Women's participation, agency and social provisions in peace agreements

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Abstract: Debates on the provisions outlined in peace agreements set to terminate armed conflicts have gained traction in recent times. Feminist theories suggest that women participants at the negotiation table have the agency to widen the scope of peace agreements. They add that if women participate, the agreement is likely to widen because women have the agency to raise a significant number of critical social issues that are often not given the needed attention. Meanwhile, this supposition leaves a critical gap in the literature. Thus, a detailed understanding of the specific input that women through agency at the negotiation table, contribute to peace agreements is still unknown. The aim of this article is to fill this lacuna, while contributing to the feminist literature in Africa. A content analysis of the agreements reached on Liberia-2003, Sierra Leone-1999, Côte d'Ivoire-2003 and Niger-1995 presents evidence in support of the normative hypothesis in the literature.

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1   Introduction

Scholars have devoted considerable time and energy investigating the extent to which provisions are accepted by belligerent actors in peace agreements sets to terminate armed conflicts (Joshi and Darby, 2013; Lee et al., 2016). While some researchers argue that all male negotiated agreements are centred on security provisions (Martin, 2006; Pospisil and Bell, 2018), others provide an understanding that women have the agency to widen the scope of the agreement by pushing for social provisions like gender equality and women's rights, which could address women's issues and improve the agreement's

content if they participate (Jobarteh, 2018; Krause et al., 2018). Others have also suggested that peace negotiations with women's participation make the final peace agreement comprehensive (Hillbert, 2017; Jobarteh, 2018). Furthermore, in modern politics, the literature suggests that the participation of women in legislatures is positively associated with the passage of female-friendly social policies, e.g., childcare (Atchison, 2015). The preceding arguments suggest that women are socially sensitive.

But our understanding regarding this phenomenon is still limited. In particular, we lack a detailed understanding of the specific input that women contribute to peace agreements through the agency they get for being participants at the negotiation table. We do not understand whether the agency that women get for being participants at the negotiation table affects the provisions outlined in the agreement. In fact, there is still a lack of evidence-based knowledge on the impact of women's participation in peace negotiations (Jobarteh, 2018). While this paper aims to provide a better understanding of the specific inputs that women, through agency, shape peace agreements set to terminate armed conflicts, it also contributes to broadening the feminist literature in Africa. It does so by drawing on theories suggesting that women through an agency at the negotiation table, widen the agreement content, rooted in their wartime experiences, interests and expectations (Bjarnegård and Melander, 2013; Jobarteh, 2018).

Following the foregoing debates and the theoretical arguments, this article is set to address the normative hypothesis in the literature that if women participate, the peace agreement is likely to broaden. This article attempts to provide a better understanding of whether a broadened peace agreement containing more social provisions is influenced by the participation and/or the agency of women at the peace table. The hypothesis is addressed by comparing and analyzing the four most similar peace agreement cases to understand if the agency that women get for being at the negotiation table influences the inclusion of social provisions in the final peace agreement. Two of the agreements on Liberia 2003 and Sierra Leone 1999 included women at the negotiation table and the other two agreements on Côte d'Ivoire 2003 and Niger 1995 excluded women. Primary and secondary sources of data were used. Primary data included the actual four peace agreements and government reports, and the secondary data constituted books, journals, articles, and theses among others. The evidence from the analysis proposes support for the normative hypothesis. Again, content analysis of the four peace agreements does provide a pattern suggesting that if women participate in peace negotiations, it is likely that, through their agency, more social provisions would be included in the final agreement than the agreement in which women are excluded. The article proceeds as follows: the next section examines previous research and the theoretical arguments. This is followed by the materials and methods used to conduct the study. The summary of the conflict cases and the emanating results and discussion and the conclusion follows accordingly.

