

Spring 6-18-2023

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Recommended Citation

Hillstead, Emma, "On Occupying: Women's Representation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" (2023).
University Honors Theses. Paper 1364.
<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.1393>

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On Occupying: Women's Representation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

By

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An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

University Honors

and

Political Science

Thesis Advisor

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Portland State University

2023

Introduction

At the intersection of three major global religions, a land dense with ancient and modern history experiences one of the longest lasting conflicts in contemporary memory. Past attempts at resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using peaceful methods has ended in failure and a doubling down of repression and violence. Past peace talks, including the Madrid Conference in 1991, the Oslo Accords in 1993, and the Camp David Summit in 2000, have all tried and failed to implement strategies to achieve peace. A notable characteristic of these peace negotiations, aside from their unfortunate failures, has been the general lack of women involved at the forefront of these conversations.

This paper explores whether a greater number of women occupying positions of power and involved in peace talks increases the likelihood of peaceful solutions to violent conflict by applying the existing research of feminist peace and conflict scholars to the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, this paper poses the question: in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, would a greater number of women occupying positions of political power, specifically when women are included in peace talks in a meaningful, substantive way, increase the likelihood of a peaceful resolution? Based on the relevant literature and myriad of evidence in support, it is clear that were Israeli and Palestinian political leaders to include a greater number of women, it would increase the likelihood of a peaceful solution to this conflict, as well as creating an environment of a just, lasting, and equitable peace.

Studies analyzing peace and conflict have tended to focus more on peace as the absence of war, or the demilitarization of a conflict, as being indicative of peace and are often the main subjects of peace negotiations. Traditionally, peace and conflict political scientists have analyzed peace as a black and white status, but more recently are finding that analyzing the status of peace

as more a “perennial process of dialog” that seeks to elevate marginalized voices is also necessary when attempting to create a lasting, just peace (Diehl 2016; Behr 2018).

To rectify this shortcoming in existing scholarship, academics have begun to analyze creative ways to resolve conflict, including the effect the inclusion of an increasing number of women in higher positions of political power has on achieving resolutions to conflicts peacefully. There have been numerous studies touting the success of peaceful conflict resolution when women are included at the negotiating table. Best et. al. (2019) have proven that when women occupy positions of institutional power, such as a greater number of women in legislative bodies, there exists a greater likelihood that a peaceful solution to conflict will be created, articulating that “as gender diversity in legislature increases, negotiated settlements become increasingly likely” (Best et. al. 2019) These authors also found that when women are included in creating peaceful solutions, there also exists a higher likelihood that that peace will be sustainable and equitable for others who hold marginal identities (Best. et. al. 2019).

The United Nations itself has also identified that the inclusion of women in positions of power is extremely beneficial in preventing and resolving conflict. Known as the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 outlines quotas for the inclusion of women in formal institutional politics in states prone to violence. However, scholars have found that this resolution, while meaningful, is an inadequate remedy to solve conflict (Renzulli 2017; Aharoni 2020), stressing the importance of understanding gendered power dynamics as well as local political contexts (Rigual 2018).

Studies by Rigual et. al., while focusing on a more micro-conflict level, found that in the context of ethno-religious conflicts, women, because of gendered socialization, are more apt to de-escalate violence, preventing conflict altogether (Rigual et. al. 2018; 2022). Additionally,

Gillooly and Iwilade analyze cases of violent conflict in South America and Africa respectively, in which the inclusion of women in peace talks can be cited as supporting the success of both peace negotiations and contributing to a lasting peace (Gillooly 2022; Iwilade 2011).

Studies have also analyzed the assumption that due to gender stereotypes, some women leaders may opt for more aggressive military spending and adopt tougher stances on foreign policy to combat attacks from political opponents that may claim they are more reserved and submissive (Imamverdiyeva et al. 2022). However, Imamverdiyeva et. al. (2022) found that women leaders are not necessarily more hawkish than their male counterparts on military spending, finding instead that women and men are comparable in this regard.

There also exists substantial literature examining how Palestinian women who exist within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have historically used avenues external from formal politics to advocate for gender equality. These non-governmental advocacy groups have also been used by women in the region to call for liberation and a peaceful end to the conflict (Jamal et. al. 2015). Israeli women, while able to access formal politics more easily, have still not found their way to the center of peace negotiations (Aharoni 2017).

