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The magic bullet against semi-automatic weapons

A quantitative study about the effect of gender mainstreaming in peace processes

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Bachelor's thesis

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Spring semester 2021

Word count: 10801

Abstract

Women and men experience conflict and peace processes differently. The thesis builds on the idea of feminist policy and gender mainstreaming that suggests women should be substantially included within and around all policy decisions including peace processes, not only to provide gender equality but also because inclusion leads to more long-lasting and qualitative solutions. The purpose of this thesis is to examine if gender mainstreaming in the form of engendered language in peace agreements affects post-conflict sexual violence. To achieve this, a systematic large-N study with OLS regression analysis was conducted. The hypothesis was that engendered language in peace agreements would lead to a smaller prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and hence the correlation between the two would be negative. The findings rather show that there is a positive correlation between the two on a 95 percent significance level, generating questions regarding both measurements of the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and about the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in peace agreements. Hence, the general conclusion of the thesis is that gender mainstreaming in peace agreements as a ‘magic bullet’ is not the complete answer in the struggle towards gender equality in post-conflict situations.

Keywords: Peace processes, peace agreements, gender mainstreaming, Resolution 1325, sexual violence, engendered language

Table of contents

List of abbreviations	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Purpose and research question	6
2. Literature review	7
2.1 UNSC Resolution 1325	7
2.2 Women in peace processes	8
2.3 Gender mainstreaming	11
2.4 Definitions of central concepts	13
3. Theoretical argument	13
4. Research Design	15
4.1 Choice of method	16
4.2 Dependent variable	17
4.3 Independent variable	19
4.4 Control variables	20
4.5 Limitations of the study	22
5. Results	25
5.1 Descriptive Statistics	25
5.2 Regression Analysis	28
6. Discussion	32
7. Conclusion	33
Bibliography	36

List of abbreviations

CFR - Council on Foreign Relations

DDR - Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration

OLS - Ordinary least square

OVB - Omitted-variable bias

SRS - Simple random sample

UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UN - United Nations

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

1. Introduction

Globally, the absolute number of war deaths has been declining since 1946, and yet conflict and violence are on the rise wherever you look and we see increasing cases of women and children in particular driven into poverty (United Nations, n.d.). There is a strong link between gender and conflicts, though women seldom take part in the decision-making, information, or violence within conflicts. At the same time, women are disproportionately hit by disasters both on the local level, but also internationally. This is an issue without easy solutions, however, Susanna Moorehead, the chair of the OECD development assistance committee, said on the webinar *Women in crisis settings - transforming gaps into synergies*, “We all need feminist policies, practices, and implementation - because it works” (2021).

Feminist policy is an increasingly growing strategy within the national and international discourse and policy making, with Sweden being the first country to launch a feminist foreign policy in 2014 (Thomson, 2020). This policy was established after many years of promotion of gender equality nationally and internationally and is based on the conviction that sustainable peace, security, and development have to include more than half of the population to be achieved. The policy consists of applying a systematic gender equality perspective throughout the whole foreign policy agenda (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018).

The notion that we need feminist policies, practices, and implementation within peace processes and when dealing with crisis in general is not a new or revolutionary idea. As early as in 2000, the United Nations Security Council drafted Resolution 1325 for the first time. Before that, the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 had the same discussions. The Beijing Platform for Action was a conference on gender equality and the empowerment of women everywhere, with political debate with representatives of 189 governments ending in a defining framework including 12 critical areas of concern (UN Women, n.d.). Following the same aspirations five years later, UNSC Resolution 1325 is built on the idea that women should be included substantially within and around all peace processes, not only due to equality but also because it leads to more long-lasting and qualitative solutions. To reconnect with Moorehead’s statement, we need feminist policies, practices, and implementation, and UNSC Resolution 1325 pinpoints the need for feminist policies within peace processes. Regarding feminist practices and implementation, this thesis explores the theoretical framework of gender mainstreaming, a commonly used tool used by development workers and agencies throughout

the field. The argument made by Moorehead seems logical, nonetheless, it is an assumption that is generally assumed to be true, without being scientifically proven. This thesis explores the effect that peace agreements have, if words of inclusion have a substantial effect on how women are treated after a conflict, and if we can statistically prove that gender mainstreaming has an important role within peacebuilding.

Following this introduction, the first section will present the purpose and research question that is investigated, the correlation between engendered language within peace agreements and sexual violence occurring after a conflict. The next section discusses the theoretical framework of gender mainstreaming that is used as a baseline throughout the whole thesis together with an overview of the previous research and discourse of some of the central concepts adjoint to peace agreements and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. After this, the choice of method (a regression analysis of the variables), chosen datasets, and variables used are presented and discussed. Finally, there is a section with the results of the study, a concluding discussion, and suggestions for future research on the subject.

1.1 Purpose and research question

Women and men are affected by conflict differently. Today, it is widely accepted that efforts such as gender mainstreaming throughout different parts of the peace process are useful and make a difference for women in, and beyond, conflict (Aolán et al., 2012, 40). The main purpose of this thesis is to describe if this effect is visible within peace agreements and their effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Does it matter what contents are included in peace agreements and are clear peace agreements voicing the unequal effects based on gender enough to make sexual violence cease after a conflict? To accomplish this, a systematic large-N extensive study with OLS-regression analysis has been used which analyses all available peace agreements between 1989 and 2018 and the reported prevalence of sexual violence occurring after the peace agreements have been signed. The study will add important knowledge regarding the possible effect that the wording of peace agreements has on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Further, it will add to the research field on both gender mainstreaming as a theoretical framework and specifically within peace processes. To accomplish this, the research question that will be investigated is:

Does engendered language in peace agreements decrease post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence?

2. Literature review

This chapter will present the previous literature and the overall theoretical framework that the thesis builds upon. Previous research on Resolution 1325, the roles of women in conflict, gender mainstreaming, and the effect of gender inclusion in peace negotiations will first be presented. Then, the definitions of central concepts will be presented.

2.1 UNSC Resolution 1325

Resolution 1325 is an important milestone within the field of international development and peace processes that was adopted in October 2000. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The resolution was the very first of its kind as it directly acknowledged the different gendered impacts of conflict on women and men, both in peace processes and in peace operations. The resolution also builds on the lack of awareness of the different effects that armed conflict has on men and women (Olsson & Gizelis, 2013, 425). The resolution is based on the evidence showing that conflict has a disproportionate and unique impact on women at the same time as contributions women make to both prevent conflict and in conflict resolution are under-valued and under-utilized (PeaceWomen, n.d.).