2   Previous research and theoretical arguments

2.1   Women's participation

The crux of women's participation is supported by two schools of thought: the functional claim and the rights-based perspective. Functional advocates argue that women's participation in negotiation is related to some positive outcomes such as the higher

attainment of peace. And because women are naturally conciliatory, they should be given an equal opportunity to participate in the peace process (Caprioli, 2003; Ellerby, 2013; O'Reilly, 2016). The functional argument is however criticised, i.e., the assumption that women by nature are peaceful is universally untrue as a small number of women have participated as combatants or culprits of sexual violence in armed conflicts (Cohen, 2013). It is even problematic to assume that women are just victims of warfare because some women have demonstrated agency in grassroots peacebuilding (Mzvondiwa, 2007; George, 2018a; Nilsson et al., 2020). The rights-based argument also postulates that women comprise at least half of the world's population who despite being victims still have the agency to cause change. So, like men, women need an equal right in peace and security decisions that affect their own lives and society in general (Bjarnegård and Melander, 2013; Paffenholz and Rose, 2015). One of the basics of this perspective is that women suffer gender violence, including the use of rape as a weapon of war, which in turn yields higher levels of post-war female mental health problems and traumatic challenges than men, so women have the right to participate and share their experiences (Brounéus, 2014; George, 2018b). The rights-based argument, nevertheless, fails to recognise that smaller numbers of civilian men and boys have also suffered diverse forms of wartime sexual violence (Carpenter, 2006; Cohen, 2013).

2.2   *Women's agency*

Agency is a sociocultural mediated capacity to act (Ahearn, 2001) and denotes that those individuals are well-informed and capable rather than inhibited by social norms and values (Moser and Clark, 2001). The capacity of women (either individually or collectively) to make an effective and meaningful choice and action, indicating the need of women themselves to be significant actors in the process of decision-making and/or change itself is suggested as an agency (Luintel, 2016). Agency marks a paradigm shift in a view that recognises women as active agents of change rather than passive victims of patriarchy or warfare, and that women can be both agents and victims in war and peace (Shepherd, 2016). The functional perspective argues that men are the perpetrators while women are victims of violence in armed conflicts, yet the masculinised story of war does not describe the complexity of men's and women's roles in the war (Olofsson, 2018).

Women's representation on the assumption that women are victims of war weakens their agency and consequently the post-war development activities, in which women can participate and all their expectations and experiences of conflict addressed are undermined (ibid). The assumption that women are just victims of violence is now taking a different turn in contemporary peace and conflict research. Thus, women in conflicts can take part as decision makers, negotiators, peace activists and participating in the military struggle (Manchanda, 2005). The struggle here suggests it is time we start identifying women as agents instead of victims and strengthen their roles as partners for social transformation (Olofsson, 2018). Women's successful contributions to grassroots conflict prevention and peace processes in Liberia (Nilsson et al 2020), Bougainville (George, 2018a), South Africa (Noma et al., 2012) and Rwanda (Mzvondiwa, 2007) suggest that if women were agents of war instead of victims of war, they may not use their agency to work for peace but rather for war.

Further, considering women as victims of war who use their experience as victims to effect change and support peace activities provides an understanding of women as not only victims of warfare or agents of war, but both (Olofsson, 2018). The recognition of

women's agency in peace and development could change the narrative about women as just vulnerable. As noted by Kofi Annan in Hunt and Posa (2001), for a very long time, women have demonstrated agency in peace education both in their families and their societies and have proved instrumental in building bridges rather than walls. Given their roles as family nurturers, women have a huge agency investment in the stability of their communities and since women know their communities, they can predict the acceptance of peace initiatives, as well as broker agreements in their neighbourhoods (ibid).

Women through agency act as agents to the level possible for them in the society they live in and in the circumstance where women are constrained by their gender roles, they use what means they have, to execute change (Olofsson, 2018). Women may use the agency they have, to impact the conflict and the ones leading the conflict such that when they have more possibilities, they use them and show that once again, they have agency (ibid). Collectively, women have the agency and avenues of resisting male domination within civil societies and to claim space for themselves in the attempt to influence decision making at the community level (Mudege and Kwangwari, 2013). It is therefore interesting to note that a more representative form of women civil society participation, which in turn, enhance the agency of women at the negotiation table does not necessarily translate into actual influence over the peace process (Aulin, 2019), and at worst, the agency of unarmed women actors at the peace table may create extra veto players, which can make it more difficult to arrive at an agreement (Cunningham, 2007).