Absent from the literature on women's involvement in peace talks is the application of the above research to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, specifically in terms of women's access to the formal public sphere as well as the effect of expressing the lived experiences of women within the conflict on peace negotiations. Picking up where Aharoni (2017) left off, this study attempts to continue the conversation started, in which the author makes the observation that "it is now necessary to better understand the complex interaction between different levels of political institutions, for example, the absence/presence of women in official peace negotiations, at the macro level, and the attitudes, actions and beliefs toward

gender and peace at the micro level” (Aharoni 2017). This paper will attempt to address Aharoni’s remark by analyzing how women have been excluded in formal peace talks within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and why the specific cultural and political aspects of this conflict create a necessity for women to be included in future attempts at negotiating peace.

A Brief History of the Conflict

Understanding the modern history of this conflict is crucial in contextualizing the research on the effect of women’s participation, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unlike any other conflict before it: its longevity, cultural and religious history and nuances has made it unique, and, so far, unsolvable.

After World War II, the United Nations implemented its Partition Plan (or Green Line), creating two states, in an attempt to ease tensions between Jewish settlers, who settled in the region during the late 19th and early 20th centuries motivated by the Zionist movement, and the resident indigenous population, the Palestinians (Manna’ 2013). The Arab population of Palestine rejected the Partition Plan as they had a stable majority in Palestine, desiring their own state with the existence of a resident Jewish minority (Manna’ 2013). This resulted in the Catastrophe, or Nakba, the systemic expulsion of Palestinians from the region by the Israeli government, in favor of the creation of a Jewish state (Manna 2013). In the War of 1967, Israel’s preemptive strikes on neighboring countries resulted in the acquisition of territory, including Palestinian lands granted in the UN Partition Plan; the Sinai Peninsula acquired in this war was later used to negotiate peace with Egypt during the Camp David Accords of 1978 (Jamal 2017).

Tensions rose in a post-1967 environment, resulting in the First Intifada, which took place from December 1987 until the adoption of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 (Naser-Najjab

et. al. 2019; Kelman 2007). The inability for parties to come to an agreement during the Camp David Summit of 2000, as well as the continuation of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank triggered a Second Intifada in the early 2000s (Mall Dibiasi 2015). There continues to be violence and repressive systems enacted by the Israeli government toward Palestinians in the name of national security. In response to these oppressive tactics and treatment, Palestinian groups often resort to violence in order to make their voices heard.

The peace talks that have occurred in the past have largely been unsuccessful and have notably excluded women from the negotiating table. The Oslo Accords were perhaps the attempt that came closest to establishing peace in the region, and, according to Kelman (2007), Oslo was as marginally successful as it was due to the mutual recognition of the legitimacy of the two parties' identities and governing bodies (Kelman 2007).

The most recent formal peace talk that was specifically set up to reconcile Israel and Palestine was during the Camp David Summit of 2000, in which former United States President Clinton attempted to facilitate PLO leader Arafat and Israeli PM Barak in coming to an agreement over the final status issues of the conflict (Schulze 2001). Negotiations failed due to disagreements over the status of Jerusalem and the existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Again, notably absent were any women representing either side (Schulze 2001).

In terms of women being involved in peace talks and negotiations over the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there have only been three women publicly representing their respective groups who have been involved at the forefront of peace negotiations in a formal context (Aharoni 2017). Golda Meir, an Israeli Prime Minister who attempted to secretly negotiate peace with King Abdullah of Jordan, Hanan Ashwari, who was the spokesperson of the Palestinian Delegation in the 1990s, and Tzipi Livni, who was the head of the Israeli delegation

to the Annapolis Summit of 2007 (Aharoni 2017). It is clear that women have been barred from engaging with the peace process in the formal political sphere, based upon the lack of female involvement in peace talks to this point in time.

Positionality of Women in the Conflict

The women who live their lives under the insecurity ensured by the continuation of this conflict have immense incentives to participate in its conclusion. However, due to the various social, political, and cultural barriers within both Israeli and Palestinian culture, it is no surprise that women have historically been excluded from being involved in the ongoing peace process. The denial of women from participation in formal political bodies and the asymmetrical representation of women in legislative bodies that are slightly more inclined to include women is important to take note of as these bodies are typically what provide the representation for peace talks.

