ASG Gender & Conflict

Recent political conflicts in areas such as Syria, South Sudan, and Myanmar have had a tremendous effect on civilians. The number of displaced individuals today is the largest in history, surpassing even the devastating effects of World War II. Among those who are most disproportionately affected are women, children, and gender/sexual minorities. Reducing the vulnerability of these populations and increasing their resilience is essential to promote inclusiveness and justice, and some researchers have suggested that it can even prevent armed conflicts from occurring.

We define conflict as organized armed aggression between groups with conflicting interests. Often such conflict includes state actors, but it may also occur between non-state organizations. We define gender as a social status and a system of discursive meaning through which people are identified with concepts such as femininity, masculinity, sexual identity, motherhood, and fatherhood. As a form of social stratification and identity, gender status both limits and enables various forms of action.

Objectives

The primary goal of the project is to analyze how gender influences the experiences of civilians during and after armed conflict. We will explore the role of gendered concepts such as masculinity and femininity, and their relationship to vulnerability and resilience. In approaching these topics, we will take a nuanced and comparative perspective, acknowledging the wide variety of gendered concepts and interactions that exist in different geographical regions across the globe. This will lead to a more inclusive and eventually transdisciplinary understanding of:

1. How gendered forms of violence and aggression in conflict settings affect access to public goods, environmental goods, material and cultural wealth, and overall well-being.
2. How the enduring gender inequalities generated through violence can be enumerated and redressed in post-conflict settlements and the redistribution of resources, and the obstacles that interfere with such accounting.

Our interdisciplinary team, drawn from the social, historical, legal, health, and engineering sciences, will work to develop new conceptual models that go beyond current understandings of gender and conflict. Our goal is to generate a dialogue among different existing models and sources of data. We will endeavor to create opportunities for conceptual synthesis and comparison among such different approaches, in order to promote a more comprehensive understanding of gender and conflict.

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