This notwithstanding, the preceding arguments suggest women are victims of war, but also act as agents of change and given an equal right at the negotiation table, they can use their agency to impact positively the peace process, by pushing for social provisions relevant to women and girls' survival, development and to support conflict transformation and reconciliation processes of post-conflict societies in general. For instance, George (2018b) has illustrated the productive impact of the agency of women peace brokers in several different Pacific societies. Also, Micheni (2020) has demonstrated the pivotal role of women self-help groups in rural economic development in Kenya, suggesting that, women through agency can contribute to comprehensive forms of stability and security especially raising and pushing for social issues that might have gone unnoticed by men.

Social provisions are arrangements, such as human rights, education, gender equality or women's rights and security provisions includes arrangements for securing the boundaries, disarming combatants, ensuring a monopoly of violence, and withdrawing foreign military forces (Newman et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2016). Research has shown that social provisions contribute to post-war peacebuilding because they address grievances that underlie or trigger violent conflict and offer a means for the state to (re)build its legitimacy and accountability (Ashby, 2012; McCandless and Rogan, 2013). The relationship between social provisions and peace has been established. For example, Ashby (2002) finds that insufficient or inequitable access to healthcare and education are factors in the decision of adolescents and youth to join armed groups. Taydas and Peksen (2012) add that social investment in health, education and social security contributes to conflict prevention because they reduce grievances by offsetting the effects of poverty and inequality in society.

Further, George (2018a) claims that social provision on education can bring immediate-term benefits in conflict prone areas by bringing people together to solve problems and give them a path forward to avert conflict relapse. In effect, social provisions are gradually finding a space in contemporary peace accords (United Nations

Development Program, 2008; McCandless and Rogan, 2013). The preceding accounts suggest that while the absence of social provisions could be a potential threat to peace and human security, the presence of these provisions can promote peacebuilding after a peace agreement is signed.

2.3   Theoretical arguments: women, agency and participation in peace process

Due to the relapse of conflicts after a peace agreement is signed by the warring actors, it is proposed that novel ideas and approaches are needed in contemporary peace processes (O'Reilly and Súilleabháin, 2013). One key suggestion is that the participation of women is a critical development instrument for contributing to an era where new perspectives are brought to the negotiation table by women, which in turn contribute to making the peace durable (ibid). Another suggestion is that women's interests in conflicts are broader than those of the men involved in negotiations, and that women bring critical topics to the peacebuilding agenda and raise other relevant social issues that men seem to overlook (O'Rourke, 2014; Castillejo, 2016). Women participants in peace processes often raise critical issues, including gender equality and women's rights closely correlating with peace (O'Reilly, 2016), and which in turn make the agreement widen (Jobarteh, 2018).

Further, it is argued that the participation of women makes it more likely for the scope of the agreement to broaden as women raise a comprehensive set of social issues reinforced by their wartime experiences, expectations, and interests at the negotiation table, thereby legitimising the peace (Nilsson, 2012; Ellerby, 2013; Jobarteh, 2018). The literature again proposes that if women were less involved, agreements would be reached fewer often, and the probability of reaching an agreement is even lower if women's groups are not involved at all (Caprioli, 2000).

Therefore, where attention is given to the WPS resolution area of participation, inclusive forms of stability and security can ensue. As women have shown to be not just victims of war but also agents of peace, it could be inferred in the preceding debates that, getting a seat at the peace table, women can leverage agency with their unique wartime experiences and interests in the conflict to advocate for diverse forms of social provisions in the agreement believed can protect women and girls in the post-war setting. Following this logic, together with the extensive set of assumptions, the normative hypothesis that if women participate in the negotiation, the accord is likely to broaden with more social provisions would be investigation.