Palestinian Women

Within Palestine, women have often been excluded from participating in formal politics, and are especially excluded from higher governmental positions. In the formation of a legitimate governing political body in the aftermath of the Second Intifada, the Palestinian Authority (PA) took shape from the remains of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the previously acknowledged legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Since its creation, there has been an attempt to consolidate male power within the PA, occurring through powerful men granting high political positions to those they already know, oftentimes the connection between these men has come from their shared history of participation in the PLO, which was primarily

comprised of men (Abdo 1999). It is these undemocratic practices that have been a major barrier to women's involvement in the public political sphere in Palestine.

The failure to make gains in gender equality within Palestine contemporarily is due to the achievement of a more institutionalized governing body in the PLO. Whilst the PLO was operating out of Tunis in the 1990s, this formal governing body became insulated from small gains made for women in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), and the leadership fell to male politicians and bureaucrats instead of politically active women (Gluck 1995).

According to Abdo (1999), the status of women within Palestinian governmental bodies has advanced little due to the patriarchal structure of the Palestinian Authority (Abdo 1999). In the absence of territorial sovereignty and geographic cohesion, there exists within Palestine a lack of a civil society in which the advancement of civil and political rights could flourish (Abdo 1999). This is not to say that non-governmental feminist groups in Palestine are non-existent, however. Palestinian women have a deep history of mobilizing outside of existing governmental structures whilst being barred from formal politics (Jamal et. al.2015). In fact, Palestinian women have been extremely active in grassroots activism since the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Gluck 1995).

In addition to being excluded from the public sphere within Palestine, Palestinian women are further denied the ability to be seen as full individuals capable of possessing basic rights, as are many Palestinians of all genders who exist both within the OPT and Israel. Jamal articulates that Palestinians everywhere are targeted by Israel as enemies of Israeli sovereignty and are treated thusly (Jamal 2017). This is most visible on a systemic level through citizenship status. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are afforded greater access to amenities and places than Palestinians without Israeli citizenship who live within the OPT (Jamal 2017). Despite

Palestinians with Israeli citizenship still being treated as second-class citizens within Israel, citizenship allows for some Palestinian representation within the Israeli governing body, the Knesset. Citizenship affects the daily reality of Palestinians and Palestinian women in relation to the accessibility of formal political spheres and creates an environment of both racial and gendered inferiority.

Palestinian women's involvement within the peace process is scarce. Only once has a Palestinian woman been at the forefront of representing Palestine in peace talks, Hanan Ashrawi who was the spokesperson of Palestinian Delegation in the 1990s (Aharoni 2017). As evidenced above, women have been regularly excluded from formal governmental positions, and thus have been barred from engaging in formal peace talks to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, women have yet been active in the capacities they can be, mainly through grassroots mobilization (Jamal 2015).

Palestinian women have a unique perspective on the conflict itself. In advocating for Palestinian self-determination and liberation, women have relied heavily on oral histories as a means of communicating their history (Hasabelnaby & Nasr 2022). In contrast, men have traditionally relied more on official records and archives to retell the history of Palestine. Where women have possessed the ability to retell their own history using their own voices and experiences, it allows for them to give voice to other marginal identities that have been affected by this conflict (Hasabelnaby & Nasr 2022). The reliance on oral histories as told by Palestinian women allows for the celebration of female culture and enables women to tell their own stories in the fight against the erasure of Palestinian experiences. This is especially important in the context of political inclusion as Palestinian women are crucial holders of experience and history, and provide unique perspectives on the conflict.

It has been in this way Palestinian women have been excluded from formal governmental positions, and, by extension, access to engage in peace talks to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite this exclusion, Palestinian women have been involved in whatever way they can to advocate for gender equality, Palestinian liberation, and self-determination, through sharing their stories and using grassroots methods of activism. It is clear that were Palestinian women included in formal peace talks, due to their unique perspectives and experiences, they would have a positive impact on the likelihood of reaching a peaceful conclusion to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli Women

While existing under a governmental body that is considered the occupying force in this conflict, Israeli women also have unique and valuable experiences to draw from. Israel operates using a parliamentary system of government, with the primary governing body of Israel being the Knesset. There are many groups within Israel that comprise the Knesset, ranging from many who hold marginal identities and more progressive policy stances, to those who are extremely right wing and who have identities which hold much power (Rahat et. al. 2012). Despite its attempt to uplift fairly progressive policies on its face in terms of gender and sexuality, Israel continues to boast a solidly right-wing trend in who has been elected to leadership positions, and, expecting Golda Meir, all Israeli leadership since the 1940s has been male.

