

<b>Institution:</b> University of Essex		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 19		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Using Conflict Research to Improve Women's Livelihoods in Fragile States		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Ismene Gizelis Florian Kern	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor Senior Lecturer	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2010- present 2017- present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014-2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Research on gender, conflict and governance by Gizelis and Kern has transformed women's livelihoods in difficult contexts in fragile states, informing and influencing national policymakers, local peacebuilders and international organisations. This work has provided a sound evidence base for changes to programmes of eminent government agencies working on peace and gender. By offering robust insights the research shaped high-level policy circles and debates, including the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Peace Operations and the High-Level Advisory Group of the Global Study on UNSCR 1325. Additionally, it has strengthened women's land rights activism and female-headed households' well-being and empowerment by improving the Uganda Land Alliance's programs through improved governance; deepening engagement with its 300 land rights advocates and training of an additional 150 advocates; widening the ULA's reach across 36 parishes, involving 1,300 marginalised households to foster gender equality.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research program on women in fragile states conducted by Gizelis and Kern provides actionable evidence in support of UN Sustainable Development Goals 5: <i>Gender Equality</i> and 16: <i>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</i>. Using a wide range of research methods, the research programme provides synergistic insights into how women's livelihoods can be improved in fragile states, where producing robust insights is extraordinarily challenging. Gizelis' work has focused on the systematic study of gender, peace and conflict. Kern investigates challenges of coexisting state and customary institutions, and how women's rights fare under such dualism.</p> <p>Gizelis' research on the links between gender equality and peace was first referenced in the Human Conflict Special Section of <i>Science</i> (18 May 2012 Vol 336). Conducting research in Liberia in 2011/2015, Gizelis demonstrated that the contributions of civil society and women's organisations in post-conflict peacebuilding should be understood primarily in terms of social networks and connections emerging in peacebuilding processes [R1, R2]. More recent research on <i>Armed Conflict and Maternal Health in Sub-Saharan Africa</i> extended Gizelis' research to demonstrate the opportunity to investigate the importance of horizontal social networks and inclusionary policies in other areas of development including maternal health during major crises like Ebola in West Africa [R3]. Gizelis' research shows that inclusionary policies promoting development and poverty reduction work best if gender and development are pursued in terms of national policies aiming at structural changes such as national budgeting processes and inclusion of horizontal networks [R4, R2]. Gizelis has shown that in post-conflict environments women and girls are particularly vulnerable to the disruption of access to public services due to structural inequalities, especially those from marginalised communities [R1, R4].</p>		

Kern, Holzinger and Kromrey [R5] show that in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa the constitutional integration of customary authorities has increased since 1990. While traditional authorities – such as chiefs or elders – are frequently perceived as negatively influencing progressive norms in societies (e.g., gender rights), Goist and Kern [R6] also show that traditional institutions can increase cooperation in communities. However, Kern [R7] also demonstrates that the divergence of the preferred versus the actual influence of traditional leaders bears potential for social conflict. Based on existing research by Kern and others one proposition posits that the less integrated state and traditional land rights are, the greater the uncertainty in terms of property rights. Moreover, customary institutions are often dominated by men, which may be particularly problematic for women seeking land ownership. This observation led to the collaboration between the Uganda Land Alliance and Kern (PI) [with Dietrich and Winters] to jointly clarify how women’s land rights can be improved (on-going project). Kern partnered with the Uganda Land Alliance, a local NGO advocating women’s rights, to investigate the effectiveness of the ULA’s women’s land advocates program.

### 3. References to the research [can be supplied by HEI on request]

[R1] Gizelis, T-I. 2011. A Country of Their Own: Women and Peacebuilding. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28 (5): 522-543. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0738894211418412>

[R2] Gizelis, T-I. 2019. It Takes a Village: UN Peace Operations and Social Networks in Post-conflict Environments, *Politics and Gender*, 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X18000855>. First presented at the Households in Conflict Network (HiCN) meeting in Aix-en-Provence France (2012); and later the key findings were published as Gizelis, T. I. 2013. Women’s Organizations and Peace Operations. Institute for Democracy & Conflict Resolution–Briefing Paper (IDCR-BP-01/13).

[R3] Gizelis, T.I., S. Karim, G. Østby and H. Urdal. 2017. Maternal Health Care in the Time of Ebola: A Mixed-method Exploration of the Impact of the Epidemic on Delivery Services in Monrovia. *World Development*, 98: 169-178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.04.027>

[R4] Gizelis, T.I. and J. Krause. 2015. Exploring Gender Mainstreaming in Security and Development, pp.165-184 in Olsson, L. and T.I. Gizelis, eds. 2015. *Gender, Peace and Security: Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325*. Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution. Routledge. ISBN 978-1-13-880002-1.

