sides that their particular perspective and policy goal “is a more expensive, less likely way of achieving an acceptable outcome than the policy of negotiation” (Zartman and Touval 1996, 453). Conflicts that otherwise would end only with the complete annihilation of one or more of the parties have the potential to be ended earlier only with the assistance of a mediator. However, who is at the table besides the mediator also matters for the durability of the agreement.

Inclusive Security

Inclusive security builds trust in the actual negotiation process by allowing interested parties, beyond those in direct conflict, to negotiate the ultimate agreement (Ghais 2016, 5). According to its advocates, inclusive peace processes are correlated with more durable peace agreements (Ibid, 6). Inclusive negotiations address the underlying issues of conflict better than the more traditional type of conflict resolution, which involves only the warring parties (Ibid).

Critics of inclusive security argue that it has too many complications; one of these complications is the difficulty of convincing the warring parties to include others (Paffenholz 2014, 72). Furthermore, scholars posit that inclusivity lengthens the process, and that longer

negotiations attempt to cover too many issues (Ghais 2016, 9). Ghais argues that longer peace processes are a necessary, if unfortunate, byproduct of creating durable settlements (9). Finally, an important argument for inclusive security is how it addresses spoilers, defined by Wanis-St. John as “parties who can challenge each side in the dispute and may have an interest in maintaining the conflict’s *status quo*” (Wanis-St. John 2006, 127). Spoilers disrupt peace processes because they are not satisfied with the efforts for making peace. Including more parties in the negotiations, as a general principle, disincentivizes spoiling because (typically) marginalized parties have an increased ability to influence the agreement.

There are three separate categories of inclusivity: the inclusion of armed groups, of civil society, and of women. The primary argument for the inclusion of armed groups is that it reduces the chances of warring parties taking to the streets to protest the negotiations (a form of spoiling). The arguments against focus on the danger of bringing in violent fringe groups that only want to cause trouble (Wanis-St. John 2006, 14-29). Generally, inclusion limits the ability of armed groups to justify violations of international humanitarian law, smoothing out the peace process (Rondeau 2011, 654). Some scholars found that the inclusion of armed groups contributed greatly to the durability of the agreement, but only when the armed groups experienced substantial public support (Ghais 2016, 291). Therefore, the consensus in the literature is that inclusion should be limited to only the most influential armed groups, rather than all of those involved in a particular conflict.

The majority of the inclusive security literature deals with civil society, defined by Wanis-St. John and Kew as “the vast array of public-oriented associations that are not formal parts of the governing institutions of the state” (15). Wanis-St. John and Kew argue that the

inclusion of the civil society in peace processes strengthens the process of rebuilding institutions in regions affected by the conflict (13). In their study of 23 separate peace processes, they found a strong correlation between the inclusion of civil society in the negotiations and an outcome of sustained peace (Ibid 27). Ghais also found that inclusion of civil society helps to produce more sustainable peace agreements, reasoning that civil society inclusion helps to “promote issues of public concern” (303). Ultimately, the subtopic of civil society can inform the role that women fill in conflict resolution, because of the similarities with how the conflict resolution literature deals with women and civil society.

Hunt and Posa make the theoretical case for the benefits of women’s inclusion in negotiations. They claim that because of women’s typical societal position as family nurturers, “women know their communities [and] they can predict the acceptance of peace initiatives” (Hunt and Posa 2001, 41). Duncanson concurs, noting that women primarily assume the responsibility for maintaining households, families, and communities (23). As most conflicts resume because of seemingly minor, local issues that typically aren’t addressed by peace agreements, women’s deeply personal knowledge of local needs is extremely important for creating durable agreements (Dayton and Kriesberg 2009, 45). Furthermore, Hunt and Posa argue, because women are not usually involved in the actual fighting, they tend to have a greater psychological distance from the conflict than the negotiators representing armed groups, making them more equipped to build lasting agreements (41). However, despite the clear potential benefits of including women, there has been little progress in actually increasing the number of women at the negotiating table (Ibid, 46). Hunt and Posa explain some of these obstacles, particularly that “waging war is still thought of as a ‘man’s job’” (46). Consequently, the simple

concept of women's inclusion is disruptive to the traditional norms of war and peacemaking. Furthermore, there is fear among many military leaders involved in peacemaking that women "will compromise too much" and should therefore be excluded (Ibid).