The resolution builds on the gender language from the Beijing Platform for Action with a focus on gender mainstreaming as the new strategy and includes a section on women and armed conflict, the adaptation of Resolution 1325 made this principle of gender mainstreaming possible to include in the security sector (Højlund Madsen, 2019, 173).

Key provisions in Resolution 1325 include, among other things, the attention to specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict and inclusion of gender perspective in all post-conflict processes. The main purpose of the resolution was to acknowledge women as important actors within and around conflicts (PeaceWomen, n.d.). Since 2000 when resolution 1325 was drafted, UNSC has adopted several resolutions reaffirming the original one, making the ambitions more concrete (Olsson & Gizelis, 2013, 1).

Previous research shows that specific references to women within peace agreements can be important during all stages of conflict. Whether issues such as sexual violence are included in peace agreements will be regarded as a violation of the said agreement, what violations will be

monitored, and often also whether the issue will be addressed in any future cases (Bell & O'Rourke, 2010, 947).

Issues on peace and security have traditionally been regarded as a masculine domain with a focus on states, military power, and war. With resolution 1325 it became not only an important indication of where the focus should lie, but it also became significantly more difficult to exclude women from matters of peace and security (Højlund Madsen, 2019, 174).

Research has examined how resolution 1325 has impacted the drafting of peace agreements in practice. One report used a quantitative method to evaluate whether the prevalence of peace agreement provisions on women has changed since the adoption of resolution 1325 and what effect the resolution has had on the quality and durability of peace. They found that only 16 percent of peace agreements contain specific references to women, which seems low but is an increase from before the resolution was signed (Bell & O'Rourke, 2010, 941).

Resolution 1325 has also been the focus of feminist debate and critique. There is an academic debate whether the framing in Resolution 1325 reproduces stereotypical notions of women as peaceful by nature and as victims in need of saving and protection, while men are seen as agitators more prone to violence. Furthermore, these presumptions produce a trade-off for women between changing international law and changing the situation for women (Landaluze, 2018, 492).

“The terms of a peace agreement do not secure the implementation of its provisions, just as resolution 1325 does not secure the integration of women in peace processes. Gender references may do little to further women’s equality, but without gender being mentioned the struggle for inclusion is even more difficult” (Bell & O'Rourke, 2010, 947).

In conclusion, UNSC Resolution 1325 has been an important marker showing the formal stance of the international community, yet, it has also been critiqued for its weakness and the possibility that it might reaffirm gender stereotypes positioning women as victims in need of saving.

2.2 Women in peace processes

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, women are affected differently in conflict than men. The image of gender in conflict generally centers on the male as an armed combatant with

an emphasis on the masculinization of war. Women on the other hand are framed as refugees losing their homes, mothers losing their sons, and widows losing their husbands while men are seen as combatants or criminals (Aolán et al., 2012, 40). It is only relatively recently that the gendered dimensions of war have been examined. Prior research in the field of post-conflict and transnational justice has revealed that there are links between the experiences that women have during conflict and the exclusion of women within all areas of peacemaking. This has been found to increase the losses for women in terms of social and political anatomy during life after a conflict. Men pursue a version of normality through confirmation and regression to traditional masculine and feminine roles which creates a reality where all dimensions of post-conflict society are affected (Aolán et al., 2012, 41).

Peace-making has for long been almost completely dominated by men. Since the drafting of UNSC Resolution 1325, we can see an increase in the inclusion of women and women's organizations in peace processes, even if this is a limited inclusion. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) notes that between 1992 and 2018, women were still hugely underrepresented in peace processes, comprising only 3 percent of mediators, 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators (2020). When women and women's organizations are given the opportunity to participate in peace-making, the chances for peace are increased and women's inclusion is associated with a longer duration of peace (Nilsson & Svensson, 2020, 5).

There is an emerging consensus that women's participation in peace negotiations contributes to the quality and durability of peace after a civil war. This has been tested and the study supported the assumption that women's participation in peace negotiations increases the durability and the quality of peace (Krause et al., 2018, 985). The peacemaking landscape presents several barriers to women's participation and the dilemma about ends and means to peacemaking. Is the goal of peace processes to only end violence or to build sustainable peace? If we see the goal to only end violence, women are unlikely to be considered legitimate participants as they rarely are active combatants. If the goal is to build (sustainable) peace, it makes more sense to have a diverse group from different parts of the society participating in peace negotiations (O'Reilly et al., 2015, 1).

The report by O'Reilly et al. assumes the same thing as a lot of research about peacebuilding accepts as a fact, that women as a group experience conflict differently from men. Women are more likely to die from war's indirect effects after a conflict ends. Causes such as societal order, human rights abuses, economic devastation, and the spread of diseases (2015, 5).

In addition to women being more likely to die from war's indirect effects, women in post-conflict communities generally experience high rates of domestic violence. The end of a conflict does not mean the end of violence for many women. When hyper-masculinized and traumatized male combatants leave the battlefield, their homes become the new field for violence, and without meaningful protection of women and children, they are left without support (Bradley, 2018, 124).

Furthermore, women's understandings of security are often at odds with the dominant concepts of security. These are historically formulated by men and continue to underpin predominantly male-led peacemaking efforts. Women tend to identify different and more security threats than men. Women are also less likely to support aggressive action against these threats (Stevens et al., 2021, 44). For the most part, governments, multilateral organizations, and other organizations involved in high-level peacemaking and peacebuilding continue to treat "conflict" and "post-conflict" settings separately, based largely on the end of formal combat and the decline in the battle-related mortality rate. Women, on the other hand, face a continuum of violence and insecurity that does not fit into these categories (O'Reilly et al., 2015; Bradley, 2018, 133).

Just as women tend to experience conflict differently from men, their priorities for peace frequently differ from men's when given a space at the negotiating table. In cases where women have had the opportunity to influence peace processes, they have frequently broadened the set of issues at the negotiating table to address development and human rights as well as security, their approach to peacebuilding is generally different from that of men. In other words, they address issues relating to the causes and effects of conflict which are frequently ignored (O'Reilly et al., 2015, 6).