[R5] Holzinger, K., F.G. Kern and D. Kromrey. 2020. Explaining the Constitutional Integration and Resurgence of Traditional Political Institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Political Studies*, 68 (4). 973 - 995. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321719884712>

[R6] Goist, M. and F.G. Kern. 2018. Traditional institutions and social co-operation: Experimental evidence from the Buganda Kingdom. *Research & Politics, Jan-March*. 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2053168017753925>

[R7] Kern, F.G. 2018. The Trials and Tribulations of Applied Triangulation. Weighing Different Data Sources. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 12(2): 166-181. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1558689816651032>

#### Research funding:

[G1] Gizelis: 2018, Gendered budgeting in Myanmar, funded by the International Development Research Centre (Canada), Co-I, USD\$12,000 (£8,975.980).

[G2] Gizelis: 2014-2018, Armed Conflict and Maternal Health in Sub-Saharan Africa, Research Council of Norway, Co-I, £26,100.

[G3] Gizelis: 2012-2013, A country of their Own: Women’s Organisations and Peacebuilding Operations, British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship, PI, £98,483.

[G4] Gizelis: 2011-2012, A Country of their Own: Women’s Organisations and Peacebuilding, PI, ESRC, £43,300

[G5] Kern: 2017, Land Access and Conflict in Uganda: The Role of Women’s Land Rights

Advocates. Robert Bosch Foundation research project grant, PI, €25,000 (£21,254)

#### 4. Details of the impact

Research by Gizelis and Kern on gender, conflict and governance has provided the evidence base informing discourses and policies of international organisations, and also directly empowered individual women and their organisations by means of improving local institutions and governance mechanisms.

##### Providing the evidence base informing policies and practices

Professor Gizelis' research on gender and conflict and conflict resolution has contributed to programmatic changes of a number of organisations internationally. Through both strengthening the evidence base, and increasing the accessibility of research, Gizelis' work impacts upon practitioners, NGOs and governmental organisations.

Professor Gizelis has a long-standing collaboration with the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), a Swedish Government agency for peace, security and development [S1] and is an active member of the FBA working group focusing on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (since 2010). FBA Head of Research confirms that Gizelis' research [R1, R2, R3],

*“has been of particular relevance to FBA’s work thematically as well as practically as part of the agency’s efforts to increase the evidence-based approach in its work, [...] it informs and strengthens our technical advice that we give to key partners and national stakeholders”* [S1].

The Head of Research adds: *“Gizelis’s research on gender in conflict-affected countries has also contributed to the work of FBA’s own programme which focuses on Women, Peace and Security”* [S1]. In 2018 the FBA invited Gizelis to participate in the ‘FBA Research Workshop and Research Policy-Dialogue on Sustainable Peace’ in Liberia, involving representatives from the Liberian Armed Forces, the Ministry of Justice, Independent National Human Rights Commission, Liberia Institute for Public Administration, and UN Agencies [S2]. The Head of Research at FBA states that

*“By engaging in the Research-Policy dialogue, Gizelis contributed to FBA’s work of making research findings accessible amongst practitioners that work directly with the issues at hand as well as contributed to the work that FBA does as part of the Swedish government’s bilateral cooperation in Liberia”* [S1].

Gizelis research led to her invitation as academic advisor to the Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) supported by the Canadian donor International Development Research Centre (IDRC) [S3]. The MIGS project has raised awareness in the upper and lower houses and specific committees within sub-national parliaments across Myanmar of the need to incorporate gender considerations into public budgets, which are helping to shape a new perspective in policymaking. Gizelis' research [R3] was used in the development of a survey to find out about citizens' budget preferences in Myanmar (2018) to explore gender budgeting as a structural strategy for poverty reduction. As the IDRC Senior Program Specialist in Myanmar states:

*“...the survey results have generated discussions at the different government levels in Myanmar in 2020-21 about how the inclusion of gender considerations when preparing and discussing public allocation of funds addresses a basic cornerstone of democratic development”* continuing that *‘the research efforts have contributed to improving gender equality...within Myanmar’s public budgeting process.’* [S3].

Gizelis delivered training to 20 practitioners from MIGS, the Myanmar Department of Social Welfare, and Myanmar Central Statistical Organization in 2018 on the relevance of budgetary decisions on policy outcomes affecting men and women, which enabled participants to apply their training to other audiences and policy issues [S3a].

Gizelis and Kern's research has led to engagement with international policymakers, challenging existing policies and providing research evidence-based support for policy improvement with regard to women's livelihoods in fragile states. At a joint workshop in December 2019 with the High Commission of Uganda to the United Kingdom – attended by participants from the Overseas Development Institute, Amnesty International, the UK Cabinet Office – the Ugandan Ambassador

emphasised:

*“the important research work undertaken on women empowerment and improving women’s livelihoods, including through the land rights advocacy”* [S4].