While there is remarkably little research on the inclusion of women at the negotiation table for peace agreements, Kennedy and Kray, in their research on studies conducted on women in business negotiations, identified many of the ways in which women excel in negotiations in comparison to men: women tend to feel connected to the other people at the table, rather than viewing them competitively, making their approach more collaborative (2015, 14). While cooperation is not always the most successful tactic in negotiations with a monetary goal, it is important in maintaining peace talks that can dissolve easily (Dayton and Kriesberg 2009, 3). Because women often make up the segment of society that works to "maintain elements of peace and normalcy in their homes and communities in the midst of raging war," they arguably have more to offer to peace processes than military or political leaders who benefit from sectarianism and are more likely to spoil the negotiations (Anderlini 2007, 12).

Methodology

The Northern Ireland conflict is an appropriate case because of the relatively high inclusion of women in the negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement. My other case is an earlier attempt at peace in Northern Ireland, the Sunningdale Communiqué of 1973, which fell apart in 1974 (Rose 1998, 139). The two cases have different outcomes, but similar parameters, as they are essentially two different processes attempting to solve the same conflict. To give my project high internal validity, I used Mill's Method of Difference, in which instances of a case have extensive commonality: for this project, the underlying conflict (Van Evera 1999, 57). The

study intended to unpack the different contribution of each variable to the durability of each agreement. Therefore, the presence of a variable indicated a positive correlation with durability, but not the direct causality of the dependent variable.

Data Analysis and Justification

I used the method of structured, focused case comparison (SFCC) as I intended for my project to be as generalizable as possible for a small-n case study (George and Bennet 2004, 67). The SFCC method is most effective with multi-case case studies, as it develops a set of general questions that are applied to each case, rather like large-n statistical or survey analysis (Bennet 2008, 500). Furthermore, SFCC tests for the presence/absence of variables, but unlike large-n analysis, it allows for a more in-depth explanation. Following the feminist tradition of international relations research, which aims to create substantive progress in addressing the world's problems, I used SFCC to make my research more applicable to increasing women's inclusion in peace processes (Tickner 2018). For my operationalization, I asked a series of questions that both accounted for the presence or absence of each variable, and further developed the influence of each variable in the durability of the agreements.¹

My dependent variable is, most simply, the durability of peace agreements. While the length an agreement lasts is important, the degree of implementation is also a useful indicator. This includes the extent to which provisions in the agreement function in actuality, and how much of the agreement is practiced. An agreement that is not durable, for example, would be disregarded by the majority of parties it concerns, and would do little to mitigate violent conflict. A highly durable agreement would not only prevent the resumption of violence, it would become

¹ See Appendix A.

the basis for political stability post-conflict. Additionally, I borrow from the feminist explanation of durability. According to Duncanson, in order to have “genuine peace, individuals and communities must be empowered to realize their own security” (59). In other words, an agreement is not truly durable unless everyone in a society is able to enjoy its promises. However, the feminist approach also views peace as a process, and it is therefore enough to say an agreement is durable if the continued adherence to the agreement is based on inclusion (Ibid).

My central variable is the inclusion of women in the peace process, and my main indicator is the inclusion of women as negotiators (Beteta et. al. 2010, 4). While women’s roles in peace processes are generally more grassroots oriented—both because they are rarely included in negotiations and because they are generally more concerned with local issues—I specifically focused on women’s inclusion in negotiations to provide empirical evidence for the international call to include more women in peace processes. I asked questions pertaining to how women got to the table (if they got there), the difficulties they faced in the negotiations, and the contributions they made that disincentivized spoiling and/or fostered durability.