An example of how a Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) program led to many men feeling emasculated is described in *Failing to empower women peacebuilders: A cautionary tale from Angola* (Steinberg, 2007). Here, a dramatic increase in alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce, and domestic violence followed. The end of the civil war led to a new era of violence against women. The report shows that the exclusion of women from the Angola peace process meant that inadequate attention was paid to areas essential to consolidate peace and reconstruct the country. To include women in peacebuilding is, according to Steinberg, not

only a question of fairness and equality, peace agreements and post-conflict governance and reconstruction simply work better when women are involved and gender is taken into account (Steinberg, 2007).

2.3 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a concept strongly connected to the Beijing Platform for Action taking place in 1995. The main goal of the meeting was gender equality and the empowerment of women. Gender mainstreaming became recognized as the most important mechanism to reach this goal (Moser & Moser, 2010, 11). It is today seen as the most modern approach to gender equality which also has backing from international highly regarded institutions such as the United Nations, Council of Europe, and the European Union (Daly, 2005, 433f).

Traditionally, government policy and legislation have been viewed as gender-neutral instruments, on the assumption that a public policy benefits all members of the public equally. However, structural gender inequalities are still very much embedded in our societies and even if laws treat women and men as equals, women do not have equal access to and control over resources and assets to the same extent that men do. Policies impact men and women differently and the consequences of not considering that are making policy gender blind (Moser & Moser, 2010, 11).

Gender mainstreaming is, as mentioned previously, a strategy towards realizing gender equality. The method is to integrate a gender perspective into all action taken, to think about and adapt according to a gender perspective in all preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and, evaluation of policies so that promotion of gender equality and combating discrimination becomes a priority (Moser & Moser, 2010, 12). The distinctiveness of the gender mainstreaming approach is that it tries to institutionalize gender equality by integrating it into public policy on all stages (Daly, 2005, 435).

There are different definitions of gender mainstreaming across different institutions and organizations, but all have more or less the same main principles as those set out by the UN Economic and Social Council:

“The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a

strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"

(UN Women, n.d.).

Gender mainstreaming is also about the institutionalization of gender concerns within the organization itself and the promotion of women's participation in decision-making processes and giving them the power to put issues on the agenda (Moser & Moser, 2010, 12).

Most international development institutions have put in place different gender mainstreaming policies today. Because of this, it is at the level of implementation that significant challenges remain, it cannot only be about complicated words wishing gender equality - it has to be followed by actual gender-aware implementation. Most efforts when turning to the implementation of gender mainstreaming today are considered inconsistent and unintegrated (Moser & Moser, 2010, 15).

There is still no consensus on the 'failure' or 'success' of gender mainstreaming at the international level. As documentation in the public domain is rather fragmented and gender mainstreaming is a process rather than a goal, it does not make sense to argue if it has failed or succeeded. With that said, evidence regarding the quality of implementation is mixed (Moser & Moser, 2010, 19).

Critique against gender mainstreaming often consists of it being seen as the 'magic bullet' in the world of development intended to counter 'gender-neutral development planning'. It is seen as existing almost independently of the international politics, power hierarchies, and persistent ideas about human nature driving the modernization paradigms and modernity theories that define what development is (Woodford-Berger, 2013, 122).

The appeal of gender mainstreaming lies in the spirit of its early intentions created during the Beijing Platform for Action, to pervade all structures and systems with awareness of gender-based biases and injustices, and to remove them (Woodford-Berger, 2013, 126).

Women and men experience conflict differently, which makes it reasonable to treat peace agreements accordingly and shape them so that women and men get different treatment, i.e. gender mainstream at every part of the peace process. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, only 3 percent of mediators, 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators are women when looking at peace processes between 1992 and 2018 (Council on Foreign Relations). This shows that even if Resolution 1325 continues to change these numbers, there is still a substantial underrepresentation of half of the population affected by peace processes today, not just in signing agreements and negotiating terms, but in the phrasing of peace agreements itself.

2.4 Definitions of central concepts

Armed conflict - The definition of armed conflict used in this thesis is “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between (at least) two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths” (Gleditsch et al. 2002).

Engendered language - The thesis defines this as the inclusion of women or gender in the language, e.g. by using female pronouns or include specific references to women. The language can include men and boys but must include women, female pronouns, or references specifically to gender to qualify. Engendered language is in the thesis used specifically within peace agreements (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 7f).

Gender equality - The definition of gender equality is when everyone has the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in all areas of life, regardless of gender. It does not require that men and women are the same or are treated in the same way, it is about leveling the playing field and more specifically in this thesis, ensuring that different gendered impacts are acknowledged within peace processes.

Peace agreement - This thesis has used the UCDP dataset for peace agreements. Peace agreements are in this dataset defined as a formal agreement between (at least) two opposing primary warring parties, which addresses the disputed incompatibility, either by setting all or part of it or by clearly outlining a process for how the warring parties plan to regulate the incompatibility (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 2).

3. Theoretical argument

The following section introduces the theoretical framework that the thesis has used to answer the research question of the study. The theoretical framework argues how engendered language in peace agreements might affect conflict-related sexual violence occurring in a post-conflict setting.

The theoretical argument is based on the presumption, set by UNSC Resolution 1325 and the Beijing Platform for Action, that gender mainstreaming works as a method to both make gender-based inequalities visible and to create a more distinguished accountability framework making post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence decrease (UN Women, n.d.). The presumed causality between the independent and the dependent variable that the thesis explores looks as follows from the presented causality diagram in figure 1. Gender mainstreaming includes an engendered language in peace agreements taking gender-based inequalities and issues that can emerge and develop in post-conflict settings into consideration. This in turn leads to more formal accountability for parties signing the agreements and institutions involved to act and monitor gendered issues more closely, which should lead to less post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

Gender mainstreaming → engendered language in peace agreements → accountability for signees and more gender equality → less post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence

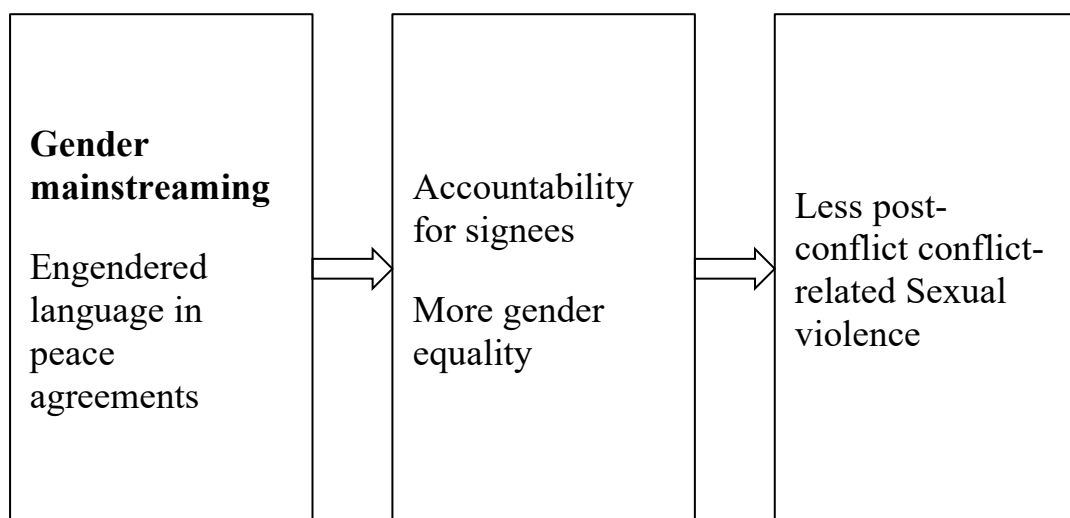


Figure 1. Causality diagram describing the assumed causality.

There is a possibility that post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence is influenced by other factors as well, which is why the thesis has used control variables to test the regression models against. In subsequent chapters, these will be explained further. Nevertheless, the engendered language in peace agreements is in this thesis assumed to be the primary and dominant variable impacting post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, and gender mainstreaming is the theoretical mechanism explaining *why* the independent variable (engendered language) leads to a change in the dependent variable (post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence).

4. Research Design

In this section, the general research design of the thesis will be presented. The choice of method will be discussed first, followed by a discussion about the selected data. The central variables and control variables of the study will then be presented and explained. Finally, problems and limitations of the chosen method, the data, and the overall research design will be discussed

4.1 Choice of method

To study the relationship between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and engendered language within peace agreements, a quantitative method has been chosen as the aim of the thesis that is to isolate and investigate any possible correlation between the two. The study is a large-N study and the unit of analysis has been peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2018. There are a total of 538 observations and 211 peace agreements in total from the SVAC dataset by Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås and the UCDP Peace Agreement dataset by Uppsala Conflict Data Program being analyzed in this thesis (2014, 2020). There is no geographical demarcation being used in the choice of peace agreements researched.

Ordinary least square (OLS) linear regression analysis has been used as the primary method of analysis of the relationship between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and using engendered language within the peace agreements. The method is used to estimate the relation between the independent and dependent variable and what effect one unit's change in the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The method is commonly considered the most flexible and powerful technique that is used to analyze and isolate a possible correlation between two or more variables statistically which is the reason why it is used in this thesis (Esaiasson et al., 2017, 391f).

There is first a bivariate regression with the prevalence of sexual violence as the dependent variable and gender being mentioned in the peace agreement as to the presumed cause of the change, i.e. the independent variable. This will be controlled in a multivariate regression against several control variables. The bivariate regression is used to understand the basic relationship between these two variables. The following multivariate regression allows an estimation of the effect, all other things being equal, of the independent variable on the dependent variable, since it makes it possible to simultaneously control for the effect of multiple other factors (Esaiasson et al., 2017, 392f).

The dependent variable, the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, is measured on a ratio scale going from 0 to 3. The independent variable, using gender in the peace agreement, that was tested against the dependent variable is a so-called dummy variable, this means that it can only take two values. The variable takes the value of 0 if there is no mention of women/girls in the peace agreement, and the value of 1 if there is mention of women/girls in the peace agreement (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020).

The data I have used are from two different datasets, UCDP and SVAC. These were chosen for their methodological and technical benefits as they have a good overview of cases from different areas of the world while still being from reliable sources fitting for the regression models used in this thesis, adding to the choice is that the datasets are accessible and have a desirable coding of the chosen variables, giving the variables strong reliability.

The SVAC dataset covers Sexual violence in Armed conflict and measures reports of the conflict-related sexual violence committed by actors between 1989-2019. The dataset was created by Dara Kay Cohen and Ragnhild Nordås to research which armed groups that have perpetrated sexual violence in recent conflicts and includes both levels of prevalence and what kind of sexual violence that have been recorded from three different sources. The armed actors include government forces, pro-government militias, and rebel groups (Cohen and Nordås, 2014).

The Uppsala Conflict Data Program is a provider of data on organized violence and both the largest and oldest ongoing data collection project for civil war. The UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset covers peace agreements signed between at least two opposing primary warring parties in an armed conflict between 1975-2018. The two datasets were merged and due to the slight disparity between which conflicts and peace agreements that are available, the thesis only uses conflicts between 1989 and 2018 (UCDP, 2020).

4.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. This variable is retrieved from the SVAC dataset and shows the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. The SVAC dataset includes all active state-based armed conflicts

between the years 1989 to 2019 and measures reports of the conflict-related sexual violence committed by armed actors (Cohen & Nordås, 2014).

The *prevalence* measure gives an estimate of the relative magnitude of sexual violence perpetrated by a conflict actor. It is coded according to an ordinal scale. The variable measures in a 5-grade scale from -99, 0, 1, 2, 3. Prevalence = -99 indicates that there have been no found reports and no data available from the conflict and have been coded as NA in my dataset so that the regression models do not get affected by these cases. Prevalence = 0 (none) indicates that there are reports, but no mention of rape or other sexual violence related to the conflict. Prevalence = 1 (isolated), sexual violence has been reported and cases are likely related to the conflict but did not meet the requirements for a 2 or 3 coding. Prevalence = 2 (Numerous) indicates that sexual violence is likely related to the conflict but did not meet the requirements for a 3 coding, sexual violence has been described with words such as “widespread”, “common”, “persistent” et cetera. Finally, Prevalence = 3 (Massive) indicates that sexual violence is likely related to the conflict and has been described as “systematic”, “massive” or “innumerable” and/or has been used by the actor as a weapon (Cohen & Nordås, 2014).