While Palestinian women are excluded from formal politics to a greater degree than Israeli women, there still exists a noticeable discrepancy between male and female representatives in the Knesset. Israel, when analyzed using the Gender Inequality Index, is one of the countries on the higher end of gender equality, however, this equality fails to translate into

the formal political sphere (United Nations 2021). According to Atmor, the political representation of women in Israel is at “an all time high,” but Israel still “lags behind the majority of OECD nations.” (Atmor et. al. 2023) The number of women in the Knesset has grown from 7 in 1988 to 30 in 2021 and the country has made attempts to include women in other areas of government, with 9 women being appointed to ministerial positions after the 2021 elections (Atmor et. al. 2023). Full gender equality in the make-up of the Knesset is not likely in the near future, as there still exist Orthodox parties that explicitly exclude women from their list of candidates (Atmor et. al. 2023).

Women are more proportionally represented within the Israeli government, but this representation does not necessarily translate directly into female involvement in the peace process. Israeli women who are in the legislature are often excluded from discussions surrounding national security, peace, and discussions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are male-dominated (Itzkovitch et. al. 2018). Thus, Israeli women still experience exclusion from the peace process itself.

Scholar Aharoni attributes this trait in peace processes to an adherence to religious similarities within the Abrahamic religions on their perspectives on the status of women (Aharoni 2020). Peace between conflicting countries is found through the acknowledgment of the countries’ similarities on the status of women, often citing their respective religions as justification for their shared marginalization against women (Aharoni 2020). This is evident through the specific language used in a recent peace treaty, the Abraham Accords, between Israel and several other countries of the region – adherence to “Abrahamic” religions connotes entrenched ideas surrounding gender that then ensures male dominated political spheres (Aharoni 2020). Additionally, Israel has failed to fully enact UNSCR 1325, with no action plan

to comply with the Resolution (Aharoni 2020). Aharoni additionally argues that the idea of peace processes have been feminized within the culture of Israeli politics, with adherence to religion as a means of “exclud[ing] women and emasculat[ing] peace.” (Aharoni 2020).

In addition to formal politics and peace processes, women in Israel also experience forms of gendered violence and discrimination in their daily lives. Israel has a unique form of gender inequality in that because it is an ethno-religious state, it conflates religious, social, and political gender inequality. Jewish Orthodoxy is considered a primary form of authority within Israel and operates with extremely patriarchal norms that must be, and is, continually challenged by Israeli women (Ben-Lulu 2021). Israeli women, as well as men, are conscripted to joining the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), before entering into society, which could, on one level, be seen as a form of gender equality, however, women in the IDF experience forms of gendered violence unique to military settings (Harel-Shalev et. al. 2017).

Israeli women’s perspective on the conflict, however, is more informed by educational practices within Israel and nationalism, rather than being informed by gender. Shared identity, histories, and experiences is often what informs policies and perspectives about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While Holocaust remembrance is extremely important, it is often weaponized to justify hawkish policies towards Palestinians in the name of security (Chaitin 2019). This is important to note as the generational trauma instilled in many Jewish Israelis due to the horrors of the Holocaust often informs the state’s military responses. Julia Chaitin, a resident Jewish Israeli, reflects that

“No matter how much pain I and my Israeli neighbors and society were facing, I knew that the Gazans were facing more. I talked about the fact that while Israel had shelters, Gazans had none. I talked about our strong and super-equipped army and air force that could and was causing massive damage to Gazans, often harming and killing innocent people who had no room to hide, no place to be safe.” (Chaitin 2019)

Chaitin's perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by an Israeli woman living within the context of the conflict itself is important as it provides a dissenting perspective to the education given to Israeli children that is aimed more at villainizing the "other" in an attempt to forward protectionist military strategy (Chaitin 2019).

Israeli women have greater opportunities at involvement in formal politics than Palestinian women, but still face exclusion in peace processes and gender discrimination due to the patriarchal systems and cultural perspective instilled by the primary religious parties within the state. As Chaitin's testimony informs, Israeli women have a unique perspective on the conflict that has the ability to reconcile the differential treatment of women in Israel with that of Palestinian women, and the treatment of Palestinians as a whole through Israel's military tactics. Israeli women are uniquely positioned as a fairly excluded group within a state that performs exclusionary strategies onto the other group of people that claim the same land. This positionality is an extremely helpful, yet untapped resource within the context of peace negotiations that could contribute to a greater likelihood of a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Application of Research

As discussed, women existing within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have unique experiences and contexts that have thus prevented them from participating in peace talks. Were they to do so, however, there exists evidence that supports the argument that women's involvement in peace negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would increase the likelihood of a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the conflict.