My intervening variables are the inclusion of civil society, the inclusion of armed groups, the use of DDR programs, and international mediation.² For civil society and armed groups, I asked whether or not civil society groups or paramilitaries were included in the formal negotiations, the extent to which they consulted in the process, and how their inclusion (or lack thereof) prevented or encouraged spoilers. For DDR, I asked whether or not they were included in the agreement or instituted prior to the negotiations. If they were used, I also investigated the extent to which they were implemented. Finally, for international mediation, I asked whether the

² See Appendix.

negotiations were mediated, and the extent to which mediation was necessary for the negotiations to continue.

My sources were the agreements themselves, personal accounts of the peace processes, and scholarly works detailing the role of each independent and intervening variable. The scale I used was essentially the extent to which I could answer each question. In other words, if there was no evidence of a variable, I categorized it as absent. If there was some evidence, I analyzed whether or not the evidence was significant relative to the variable's corresponding school of thought. For example, any inclusion of women is significant because women are so rarely included, while a DDR program is only significant if it worked, because a dysfunctional DDR program cannot contribute to durability. If the evidence was significant, I categorized it as present. If it was still not significant, I categorized it as absent.

I tested the claim that women's inclusion is a necessary factor in durability, but I also recognize that it is not the only explanation for durability. Therefore, my hypotheses are as follows:

H1: In an analysis of peace processes, some combination of inclusion (either of women, armed groups, or civil society) in the peace process, along with some combination of the utilization of DDR programs and international support, is positively correlated with higher durability of peace processes.

H2: In an analysis of peace processes, the inclusion of women is positively correlated with higher durability of peace processes.

There are many factors that influence the success of negotiations, which is why I included intervening variables other than women's inclusion. I also anticipated that during the

research process I might uncover other important factors, possibly that related to both cases. While other factors I uncovered (addressed in the section on alternate explanations) had the potential to complicate my findings, the SFCC method is designed to illuminate only specific aspects; by knowing what questions to ask, the research process is able to uncover new information without compromising the validity of the project (Bennet 2008, 500). Comparing the Good Friday Agreement with the Sunningdale Communiqué allowed me to isolate the most significant variables (determined by the literature on durability), and especially to test the claim that women's inclusion correlates with higher durability. Furthermore, my project was falsifiable. By identifying several other contributions to durability, my analysis had the potential to demonstrate that the inclusion of women is not necessary for durability, but that some combination of the other factors is essential. Finally, my research was reliable in that I used peer-reviewed journal articles and primary sources.

Analysis

I analyzed two cases, the Sunningdale Communiqué and the Good Friday Agreement, for their durability, the inclusion in their negotiations of women, civil society, and armed groups, the utilization of DDR programs, and for the influence of international mediators.

Variable	The Sunningdale Communiqué	The Good Friday Agreement
DV: Durability	Not durable	Durable
IV: Inclusion of Women	Absent	Present
IntV: Inclusion of Civil Society	Absent	Absent*

IntV: Inclusion of Armed Groups	Absent	Absent*
IntV: Use of DDR	Absent	Present
IntV: International Mediation	Absent	Present

My primary hypothesis—that some combination of inclusion (either of women, armed groups, or civil society) in the peace process, along with some combination of the use of DDR programs and international support, is positively correlated with higher durability of peace processes—was supported by my data. Stated simply, the Sunningdale Communiqué, which did not have the presence of any of my independent or intervening variables, was not durable. The Good Friday Agreement, by contrast, was durable, was negotiated with the inclusion of women, included provisions for DDR programs, and was heavily supported by an international mediator. Furthermore, while paramilitary groups were not allowed in the negotiations, more parties with ties to paramilitary groups were included than in all previous attempts at negotiation, and therefore arguably had indirect inclusion in the negotiations. Additionally, while civil society groups were not included in the negotiations, the agreement provided for the establishment of a Civic Forum for civil society to “act as a consultative mechanism on social, economic, and cultural issues” in the political process (Farrington 2008, 121). My secondary hypothesis, that women’s inclusion in particular increases the durability of peace agreements, was not supported by the data, but also not falsified; although the Sunningdale Communiqué did not include women and was not durable, and the Good Friday Agreement did include women and was durable, the inclusion of women was not the most significant factor in its durability.