The prevalence is disaggregated by three different sources. *Prev_state* scores are assigned using information from US State Department annual reports, *Prev_HRW* scores are assigned using information from Human Rights Watch annual and special reports and *Prev_AI* scores are assigned using information from Amnesty International annual and special reports. For the regressions in the thesis, I have chosen to take the highest reported score from the three available sources one year after a peace agreement has been signed and created a new variable called *prevalence*. The motivation behind doing so instead of trying all three variables individually is that if two of the sources find that there has been no use of sexual violence in the conflict, and the third one claims that there have been isolated reports of occurrences of sexual violence, there is a high probability that there have been at least some cases, and this should be accounted for in this thesis. The new variable *prevalence* will take this into account and give us the highest reported prevalence score. As an example, if two of the sources have assigned a conflict with a prevalence score of 0, and the third source has assigned the score 1, the new variable would provide the score of 1, this indicates that there have been at least some reported cases of sexual violence related to the conflict.

The reason for only using data from one year after a peace agreement has been signed, is due to the fact that this point in time is when we have most available data measuring prevalence after a conflict. When looking at more long-term effects, the available datasets are not sufficient due to missing data. Additionally, many of the conflicts studied in this thesis have not held their peace more than one to two years before further violence has occurred, which makes the prevalence measured hard to differentiate between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

Further, the validity of the dependent variable has a risk of not adequately measuring what it is intended to measure, i.e. sexual violence. This could happen due to sexual violence being a complex and stigmatized issue making it probable that it might be measured differently depending on geographical and cultural subtext, and that it might be underestimated due to a large number of underreported cases. The UN estimates that in conflict zones, for every one rape that is reported, between 10 and 20 rapes are not (Lund, 2019). To mitigate this, the solution of the highest reported score available has been used, which hopefully picks up some of the data lost in the different sources, making the regression analysis as accurate as possible.

4.3 Independent variable

The independent variable is the thesis' assumed active variable, affecting the dependent variable discussed above (sexual violence). The independent variable tested is if the peace agreement in question uses an engendered language. The validity of this variable is rather strong as it measures what it is intended to measure - if the language within peace agreements has been gender mainstreamed. The reliability is strong as well and the data is large and easy to access, which makes the study easy to replicate.

The initial regression will test post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence against solely the inclusion of women or gender in the agreement in a bivariate regression. The independent variable, engendered language, is operationalized as if the peace agreement document contains women, female pronouns, or refers specifically to gender. The UCDP-dataset has concluded that a given document will refer to people in general, without specifying gender - or that it will be targeting men. Specific mentions of men and boys (as well as other male-gendered terms such as "sons", "brotherhood" or the use of male pronouns) will be coded as 0 and if they have specific inclusions of women or gender in the peace document, it will be coded as a 1. The peace agreement may include men and boys, but it must include either women, female

pronouns, or reference specifically to gender to qualify (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 7f). The independent variable will not be able to measure all gender mainstreamed activities surrounding the peace process, which would be ideal, however, this method gives a proxy estimate of how well gender mainstreaming have penetrated the peace process as the written agreements indicate if issues regarding gender-based inequalities have been a factor at all during negotiations. Following the bivariate regression, three multivariate regressions have been used to measure this effect against control variables, which in turn have been explained and discussed.

4.4 Control variables

To further control the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the thesis has used multivariable regression analysis with seven different control variables designed to see the effect of the independent variable with other factors accounted for. The seven control variables are *DDR*, *Cease*, *Elections*, *Interim government*, *Integration of rebels into civil service*, *Integration of rebels into the government*, and *Military provision*. All variables are from the UCDP dataset (UCDP, 2020).

DDR, i.e. disarmament demobilization and reintegration, is a binary variable that shows if the peace agreement included provisions for the disarmament of the warring parties. Coded yes (1) even if the disarmament only concerns one of the warring parties and no (0) if none of the parties are included (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 4). This variable is chosen due to the presumption that DDR programs have the potential to provide women with agency and make possible articulations of accountability for sexual harms, DDR programs provide an opportunity to address issues of masculinity that often follows an armed conflict. The effect of this should in theory mean that DDR has a negative correlation with the presence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence (Aolain et al., 2011, 134). The variable's validity is strong as the operationalization simply measures the presence of such provision within the peace agreements, hence it measures exactly what it is intended to.

Cease is a binary variable measuring if the agreement included provisions for a ceasefire or the cessation of hostilities. The variable is coded 1 if it is included in the peace agreement and 0 if the agreement did not include any provisions for a ceasefire (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 4). Although achieving a ceasefire often is an initial goal of any peace process, it is not always possible to achieve at the first stages of negotiation. It is in some cases linked to a more

comprehensive settlement with more extensive agreements, later on in the peace process. There is a neglected relationship between ceasefires and gender-related relations which is expected to influence the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Using this variable in the multiple regression model could show if this relation has an additional effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, other than the expected effect of engendered language in peace agreements (Forster & Bell, 2019, 4). The variable is chosen to see if the peace agreement had specific references to end the hostilities and thus if this has any correlation with the dependent or independent variable.

Elections measure if the agreement provided for elections or stipulated electoral reforms. This is a binary variable giving the score 1 for yes and 0 for no from the UCDP dataset (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 5). Elections work as a good indication of if the peace agreement has provided democratic reforms making the peace agreement and included parties are focused on a more democratic future post-conflict. Research shows that democracies rarely engage in widespread sexual violence and generally punish rape on a larger scale, which reasonably should appear in a negative relationship with post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence (Wood, 2006, 332). The variable's validity is relatively weak as it tries elections as the operationalization of democracy, however, as democracy is such a broad spectrum with a countless number of definitions and ways to measure by, this was convenient as a general indicator on which way a possible correlation would be going.

Interim government is a binary variable coded 1 if the agreement provided for rebel integration into the interim government and 0 if it did not (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 5). Civil wars are far less likely to end in peace agreements than international wars, and more than a third of civil wars restart within a few years. This is likely a consequence of rebels demobilizing and thus losing bargaining power, which in turn makes rebels reluctant to stop fighting. Rebel integration has in previous research been suggested to not be a successful peace-building mechanism, however, it is still frequently used in peace agreements and could affect the dependent variable as rebels are not seldom key actors perpetrating sexual violence during and after a conflict (Glassmyer & Sambanis, 2008, 381). This variable is included in each of the multiple regression analyses as it might have an effect both on the variable *Cease* and possibly even be an underlying variable affecting the other variables tested. It measures what it is intended to measure, hence, the validity is strong.