The research done by Best et. al. (2019) explores whether including women in formal political institutions increases the likelihood of peaceful outcomes to conflicts. They argue that

“increasing the diversity of governmental institutions, in particular, raising the gender diversity in a country's legislative body, may improve problem-solving capacity” (Best et. al. 2019).

Scholars Krause et. al (2018) also examine gender inclusion in peace negotiations and women's impact on formal peace processes. Krause et. al. (2018) find that when women are at the forefront of peace negotiations, there exists a greater likelihood of success in that peace process. Additionally, Krause et. al. (2018) find that when women are included as signatories on peace treaties, there is a correlation with that peace being constructive and lasting.

Iwilade (2011) also provides evidence and argument in favor of including women in peace talks, though furthering the research of both Best et. al. and Krause. Iwilade (2011) argues that women must be involved in peace talks in an active and constructive way, a way in which women are involved with the substance of peace negotiations rather than just at the table symbolically. Iwilade argues that peace talks benefit from greater diversity of perspectives, including the perspectives of women and their unique marginalization.

Research done by Rigual et. al. (2018; 2022) analyzed the de-escalation of violence in ethno-religious conflicts is extremely impacted by gender. While Rigual et. al. stress that these studies focus on the micro-level of conflicts, their research is still valuable in this context as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an ethno-religious conflict that occurs on both the micro community based scale and the macro formal peace negotiation level. The micro-level analysis offered by Rigual et. al. is helpful because Rigual et. al. are attempting to explore the gendered logics of conflict resolution that can be applied to a broader level of conflict resolution, and this is why understanding the lived experience of women in these conflicts is so important.

Being that the theory that women being included in peace talks would result in a peaceful conclusion to conflict in Israel and Palestine is largely hypothetical, it is crucial to have an

understanding of instances where women were included to a greater degree in formal peace negotiations.

Scholar Gillooly conducted a case study on the inclusion of women in peace negotiations in Colombia, finding that Colombia is a helpful model to provide concrete evidence that when women are included in peace talks, it results in successful, lasting, peaceful conclusions to conflict (Gillooly 2022). While women were not necessarily at the forefront of peace negotiations in Colombia, they were included in specific sub-committees that were tasked with advocating for the wellbeing of women and thus female voices were included to a greater extent than they have in other peace talks prior (Gillooly 2022).

There is clear evidence that Palestinian women have been excluded from participating in formal politics, this is supported by the lack of female representation within the PLO and currently within the PA (Abdo 1999). These groups, the PLO and the PA, have typically comprised the Palestinian representative in peace negotiations, and their failure to include women is a hindrance to the advancement of a peaceful solution to the conflict. While Palestinian women have historically been extremely active in mobilizing outside of formal politics, these women's advocacy groups have been undermined by foreign donor funds, and have been excluded from participating as a representative for the Palestinian people in peace talks (Jamal 2015). In conversation with the research done by Best et. al., there is strong evidence in favor of reaching a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict if the Palestinian Authority were more intentional about the inclusion and appointing of Palestinian women to positions within the PA. In this way, Palestinian women would have greater access to avenues of peace building and could contribute their unique perspectives to the discussion surrounding peace.

In the case of Israel, a system that operates using a parliamentary system of government, members of the Knesset, rather than the general population, vote for a prime minister to represent the country. This prime minister is then the leader at the forefront of representing Israel when the time to negotiate peace presents itself. The inclusion of more women in the Knesset would allow for marginalized groups to voice their opinions on who is at the negotiating table in the future. However, the findings of Itzkovitch add to the research done by Best et. al. in that it is important to not only have general female representation within legislatures, but that that representation is used effectively and is applied to all sectors of government, including peace talks.

The research done by Best et. al. works together with the research done by Krause et. al., in that when women are included in legislatures to a greater degree, this allows them the potential of access to formal peace negotiations. In the instance of Palestine, women being excluded from formal politics in general makes it extremely difficult for them to be at the front of peace negotiations and in the case of Israel, even when women are afforded greater access to formal political institutions, they are still barred from participating in peace talks.