I begin my discussion with why the Sunningdale Communiqué fell apart after only a brief six months (December 1973 to May 1974), and then turn to why the Good Friday Agreement was able to last for 18 years with only one minor interruption (which was resolved by a return to the negotiation table) (Dorr 2017, 370; Peace Accords Matrix).³ The Sunningdale Communiqué was the agreement that came out of initial meetings between the British and Irish governments, and three Northern Irish political parties: the Protestant Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Alliance Party, and the Catholic Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) (Dorr 2017, 301). I characterized it as not durable because it lasted only a very short time, it never became a full agreement, and its provisions did not function well in actuality.

The Sunningdale Communiqué was an attempt at a consociational power-sharing government, along with a cross-border body between the North and South of Ireland (Gordon 1998, 100). It ended when the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) led a general strike that pressured the power-sharing government (called the Northern Ireland Assembly) set up by the agreement into collapsing (Dorr 2017, 370). The UWC, essentially a civil society organization, acted as a spoiler to the experimental government. While I did not find direct evidence for this, the literature on inclusive security would say that their exclusion from the formal process was a motivating factor for the UWC in spoiling the agreement. In this case, it was the exclusion of civil society, not of women, that decreased the durability of the agreement. Otherwise, the Sunningdale Communiqué was essentially a stepping stone for the Good Friday Agreement to build off of and learn from. As none of the variables were present under the Sunningdale Communiqué, I conducted a deeper analysis on the Good Friday Agreement.

³I capped my analysis of the Good Friday Agreement in 2016 because the result of the Brexit vote has the potential to dramatically change the geopolitics of Northern Ireland.

The Good Friday Agreement was signed on April 10, 1998 after nearly 25 more years of violent conflict, and established a consociational, power-sharing, devolved government (from Britain)—that, unlike the one established by the Sunningdale Communiqué, has lasted for 18 years with one setback from 2002 to 2006—as well as an agreement between the British and Irish governments (Peace Accords Matrix). It consisted of a Forum of all the parties, and three different “strands” of negotiations: Strand 1 dealt with internal Northern Irish issues, Strand 2 with British-Irish relations, and Strand 3 with north-south relations (Mitchell 1999, 62). Entry into the Forum was limited to political parties, and was determined by a general election (Ibid). Notably, the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition (NIWC) gained entry into the negotiations by winning 1% of the vote and earned two seats (out of about 110, or 1 out of 8 parties, the total number of which varied because a couple of parties left/reentered the talks), held by Catholic Monica McWilliams and Protestant Pearl Sagar (McCartney 2004, 44). Like the Sunningdale agreement, the negotiations were limited to the political elite, excluding civil society. However, because of the inclusion of the NIWC, there was less of an incentive for civil society groups to act as spoilers, as happened during the Sunningdale process. The NIWC proposed the Civic Forum, which created a space for civil society to consult and participate in the political process after the negotiations (Farrington 2008, 121).

Moreover, the Good Friday Agreement was arguably more durable because it was more inclusive overall; parties with direct ties to paramilitary organizations, such as the Catholic Sinn Féin, were allowed to participate. As a side note, Sinn Féin always denied its relationship with the IRA, but only individuals within Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Diaspora in the U.S. believed their claim (Mitchell 1999, 25). The inclusion of both Catholic and Protestant

parties associated with paramilitaries potentially reduced the incentives for paramilitary organizations to resort to violence and upset the talks.

Furthermore, the Good Friday Agreement arguably succeeded because of two different types of DDR. The first was disarmament of the paramilitaries, a process overseen by Mitchell's Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (McCartney 2004, 35). The second was the demobilization of British troops, which were reduced to a non-conflict level in 2007 (Peace Accords Matrix). Interestingly, as Anderlini claimed happens frequently, there was little evidence for the reintegration step of DDR. Consequently, I argue that DDR, while allowing the agreement to be implemented with more certainty, was not the most significant factor.