Gizelis’ research [R1-4] has provided the evidence base on gender in fragile and post-conflict states. She has been invited to offer insights at high-level events where her research has informed influential practitioners and policymakers. Participants included members of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Peace Operations and the High-Level Advisory Group of the Global Study on UNSCR 1325 [S5], Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [S6], the Canadian Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace [S7], Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) [S6] and the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation [S8]. The importance of Gizelis’ research was highlighted by the HE Swedish Ambassador to UN in 2015, who attested to [R3] being an:

*“extremely important contribution [to] enhancing our understanding of women, peace and security”* [S9].

### Ensuring the rights of women in Northern Uganda

As well as having an impact on policy and practice, through working with women in Uganda, Kern’s research has changed how women access their rights. Women in Uganda continue to be denied land and property rights due to traditional practices despite legal recognition. Kern has collaborated with the Uganda Land Alliance (ULA) an NGO **to strengthen its policy and practices**. The ULA, a consortium of over 60 international, national and local civil society organizations working to ensure equitable land distribution, educates local female and male advocates about women’s land rights. These advocates go on to assist marginalized households in their communities in relation to access, control and ownership over land. Drawing on Kern’s research [R5, R6], the ULA changed the way it engages with its 300 existing female advocates and improved the training delivered by ULA staff to a further 150 additional advocates, using a new training manual [S10] developed based on evidence collected via a survey of 118 land rights advocates and focus groups with 24 advocates. As a result, the ULA have improved their governance processes, enhanced their capacity and widened their reach on the ground, with advocates operating in a further two districts and 36 parishes [S11 pg 2]. Freda Orok, a ULA trainer working directly with the advocates, confirms that the project has changed the ULA’s overall approach:

*“As a result of this project we have revitalized our women land rights advocates previously trained in 2010. [...] Because of this process we are now in constant contact with them and this has given us an opportunity to offer technical support to them in case of any challenges they are facing. It has made them do their work better and they are now more vibrant...”* [S12].

On the project the ULA Executive Director confirms:

*“The ULA sensitized communities to ensure that the Communal Land Associations (CLA) were constituted properly and that they understood and knew their roles and the rights of the members of their CLAs.”* [S12a].

The application of Kern’s research has **empowered women to assert their land rights in Northern Uganda**. The training delivered to the advocates led to a greater understanding amongst the women about their land rights, improving their confidence and empowering them to assert their rights:

*“In the short term, the training has created awareness of women’s rights to land access, control and ownership. For female-headed households, some of the women now have the confidence to tackle challenges they have faced in their rights to their late husband’s land and property”* [S11].

This improved awareness is further evidenced by testimonials from the 150 women participating in the training:

*“I am a widow. Some people were trying to take my land. But now I know my right and am confident to go and claim and assert my right over my deceased husband’s land.”*

(Participating woman 1) [S11]. “[N]ow I know that as a legally married wife, I still have right to that property, and I will claim my right.” (Participating woman 2) [S11].

The introduction of action plans at the parish level to educate communities on property rights [S11, pg 6] affords the women in these communities greater gender equality and financial security as evidenced by their testimonies:

“But now I see that the government says I have rights”, “I will go back and teach my fellow women who have also been struggling with this issue” [S11].

“I learnt that women have a right to equal share of family property”, “I was not aware that as a (girl) child am entitled to my father’s estate. But now if there is any issue, I will ensure to participate and to protect my rights” [S11].

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[S1] Testimonial letter by the Head of Research at Folke Bernadotte Academy.

[S2] Invitation (Gizelis) to the *Research-Policy Workshop: Sustainable Peace* 19 November 2018, Monrovia, Liberia.

[S3] Testimonial letter by the Sr. Program Specialist, Myanmar Initiative Lead, International Development Research Center.

[S3a] Testimonial evidencing provision of training on gender budgeting to staff of Myanmar Institute for Gender Studies and follow-up testimonials from participants.

[S4] Speech transcript by Ambassador John Leonard Mugerwa, Deputy High Commissioner, Uganda High Commission London.

[S5] [Presentation of Gender, Peace and Security Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#) during the event [Research for Peace at the](#) Folke Bernadotte Academy.

[S6] Invitation (Gizelis) to participate at the panel [Preventing gender-based violence in war and peace](#), in 2014 [Stockholm Forum on Security and Development](#); Hosted by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) & Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation.

[S7] Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations, [Baseline study](#), footnotes 18-21-32 (pages 6, 7, 10).

[S8] [Background paper](#) presented at the Challenges Forum Partnerships on UN Peace Operations 2020 (2016) (page 10).

[S9] [Video](#) and transcript of speech by H.E. Swedish Ambassador to UN Veronika Bard (2015).

[S10] “A Facilitator’s Manual for Training Women Land Rights Advocates: On Property and Land Rights in Uganda. Revised October 2019”.

[S11] “University of Essex – ULA Academic Collaboration Progress Report” by Pamela Lakidi, Uganda Land Alliance Programs Director and Algresia Akwi Ogojo, Executive Director.

[S12] Email testimonial on project impact by the Uganda Land Alliance.

[S12a] Testimonial from the Uganda Land Alliance.