Thus, for women to contribute to peace negotiations in a substantive way, they must be included both within legislature and other representative political bodies generally, as well as be included within the formal peace process for there to be an impact on peace talk outcomes.

This argument for substantive participation by women in peace talks is supported by the scholarship conducted by Iwilade (2011). Iwilade argues that in order for peace to be lasting and just, women should not just merely be included, but be allowed to be active participants in the peace process. This is because women offer unique perspectives on conflict, and these unique, marginalized perspectives only benefit peace negotiations. For Palestinian women, especially

those who are not Israeli citizens, their perspectives are especially important due to their layered forms of marginalization. Palestinian women are affected both by exclusionary policies enacted by the Israeli government toward all Palestinians, but have also faced exclusion from participation in formal politics. This specific form of marginalization is an extremely important perspective to include at the negotiating table in this conflict, since, as Iwilade articulates, can make it easier for other women, including Israeli women, to come forward with their own gendered grievances and provide an opportunity for others who hold marginalized identities to participate in governmental institutions.

Women across different cultural and religious contexts all have similar, uniquely female experiences to draw from and are able to relate to each other in this way, they formed creative methods of conflict management and resolution. Research done by Rigual et. al. examines the idea that the micro-levels of a conflict is also important when considering how women can positively impact the likelihood of a peaceful outcome to ethno-religious conflicts. The women living within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have a unique and often more intersectional perspective that can be brought to peace negotiations. The research conducted by Hasabelnaby & Nasr (2022) works in tandem with Rigual's research as Palestinian women stress giving voice to marginal perspectives. The unique way in which Palestinian women emphasize oral histories, especially when faced with the systemic erasure of their narratives can only benefit a peace process in that allowing individuals who contain more marginal identities are more able to foster a lasting, just peace. These traditions of storytelling and oral histories are particularly helpful when paired with the research done by Rigual.

Israeli women can also draw from their specific experiences of discrimination, specifically in how women are treated in the context of Orthodox Judaism. Similar religious

patriarchal systems subjugate both Palestinian and Israeli women. In the case of Palestinian women, it manifests more so in exclusion from formal politics, while in the case of Israel, women are excluded from peace talks and struggle against gendered religious norms. Finding common ground based upon uniquely female experiences is what Rigual et. al. find to be the most effective in resolving ethno-religious conflicts, and in the case of Israel and Palestine, the shared experiences of gendered marginalization has the potential to inspire a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

An in-depth examination of a successful case of women being included in the formal peace process was conducted by Gillooly (2022) when analyzing the extent to which women were included in peace discussions in Colombia, specifically looking at the ways in which women were involved in the pre-negotiation process. While women were much more included in this attempt at peace than in others prior, there still existed difficulty in the full inclusion of women due to gender stereotypes. In the case of Colombia, women were involved in a sub-committee that was created to encourage gender equality and equity when coming to a peace agreement. This inclusion, while helpful, was also a way in which to continue the marginalization of women and bar women from the main negotiating table. In tandem with the research done by Krause et. al., it is necessary for women to be included at the center of peace negotiations in order to construct a truly inclusive, lasting peace. The imperfect attempt at the inclusion of women in Colombia is yet a hopeful case upon which to draw inspiration for the inclusion of women within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Conclusion

The research conducted by these scholars is extremely important and necessary when considering whether the inclusion of women would increase the likelihood of a peaceful, just outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Examining this research and scholar's continual calls for the substantive inclusion of women in peace negotiations, it is clear that, while the inclusion of women remains a hypothetical in the case of Israel and Palestine, attempts to include women in peace talks and negotiations within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only benefit discussions surrounding peace. When considering the longevity of the conflict and the intense feelings of both parties, it is difficult to imagine a just and peaceful conclusion. However, the inclusion of women is a crucial component that must be enacted in order for discussion of peace to continue.

Including women not only allows for there to be a greater likelihood of a peaceful outcome to this conflict in terms of violence and gender equality, but it also creates an opportunity for other marginalized identities to participate and make their voices heard. In answer to the research question posed by this paper, it is clear that were women to be included in discussions surrounding peace within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the likelihood that there would be a peaceful, just conclusion to the conflict would increase. However, as argued by the scholars above, it is not enough for Israeli and Palestinian women to simply be symbolically present in formal governmental institutions, or even included at the negotiating table. Israeli and Palestinian women must be included in a substantive way that allows them to express their voices and to be heard in a way that contributes to discussions surrounding peace.

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