3   Materials and methods

This article is primarily a qualitative comparative study that employs a content analysis technique in analysing the research data to reflect on the issues more deeply and be able to analyse and present systematically the research materials, making it possible to draw some interpretation of the results (Boréus and Bergström, 2012). Both primary and secondary sources were relied on for this article wherein the former included four peace agreements/cases on Liberia 2003, Sierra Leone 1999, Côte d'Ivoire 2003, and Niger 1995, while the latter included books, journal articles, reports, media, etc. The four peace agreements wherein two – Liberia and Sierra Leone – involved the participation of women and the other two – Côte d'Ivoire and Niger – without women participants were compared and examined qualitatively to understand how prominently social provisions

feature with other types of provisions - in this case security provisions in the agreements vis-à-vis the presence of women.

These four peace agreements were selected for threefold reasons. First, they are all in the West African subregion, sharing similar environmental and geographical background. Second, these peace agreements were all signed in the period after the end of the post-Cold War at a time where women's participation and inclusion in political and peace-making decisions were strongly supported by the Beijing Declaration (Hillbert, 2017; United Nations Women, 2015). Third, peace agreements around this time were more oriented towards either conflict resolution, management or transformation and provisions relevant to security peace rather than social peace (Lee et al., 2016). Make us presume that both social and security provisions the attention of all the major peace agreements signed during this period. Taken together, these four most similar cases help to obviate a higher risk of many other explanatory variables taking into consideration some of the similarities in contextual context (Jabang, 2016). In the next section contextualise provisions in the peace agreements to show the steps taken to enumerate and evaluate the provisions outlined in the four agreements. Doing so, this helps to uncover which provisions appear to be the most occurring in the agreements in relation to the presence or absence of women and the agency they get at the peace table.

3.1   Contextualising provisions in the peace agreement

The PAM dataset summarised by Joshi and Darby (2013) and Lee et al. (2016) concerning what comprehensive peace agreements (CPA) are, is adopted in this article. According to them, a CPA should include the following six major categories of provisions:

1   cease-fire

2   security

3   rights

4   institutions

5   external arrangements

6   other arrangements which are further sub-divided under each (see Table 1).

However, for the purpose of this article, I focused on the 'security' and 'rights' provisions because of the research puzzle and the hypothesis set for investigation. I evaluated these two major categories of provisions through the process of counting how many sub-provisions under 'security' and 'rights' were included in the four peace agreements selected for this article (see Table 1). Doing so, I was able to ascertain whether female participated negotiations lead to more social provisions in the agreements or male negotiated peace agreement were security focused. Further, the 'rights' provisions in Table 1 was translated as 'social' provisions and used interchangeably for the purpose of this article.

There are seven sub-provisions under security in the PAM dataset in Table 1. However, I also found in the peace agreements literature other regularly appearing sub-provisions that the PAM dataset does not capture under 'security'. So, I increased it with four other sub-provisions (boundary demarcation; regional or United Nations (UN)

peacekeeping force; UN, International or Internal Verification; and withdrawal of troops) (Lee et al., 2016). These four additional sub-provisions are policy areas applied in peacekeeping and peacebuilding programs since the end of the Cold War and mostly they support the security approaches towards peace (ibid). In all, this article recognised 11 sub-provisions under 'security'. Further, I identified 15 sub-provisions under 'rights' in the PAM dataset in Table 1. In a similar vein, I expanded the sub-provisions to include two additional items: inter-ethnic state relations, and truth or reconciliation mechanisms which the PAM dataset did not include under 'rights' (Lee et al., 2016). I added these extra sub-provisions because they had received increased emphasis in recent seminal findings from international organisations (ibid). Together, there are 17 sub-provisions under rights, which I considered relevant for this article.

Going forward, all the sub-provisions under security and rights outlined in the four agreements were counted and assessed. This will help to evaluate which of the agreements showed the greatest number of sub-provisions outlined under rights or security in relation to the presence or absence of women at the peace table. Notably, if the names of sub-provisions are not exactly what was mentioned in the four peace agreements under study, but have the same meaning, I still placed them under the categories where they fitted. For example, in the PAM dataset in Table 1, we have military reform under 'security' and so, where I saw security reform in the peace agreements, I assumed it had the same meaning as military reform.