Integration of rebels into civil service measures if the agreement provided for the integration of rebels into civil service or not, e.g. public administration of the government in a country, excluding legislative, judicial, and military branches. It is a binary variable coded 1 for yes and 0 for no (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 5). The same reasoning used to include *interim government* and the following *Integration of rebels into the government* is the motivation for including this variable and the subsequent one. The variable is also assumed to have an effect on the success of peace agreements and could therefore have an indirect effect on the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

Integration of rebels into the government indicates if the peace agreement has provided for integration of rebels into the government. This is a binary variable coded 1 for yes and 0 for no. It should be observed that this is not the same variable as *interim*, which measures if the integration of rebels into the interim government was provided in the peace agreement (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 5). This variable measures integration into the government, which in most cases in this dataset indicates integration into an already existing government. The same motivation on why it is included in the analysis as the two former variables are used. The validity of this variable is seen as high as it measures what it is intended to measure and the operationalization is reliable.

Military provision is a binary variable that measures if the agreement had any regulation of the violent behavior of the parties. A more general variable than the one that only measures DDR. This variable, in addition to DDR programs for one or all of the parties, also includes any of cease, in-army, and withdrawal from one or all parties within the conflict (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020, 5). As mentioned in relation to the variable *DDR*, there is a relationship between DDR programs and other similar provisions within peace agreements and improvement in gender equality after a conflict (Aolain et al., 2011, 134). The presumption that justifies the inclusion of this variable is that a higher level of equality should have a negative correlation to post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and thus could affect the correlation between my dependent and independent variable in the multiple regression analysis.

4.5 Limitations of the study

This section will start by explaining the limitations and flaws with the choice of method. Following this, the datasets chosen when analyzing the relation between the prevalence of post-

conflict conflict-related sexual violence and engendered language in peace agreements will be discussed. Finally, the validity of the independent variable will be reviewed.

The method used for this thesis is one bivariate regression analysis and three following multiple regression analyses trying to isolate the correlation between the dependent and independent variable. Even if regression analysis is an effective tool for statistical analysis, it has limitations. The method used is good to find and analyze correlation, unfortunately, it cannot prove causality. For a regression to allow us to estimate any causal effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, there are two important conditions that need to be fulfilled. First, the dependent variable cannot affect the independent variable (this would mean that we have reverse causality). The second condition to prove causality is that we know that there are no omitted variables that affect both the independent and the dependent variable, which would lead to omitted variable bias, which will be discussed subsequently in this section (Österman & Folke, 2020, 73f). None of these conditions can be certainly confirmed, which makes the causality difficult to prove.

One potential bias that must be taken into concern is the omitted-variable bias (OVB). This occurs when a statistical model leaves out one or more relevant variables that are correlated with both the dependent and the independent variable. The bias results in the model attributing the effect of the missing variables to those that were included and providing an incorrect regression model (Österman & Folke, 2020, 73f). To minimize the risk of OVB I have included all variables that reasonably could affect the dependent variable, however, there is always a risk that there are variables that this thesis did not include that should have been, which again makes it hard to prove causality.

Finally, the dependent variable has a weakness with its validity being low. Prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence is a variable that includes numbers from several different actors and individuals originating from three different sources. Hence, it is difficult to measure objectively. Sexual violence is a stigmatized subject and in many different contexts, there is a certain risk that many victims do not report being subjected to it. Furthermore, there is a risk of different definitions of sexual violence being used depending on individuals being subjected to it as well as individuals measuring the prevalence depending on both the context of the conflict in question and on the relationship between victim and perpetrator. The solution used to mitigate this is to take the highest reported score from the three available sources, which

makes the validity stronger. There is an obvious measurement risk with the variable giving it has a weak validity, however, it is the most fitting variable accessible of this size and credibility.

The reliability in the datasets is rather high as the datasets used are large and accessible to anyone, making it easy to replicate the study. The validity on the other hand is weaker, given that the dependent variable is given scores based on perception and estimate from several different actors involved. The dependent variable is, as mentioned, also at risk to be underestimated due to individuals not wanting to report crimes of this character.

5. Results

This chapter will present the results of the thesis. It will begin with a summary of the data in ‘Descriptive statistics’ together with explanations on how the measures should be interpreted in relation to the regressions following. Secondly, both a bivariate regression and three multivariate regression models are presented and discussed. Finally, the chapter discusses the results and possible ways to interpret them.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the original coding of the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence. We have three different columns which represent the coding of the prevalence that was given by Amnesty International (AI), Human Right Watch (HRW), and the US State Department (USSD) annual reports separately. One option would be to only take one of the columns in the regression analysis, but that would mean potentially losing accounts where one of the other agencies has recorded cases of sexual violence being used at some scale. Another option that has been used by other researchers with similar data is to recode the data into a binary variable showing 1 if at least one of the three variables reports any sexual violence related to the conflict and 0 if none of the three variables reports sexual violence occurring. The method used in this paper was to create a new variable, *prevalence*, that provides the highest reported score of the three available variables. The descriptive statistics of this new variable are shown in table 2 together with the other variables used in the regression analysis.

Table 1. Description of the three prevalence variables.

	Amnesty International	Human Rights Watch	US State Department
NA	1	40	0
0 (None)	249	207	236
1 (Isolated)	0	2	9
2 (Numerous)	1	1	3
3 (Massive)	0	1	3
Total number of cases	251	251	251

The new variable *Prevalence* has 41 observations with NA (out of 251 in total) and the highest recorded value is a score of 3, meaning that at least one conflict has scored prevalence (3) = massive. The mean is 0.1374 which indicates that most conflicts in the dataset have rather low scores, however, the standard deviation is rather high in relation to the mean which shows that there are multiple outliers within the dataset and that the scores differ, making the mean less reliable. As shown in table 1, the three sources have a different number of NA (no found reports and no available data), however, as the new prevalence variable chooses the highest reported score regardless of how the other sources have reported (i.e. it will ignore cases coded NA and treat them as 0), this will not make any difference to the regressions following.

The thesis only used data from one year after a conflict has ended which, as mentioned earlier, is motivated by the availability of data. To achieve as large a sample as possible when combining the SVAC and ucdp datasets, the point in time where most data could be collected was one year after a peace agreement had been signed. It would be beneficial to look further in the future, as change might not happen so quickly as only a year after a conflict, but for the thesis to have a larger quantity of points to measure the choice to only look at the one year mark was made.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the independent variables.

