



## Peace negotiations in the political marketplace: the implications of women's exclusion in the Sudan-South Sudan peace process

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### ABSTRACT

This article investigates the implications of women's exclusion for the nature and durability of peace processes, and whether factors that undermine peace consolidation post-settlement might be prevented through more inclusive peacemaking. It examines the Sudan-South Sudan peace process that produced the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the roles women played in peacemaking and their exclusion from official negotiations, and the sources of insecurity post-CPA. South Sudan's peace process shows that the exclusion of women can be understood as a canary in a coal mine: a highly visible marker of the broader exclusivity of such processes, and the complex dynamics of elite capture in war and peace processes. Women's exclusion was the product of the region's political marketplace, in which power and authority is secured by elites through violence and bargaining, to the exclusion of other groups. By understanding exclusion as a deliberate strategic tactic that extends from war into peacetime, I argue that the exclusion of women is not the reason why peace processes fail in and of itself, but rather the product of elite ownership of peace processes and the structure of many peace processes that facilitates and rewards such ownership, with serious consequences for the sustainability of peace post-settlement.

### KEYWORDS

Peace negotiations; South Sudan; political marketplace; inclusivity/exclusivity; women; peace and security

One of the most striking characteristics of peace processes in civil wars is that, even where they prevent a resumption of civil war, they are often unsuccessful in establishing durable peace, or even the hallmarks of security and stability. The proliferation of civil wars since the end of the Cold War, and the rise of peace settlements as the preferred way of ending them, has given rise to a new phenomenon in nascent post-civil war states, namely, the entrenchment of 'neither war, nor peace' situations where pervasive, low-level violence continues to characterise life in nominally 'post-war' societies, and in some cases, such as South Sudan, escalates back into full-scale warfare (MacGinty 2006; Westendorf 2015). In these contexts, violence continues to be perpetrated by both state and non-state actors, and ranges from criminality and lawlessness, to communal and electoral violence, and in some cases results in fatality rates similar to, or higher than, during the war proper.<sup>1</sup>

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