Finally, American Senator George Mitchell, along with Canadian John de Chastelain and Finn Harri Holkieri, acted as objective and neutral mediators (Mitchell 1999, 29). Their inclusion in the process came about in a lengthy and complex way, but they were accepted by nearly all the major parties, which is sufficient to establish their legitimacy (Ibid). Acceptance of a mediator by the negotiating parties implies the parties' trust in the ability of the mediator to act objectively. This mediation facilitated communication between the parties, allowing the talks to continue when the process became tense (Ibid). It provides a direct contrast to the Sunningdale process, which did not have international mediators, and which never made it past initial talks (the final agreement, called the Sunningdale Communiqué, was meant to be the first of many talks). The international mediation was ultimately the most significant factor, as, according to Mitchell's account of the peace process, the negotiations almost failed, particularly while they approached the end—it was the hard deadline of Good Friday that brought about the agreement (Ibid, 182).

Without the mediation, even with women's inclusion, the negotiations would very likely have failed.

My research question focused on the role of women in negotiations, and while the NIWC did not have a significant impact on the durability of the Good Friday Agreement, there were several instances where the theory of the literature on women's inclusion accurately predicted the role women played in the peace process. One of the primary arguments made for women's inclusion is that women tend to be more conciliatory in their approach and focus on areas of overlap between conflicting parties rather than 'winning' concessions. The NIWC, a mixed Catholic and Protestant political party, was founded with the express purpose to "propose a framework based on collective action and mutual recognition of communal differences" (Spencer 2004, 50).⁴

Unfortunately, the NIWC faced a lot of obstacles, such as the consociational model of the agreement itself. Because the NIWC did not conform to the sectarianism of the rest of society, it was institutionally marginalized—for voting, the parties had to register as Catholic or Protestant, but the NIWC was both (Murtagh 2008, 48). Consequently, it did not last past 2002.

Furthermore, during the negotiations it was completely sidelined by the media, which focused instead on dramatic showdowns between the dominant parties (Spencer 2004, 46). As the news media was the primary way information was disseminated to the public at large, which included the paramilitaries and civil society groups, this limited the ability of the NIWC to prevent spoilers. Moreover, the women were frequently heckled in the negotiations (and after the agreement was implemented, in the assembly); in other words, their colleagues did not allocate

⁴There was also one other mixed Catholic and Protestant party, called the Alliance Party, but as it is not linked to paramilitaries, civil society groups, or expressly dedicated to women's inclusion it is outside the scope of this study.

equal respect to the members of the NIWC (Mitchell 1999, 44). Ultimately, it is quite possible that the NIWC would have had a larger impact on the durability of the agreement had it faced fewer of these obstacles.

A very possible alternative explanation to my argument is that the Good Friday Agreement was more durable simply because it was the third attempt in the Northern Ireland conflict at a peace agreement. There was a second agreement, the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, which I did not include in this project because it was primarily focused on British-Irish relations rather than a devolved government (in contrast to the Sunningdale Communiqué and the Good Friday Agreement) (Ibid, 16). By omitting the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it is possible I presented an incomplete explanation of the peace processes in Northern Ireland. Moreover, there is the role of women beyond that of the NIWC. There were many women's groups and women-led movements outside of the negotiations that certainly had an impact on rebuilding trust in the society (Ibid, 96). However, women outside the negotiations do not fit the definition I used of women's inclusion, which focused specifically on the inclusion of women in formal negotiations. There is also Marjorie "Mo" Mowlam, who served as the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland during most of the peace process, and who is often cited as a notable female political leader who worked very hard to ensure the success of the Good Friday Agreement (Ibid, 132). Ms. Mowlam did participate in the negotiations as a representative of the United Kingdom, but as she was included because of her position rather than her identity as a woman, I did not characterize her role as the inclusion of women.