Table 1   Provisions under CPAs adopted in the PAM dataset

Category of provisions	*Sub-provisions*
Security	Demobilisation, disarmament, military reform, police reform, paramilitary groups, prisoner release, reintegration.
Rights	Amnesty, children's rights, citizenship, cultural protections, education reform, human rights, indigenous minority rights, internally displaced persons, media reform, minority rights, official language and symbol, refugees, reparations, right of self-determination, women's rights.

3.2   Summary of the cases

The Liberia civil war started in December 1989 and ended on 18 August 2003, following the signing of the final peace agreement in Ghana (Accra Peace Agreement). Liberia illustrates a case where the final agreement was reached with women participating at the peace table in the form of observers. Like Liberia, Sierra Leone demonstrated a case where the final peace agreement was concluded with women at the peace table as delegates and observers. The Sierra Leone armed conflict started on 23rd March 1991 and ended on 7th July 1999 with the signing of a final peace accord in Togo (Lomé Peace Agreement). More so, the Côte d'Ivoire civil war started on September 19, 2002, and was terminated following the signing of a peace accord on 23rd January 2003 in France (Linas-Marcoussis Peace Agreement). Côte d'Ivoire reveals a case where the final peace agreement was concluded with no women participants at the peace table. Besides, the intrastate conflict in Niger started in November 1991 and ended with a peace pact signed on 15th April 1995 in Burkina Faso (Agreement between the Niger Republic Government and the Organisation of The Armed Resistance-ORA). Like Côte d'Ivoire, Niger depicted

an instance where the final peace agreement was signed with only male participants at the negotiation table.

4   Results and discussion

4.1   The scope of peace agreement

To reiterate, the normative hypothesis of this article is that if women participate in peace negotiations, the scope of the agreement was expected to broaden with more social provisions. In Table 2, the scope of provisions outlined in the four peace agreements is presented for an in-depth analysis of provisions outlined with or without the participation of women at the peace table.

Table 2   The scope of provisions in the peace agreements

Cases	Social/rights provisions	Security provisions
Liberia	Part 6: Human rights issues Part 6 (Art XXIII): TRC Part 8 (Art XXVIII): Gender issues Part 9 (Art XXX, 1a): Refugees Part 9 (ArtXXX,1b): Displaced persons Part 9 (Art XXXI): Vulnerable groups Part 10: Amnesty 7 major social provisions	Part 2: Int'l. peacekeeping Part 3: DDR Part 4: SSR Part 5: Release of prisoners 4 major security provisions
Sierra Leone	Part 2 (Art VI, 2ix): TRC Part 3(Art IX): Amnesty Part5(Art XXIV): Human rights issues Part 5 (Art XXXI): Education Part 5 (Art XXII): Refugees Part 5 (Art XXII): Displaced persons Part 5 (Art XXX): Children's rights 7 major social provisions	Part 4 (Art XVI): DDR Part 4 (Art XVI): Paramilitary groups Part 4 (Art XVII): SSR Part 4 (Art XVIII): Withdrawal of mercenaries Part 4 (Art XIII): Int'l Peace keeping Part 5 (Art XXI): Release of prisoners 6 major security provisions
Côte d'Ivoire	Annex V: Media reform Annex VI: Human rights Annex VII.5 Amnesty 3 major social provisions	Element 2: Int'l. peacekeeping Element 3f: SSR Element:3g Disarmament Element3i: Release of Prisoners Annex VII: Demobilisation 5 major security provisions
Niger	Clause 10 (Sec III): Reconciliation Clause 15: Amnesty Clause 22c: Cultural protection 3 major social provisions	Clause 3a: Boundary demarcation Clause 13: DDR Clause 17a/b: SSR Clause 14c: Paramilitary forces 4 major security provisions

The agreements reached on Liberia and Sierra Leone in which women participated at the peace table showed a significant number of social provisions than security provisions. The Liberian agreement had seven sub-provisions under social, compared to the four sub-provisions under security. Similarly, the Sierra Leone agreement had seven sub-provisions on social compared to the six sub-provisions on security. Together, we

observe that, of a total of 24 sub-provisions under security and social on the Liberia and Sierra Leone agreements, 14 constituted social provisions, which was more than half of the total. The significant number of social provisions in these two agreements, supports previous study suggesting that the participation of women at the peace table was likely to broaden the scope of the agreements because women usually bring up an extensive set of social issues to the negotiation table (Hillbert, 2017; Jobarteh, 2018).