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	St. dev	<i>n</i>
Prevalence	0	3	0.1374	0.3667	251
Gender	0	1	0.3187	0.4669	251
DDR	0	1	0.3586	0.4805	251
Cease	0	1	0.4661	0.4998	251
Elections	0	1	0.3307	0.4714	251
Interim government	0	1	0.2151	0.4117	251
Integration of rebels into civil service	0	1	0.1514	0.3591	251
Integration of rebels into the government	0	1	0.2510	0.4345	251
Military provision	0	1	0.6135	0.4879	251

The merged datasets, SVAC and UCDP, include 251 observations of the prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence one year after a peace agreement has been signed in the timeframe between 1989 and 2018. Table 2 provides summary statistics for all used variables. Both the independent variables and the variables used as control variables in the subsequent regression models are binary as shown in the min-max columns in table 2. The only exception of this is the dependent variable, *prevalence*, which has a scale from 0-3. The highest recorded value in this variable is 3. Within the data, roughly a third of peace agreements used an engendered language specifically targeting women and girls, with a standard deviation at 0.47. This is a fairly high standard deviation and points to the fact that there is a large spread around the mean in this variable, i.e. many outliers, giving us a less reliable mean.

Figure 2 displays a jittered scatterplot of the relation between peace agreements using engendered language and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. We can see that there is a linear positive association between the variables, however, there are many outliers from

the regression line. This explains the high standard deviation shown in table 2. This means there is a correlation between engendered language and a higher prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, however, this appears to be somewhat weak. The many outliers could mean that there are other more important factors affecting post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence or that the observations with engendered language in peace agreements are comparatively few, only a third of the sample.

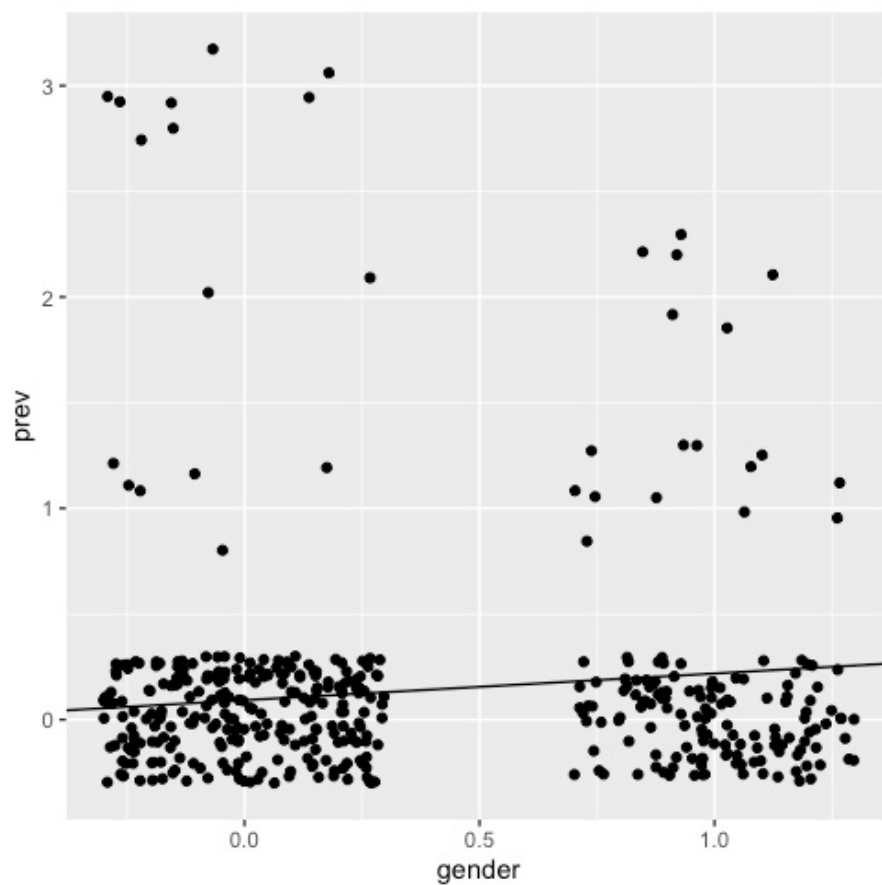


Figure 2. Jittered scatterplot of the relation between engendered language and the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Regression line based on a bivariate regression between the two.

5.2 Regression Analysis

The following section will present the results from the bivariate and multiple regression analyses created to answer the research question regarding the correlation between engendered language in peace agreements and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

Table 3. The effect of gendered language in the peace agreements on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

Variable	Bivariate regression	Multiple regression 1	Multiple regression 2	Multiple regression 3
Intercept	0.127 ** (0.045)	0.039 (0.056)	0.019 (0.022)	0.024 (0.024)
Gender	0.029 (0.075)	0.028 (0.073)	0.016 (0.028)	0.016 (0.029)
DDR		0.039 (0.078)	0.012 (0.030)	0.024 (0.038)
Cease		0.072 (0.079)	0.021 (0.031)	0.039 (0.041)
Elections		0.318 *** (0.083)	0.135 *** (0.032)	0.132 *** (0.033)
Interim government		-0.291 ** (0.094)	-0.116 ** (0.036)	-0.115 ** (0.038)
Integration of rebels into civil service			-0.084 . (0.045)	-0.093 . (0.049)
Integration of rebels into the government				0.012 (0.036)
Military provision				-0.032 (0.049)
Adjusted R ²	0.004061	0.06591	0.07706	0.07042
n	251	251	251	251

Notes: OLS regressions. Figures are coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis. Significance: '***' $p < 0.001$; '**' $p < 0.01$; '*' $p < 0.05$; '.' $p < 0.1$

Table 3 shows the result from four different regression models and their point estimates for each variable's coefficient. Within the parenthesis is the standard error. The table also presents the adjusted R-squared and the sample size (n) for each regression. The adjusted R-squared shows how much of the variation in post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence can be explained by the model and varies between 0 to 1, the closer to one, the smaller the deviation between the observed and the expected values on the dependent variable (Esaiasson et al., 2017, 395). As shown, the R-squared increases in every regression, indicating that engendered language is not the sole variable affecting post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, which is reasonable given that it is a versatile issue with many different possible explanations.

First, engendered language in peace agreements seems to have a positive, although weak, effect with the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence all other things equal. In the bivariate regression, we see that an engendered language increases the likelihood of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence in a binary context. However, it is important to note that these effects are not significant on any statistical level, making it impossible to draw any substantial conclusions about the estimates. The point estimates shift slightly in the different OLS regression models but are relatively stable.