Conclusion

My research question, “how does women’s inclusion impact the durability of peace agreements?”, is now something I can address more fully. In the case of Northern Ireland, women’s inclusion did not dramatically extend the length of the agreement, but it did operate in the way it was intended to. It bridged sectarian divides and reduced spoilers by representing civil society interests at the negotiations. Furthermore, women, unlike civil society groups, are able to operate throughout the formal political level, making their inclusion more adaptable to different acceptance thresholds of negotiations. Women have the ability to form political parties that could potentially better represent the interests of civil society and armed groups in formal peace negotiations than they could for themselves. Firstly, civil society groups and women’s groups often focus on similar issues. Secondly, women who are members of armed groups are rarely taken as serious threats, and arguably would have a better chance at entering negotiations as the representatives of a paramilitary group than a group of armed men (Anderlini 2007, 101). Women’s ability to form political parties was a key point in the Northern Ireland case, as the negotiations for both agreements were only open to political parties and not paramilitaries or civil society organizations.

Moreover, I found that a combination of inclusion, DDR, and international mediation, was sufficient to establish higher durability. I developed a deeper understanding of peace processes, which supported my goal of conducting research that aims to improve peacemaking generally. There is a lot of potential for future research, both within Northern Ireland and in women’s inclusion in peace processes in general. Something I discovered but did not fully discuss was the highly gendered divide in North Irish society, which potentially limited the

NIWC even further. Monica McWilliams described this, saying “it is undoubtedly the case that both Church and State have combined together in ensuring that the prime role of women is as mothers and housewives” (Spencer 2004, 49). While the literature claims that women’s typical gender roles provide the basis for the different perspectives they bring to the table, it would be interesting to analyze, in the context of Northern Ireland, the extent to which this limited the NIWC in formal politics.

Another limiting factor was numerical in nature—the NIWC only had two seats in the negotiations, and it is quite possible that it could have achieved more if it had received more votes in the general election. However, they were not the only women involved in the formal negotiations, simply the only ones who were there because of their identities as women. The other parties, and George Mitchell, had women on their staff, and it would be fascinating to explore how their influence affected the peace process. Moreover, as there is very little research of women’s inclusion in peace processes more generally, the basic design of this project could be easily applied to other cases of women’s inclusion. This would provide more empirical evidence of the theory that women’s inclusion contributes substantially to durability. Finally, there is considerable space for research on how to increase the inclusion of women in peace processes, or, in other words, how to overcome obstacles like those faced by the NIWC.

Appendix A: Operationalization of the Variables

Dependent Variable	Operationalization	Good Friday Agreement	Sunningdale Communiqué
Durability of Peace Agreements (DV)	How long has the agreement lasted?		
	Did the agreement include: Constitutional reform? A monitoring mechanism to verify parties are upholding the agreement?		
	To what extent was the agreement implemented?		
Independent and Intervening Variables	Operationalization	Good Friday Agreement	Sunningdale Communiqué
Inclusion of Women (IV)	If women were included, at what point in the process were they allowed to participate?		
	Were the women asked to participate, or did they have to push their way in?		
	Was their participation characterized as the inclusion of women, or was their inclusion part of a larger inclusion of civil society?		
	What obstacles did they face during the negotiations?		
Inclusion of Civil Society (IntV)	Was there inclusion of civil society groups during the peace process? If so, which types and how many?		
	Were they asked to participate, or did they have to push their way in?		

	To what extent did their inclusion limit the disruption of spoilers?		
Inclusion of Armed Groups (IntV)	Were the armed groups in the conflict included in the peace process?		
	Did they have to push their way into the process, or were they invited?		
	Does the final agreement focus primarily on the interests of the armed groups, or does it contain other provisions?		
DDR (IntV)	Were DDR programs implemented? If yes: To what extent did they play a role in mitigating the uncertainty and high tensions present post-agreement?		
	If no: Were different programs used instead? What prevented DDR from being used?		
International Mediation (IntV)	Were the negotiating teams made up of UN or other international individuals, or were they mainly representatives of the conflicting parties? ob		
	Did members of the international community call for the peace talks, or was it one or all of the conflicting parties?		
	What role did a diaspora (located primarily in the United States) have in the decision to intervene?		

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