Further, we can see that of the total of 15 sub-provisions under security and social in the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements, nine constituted security and six fell social. Security provisions were found to be the most occurring in the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements negotiated with only male actors at the peace table. This observation gave support to earlier research suggesting that exclusively male participated negotiations usually shaped the contents of the peace agreements towards security provisions (Pospisil and Bell 2018). The next section discussed the agency that women demonstrated in the peace process which may have contributed to the significant number of the social provisions in the Liberia and Sierra Leone agreements.

4.2   Liberia: Women's agency, participation, and social provisions in peace agreement

In the attempt to show agency intended to influence the negotiation process to have more social provisions included in the agreement on Liberia, outside and around the negotiation hall in Accra, Ghana, the women's civil society organisations, including the Liberian refugee women, Christian women of WIPNET and the Muslim women of Peace Network continued to lobby for more women's inclusion in the peace processes and subsequently presented the golden tulip declarations stating their demands (Saiget, 2016). The declaration outlined key issues including:

1   involving more women in the negotiation process

2   integrating and supporting Liberian women in all decision-making policies on HIV/AIDS prevention and control

3   ensuring 50 % representation of women in the transitional leadership

4   ensuring women participants as observers at the Accra peace talks be made delegates and be given voting rights, including places on the vetting committee

5   a greater participation of women in peacekeeping missions as well as the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process (Golden Tulip Declaration, 2003).

Women participants of the mano river women's peace network (MARWOPNET) at the negotiation table focused particularly on WIPNET's expectation and objective of a gender equal society. Through agency at the table, the women were able to shape the scope of the negotiation such that gender, education, health and social welfare ministries were finally accepted and included in the agreement. The accord also stated that seats in the national legislature shall be provided for civil society representatives of women (Dayton and Kriesberg, 2017). Prior to the negotiation process, seats in the national legislature was monopolised by men, so for this social provision as outlined in the Declaration to find its way in the final agreement suggest Liberian women impacted the negotiation process positively. The final agreement outlined seven sub-social provisions

(see Table 2): human rights issues in Part 6; TRC in Part 6 (Article XXIII); Gender issues in Part 8 (Article XXVIII); Refugees issues in Part 9 (Article XXX, 1a); Displaced persons in Part 9 (Article XXX,1b); Vulnerable groups/ indigenous minority in Part 9 (Article XXXI); Amnesty in Part 10.

4.3   *Sierra Leone: Women's agency, participation and social provisions in peace agreements*

Similarly, women's efforts created a suitable platform for the UN and the International Community to broker the final peace agreement on Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone women's movement for peace (SLWMP) on the theme: 'try peace to end this senseless war' organised a series of collective nonviolent campaigns, appeals, peace marches, rallies, symbolic Muslim and Christian prayer meetings and mobilised women from diverse backgrounds throughout the country to pressure the belligerent actors for a negotiated settlement. Women at the peace table shaped the negotiations through informal lobbying and consultation on the periphery of the negotiations. For example, towards the end of the negotiations the rebel faction/RUF unexpectedly backtracked provocatively on previously agreed ideas, insisting on such major changes that many participants thought the continuation of the negotiations was in danger (Hayner, 2007).