Looking at the control variables, three of them show a statistically significant effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Elections, interim government and integration of rebels into civil service (intciv). The results suggest that elections have a positive effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence on the highest significance level while interim government and intciv have a negative effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence on a significance level between 90 and 99 percent.

Elections were due to the previous research presumed to have a negative effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence, which it did not have. The validity of this variable is relatively weak as it is only an indication of future democratic reforms, which could explain why the correlation is positive. This could be due to perpetrators reacting to having less bargaining power when elections are included as provisions in the peace agreements and therefore making them reluctant to stop fighting. The same could be argued when it comes to the positive correlation between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and the integration of rebels into the government.

That the variable military provision had a negative correlation was not surprising as the presumption was that regulations of violent behavior would lead to a decrease in post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. This expectation was built on previous research showing that there is a relationship between DDR programs and improvement in gender equality, hence it should lead to a decrease in sexual violence (Aolain et al., 2011, 134).

The negative correlation between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and integration of rebels into civil service was expected due to the previous research on the subject, and this regression analysis shows that integration of rebels into civil service has a negative effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

The variable *DDR* have a non-significant positive correlation with post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and the variable *cease* have a non-significant positive correlation. As the correlation is non-significant we cannot be sure that the correlation is caused by anything else than a coincidence.

6. Discussion

This section will first discuss the results of the study and what conclusions we can draw from these results. After this, there will be a discussion whether the research question is properly answered within this study and finally, the section will present what further research would be beneficial for the field in the future.

The potential correlation between using engendered language in the peace agreements and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence was assumed to be negative. The hypothesis was based on the previous literature on the subject, that using a more inclusive language considering the whole population (and not only the male half) would decrease the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. Policies such as UNSC Resolution 1325 and the research on women in peace processes made the argument that inclusion is a generally good path to follow.

As shown in the regression models, this is not the case within the sample that was used in this study. The opposite could be observed, and we can see a positive correlation between the two, giving a clear, although small, indication of the correlation. As mentioned before, the correlation was not statistically significant, thus the results should only be viewed as an indication and could very well look different with a larger sample size, e.g. when looking further in the future or taking into consideration what the situation looked like before a peace agreement was signed. The sample used in these regression models uses all available peace agreements within the given time frame and is therefore considered random, which together with the fact that the thesis is a large-N study indicates that the results from the regression analyses are generalizable.

There is a probability that the correlation is due to omitted-variable bias (OVB), which is an issue brought up in section 4.5 *Limitations with the study*. OVB is when a statistical model leaves out one or more relevant variables that are correlated with both the dependent and the independent variable, leading to a model that attributes the effect of the missing variables to those that were included and providing a faulty regression model (Österman & Folke, 2020, 73f). This is always a risk when using regression analyses to analyze data and could potentially explain the unexpected result of a positive correlation between engendered language and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

One possible explanation for the positive correlation between engendered language and the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence could be that in cases where peace agreements took women and girls into consideration and used an engendered language, the structures within said country/context are somewhat more equal than in cases where peace agreements did not. This would likely lead to a more extensive definition of what sexual violence is, leading to a larger amount of cases being reported both by individuals being subject to such violence and organizations working with the reports. In the same way, as a higher number of reports of rape or domestic violence in a country do not automatically signify a higher amount of rape or domestic violence occurring in a country, it is usually a consequence of more people reporting rape or domestic violence, or a different definition on what accounts as rape or domestic violence. The positive correlation between engendered language within peace agreements and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence could mean that there is not only a correlation but also causality between engendered language and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. However, a more likely scenario is that an engendered language provides a higher incentive for victims to report and for agencies to investigate how situations post-conflict are situated. In addition, an engendered language within peace agreements also works as an incentive where it is clear what should and should not be regarded as a case of sexual violence.

7. Conclusion

In this thesis, the main objective was to examine how gender mainstreaming influences post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence. The thesis had the research question “*Does engendered language in peace agreements decrease post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence?*” that was based on findings from previous research within the field. The question, if engendered language in peace agreements has a negative effect on post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence cannot be answered with full certainty using the OLS-regression analysis made in the paper. We can see a positive correlation, although, as it is not statistically significant on any level, it is not possible to say that there is a correlation between engendered language in peace agreements and post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

The findings generate questions both regarding measurements of the prevalence of post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and about how effective gender mainstreaming is. As said when discussing gender mainstreaming in the theory section of the thesis, it is a tool in the strive for gender equality and not a magic bullet that will stop all issues on the subject. However, based on the previous research on the field and the fact that Sweden together with many international institutions has a policy to shape foreign policy and peace work from a feminist perspective, it would seem safe to assume that gender mainstreaming in the form of engendered language in peace agreements should decrease post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence.

The thesis also showed that there is a positive relation between post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence and elections on over 99 percent significance level. This indicates that previous research suggesting that democracy should lead to a decrease in post-conflict conflict-related sexual violence has reason to be further researched to see what the mechanism behind this result could be, if it is an effect of omitted variable bias or if it is a case of reverse causality.

As a conclusion of this study, it can be said that it would be beneficial to explore this correlation with a more extensive study, e.g. with a larger time frame than just one year after a peace agreement has been signed and with a higher number of units, i.e. peace agreements, to analyze. Future research using time series data to observe the changes this could lead to over time would open up further for different results. Another future area for a large-N quantitative study would be to try the correlation with other control variables as well. As mentioned in section 4.4

Control variables, some variables have a relatively weak validity. As an example, the use of the variable *Elections* is not ideal to measure democracy, and further research would benefit from using additional datasets to compare the statistical significance further when adding variables and testing other variables indicating democratization after a conflict, which could potentially change the results. Additionally, it is important to discuss what the concept of feminist policy means. An important contribution would be to explore what it really means to adopt a gendered lens to peace and war, what does a feminist foreign policy mean in practice?

Finally, it would also be beneficial to do a qualitative case study or a mixed-method study on the effect of gender mainstreaming within other parts of the peace processes, such as looking into more specific DDR projects or to compare peace agreements with and without engendered language to see what differences might appear. In the end, gender mainstreaming is a toolbox made to simplify the usage of engendered provisions within the field, and as mentioned earlier - it is not a magic bullet solving every problem. To go more in-depth within specific cases could show how other factors might work as mechanisms behind structural sexual violence used in and after an armed conflict.

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