In response, the women and several civil society observers invited key RUF leaders outside the peace table and strongly confronted them to retract their afterthought position and consider other social intervention programs in the agreement. This confrontation almost resulted in a physical fight, but it was an effective strategy such that the next day at the negotiation table, RUF withdrew its position and agreed to continue with the talks and subsequently accepted education reform (free education), a key social policy that women have continually advocated (Hayner, 2007). The final agreement outlined seven sub-social provisions (see Table 2): TRC in part 2 (Article VI, 2ix); amnesty in part 3 (Article IX); human rights issues (Article XXIV); education (Article XXXI); refugees (Article XXII); displaced persons (Article XXII); children's rights (Article XXX), all in Part 5. Taken together, it is possible to suggest that the agency of women at the peace table did shape the scope of the agreements on Liberia and Sierra Leone to be more holistic with 24 out of the 39 total provisions and with a substantial amount on social arrangements. The above accounts provided support to the normative hypothesis and reinforced the theoretical arguments that the agency of women at the negotiation table gave them the leverage to bring a holistic set of issues, which in turn broadened the scope of the agreement to become comprehensive with more social arrangements.

4.4   *Côte d'Ivoire and Niger: provisions in peace agreements negotiated by male actors*

An analysis of the result of the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements negotiated without women at the peace table shows the agreements included a significant number of sub-provisions under security than social. Combined, the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements have nine sub-provisions under security compared to the six sub-provisions under social. Results from the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements confirm the earlier suggestion that peace agreements negotiated by men are more likely to be rivetted towards security agenda (Pospisil and Bell, 2018), and that they are engrossed on security agenda revolving primarily around compromises negotiated in secret by political-military

elites who are almost exclusively men (Martin, 2006; Newman et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2016).

However, although Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements appeared security centred, these agreements still included some social provisions. We observed that six out of the total of 15 sub-provisions constituted provisions under social. Thus, for Côte d'Ivoire, social provisions outlined include Media reform in Annex V; Human rights issues in Annex VI; Amnesty in Annex VII-5, and for Niger the social provisions are reconciliation in Clause 10 (Section 3); Amnesty in Clause 15; Cultural protection in Clause 22c. (See Table 2). This observation is contrary to what prior research suggested that male produced agreements were partial and/or less likely to include social arrangements (Janine, 2010; Pospisil and Bell, 2018). Going by these assumptions, we should not have observed the Côte d'Ivoire and Niger agreements wherein women's agency was absent included some social arrangements. The results show an interplay of other factors (e.g., external influence) than just the presence or absence of women's agency at the negotiation table that shapes the content of the peace agreements. Thus, the influence of external peace actors, including males who believe in human rights and are gender advocates may influence male belligerent actors to buy pro-female social provisions in peace agreements. External mediators are powerful agents who can introduce their own agendas to affect negotiations in their desired direction and orientation (Hillbert, 2017). Besides, like women, male belligerent actors may advocate for social considerations of women, especially if they have extensive knowledge about women's complex issues (Issifu, 2021). This, therefore, suggests that though women generally through agency would push for social development, some males based on their knowledge and beliefs in social matters were likely to advocate for social arrangements in peace agreements.

5   Conclusions

A substantial amount of time has been dedicated to examining the level at which social or security provisions were accepted in peace accords sets to end armed conflicts by combatant actors. While some scholars claimed that an all-male negotiated agreements were security focused, others were of the opinion that if women participated at the negotiation table it made the agreements comprehensive with social provisions. But our understanding regarding whether social provisions were shaped by the participation and/or the agency of women was still limited. The aim of this article was to contribute a better understanding of the specific inputs that women through agency at the negotiation table made in peace agreements set to terminate armed conflicts. Doing so, it contributed to broadening feminist literature in Africa.

Having analysed most similar cases of four peace agreements, the evidence suggested support for the normative hypothesis provided in the literature. The evidence reinforced previous research on the positive relationship between women's participation/agency and social provisions as well as the durability of peace (O'Reilly, 2016; Hillbert, 2017; Jobarteh, 2018). Importantly, associating women's participation and agency to social provisions in peace agreements strengthened the idea that peace and conflict were more than just security issues (Lee et al., 2016). The findings, stemming from the content analysis of the four peace agreements imply that if women participated in peace negotiation, it was likely that through their agency more social provisions would be

included in the final agreement than the agreement in which women were excluded. This notwithstanding other factors like the influence of external peace actors and the knowledge of the warring actors about women's complex issues were more likely to shape the scope of peace agreements to include social provisions and not necessarily about the presence or agency of women at the negotiation table.

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