

# Scientia et PRAXIS

Vol. 06. No.11. Jan-Jun (2026): 59-85

<https://doi.org/10.55965/setp.6.11.a3>

eISSN: 2954-4041

## **Gender, Culture of Peace and Citizen Participation as Evidence-Based Social Innovation for Sustainable Urban Governance**

## **Género, cultura de paz y participación ciudadana como innovación social basada en evidencia para la gobernanza urbana sostenible**

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**Keywords:** Gender, Culture of Peace, Citizen Participation, Neighborhood Conflicts, Sustainable Community Development

**Palabras Clave:** género, cultura de paz, participación ciudadana, conflictos vecinales, desarrollo comunitario sostenible

**Recibido:** 3-Feb-2026; **Aceptado:** 12-May-2026

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## RESUMEN

**Contexto.** Las desigualdades de género en la participación cívica y en la resolución de conflictos persisten en comunidades urbanas de la Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara (ZMG), donde entre 62% y 91% de los residentes reportan inseguridad o conflictos vecinales, y menos de la mitad participa en procesos democráticos.

**Problema.** A pesar del creciente interés en la construcción de paz y la gobernanza participativa, el papel moderador del género en la relación entre cultura de paz, participación ciudadana y percepción de conflictos vecinales sigue insuficientemente explorado. Por ello, resulta pertinente preguntar cómo influye el género en estas relaciones dentro de comunidades urbanas.

**Objetivo.** Analizar cómo el género modera la relación entre cultura de paz, participación ciudadana y conflictos vecinales en comunidades urbanas de la ZMG, como base para diseñar intervenciones de innovación social orientadas al desarrollo sostenible.

**Metodología.** Se realizó un estudio cuantitativo transversal en diez comunidades de la ZMG durante marzo–abril de 2024, con una muestra de residentes urbanos ( $n = 229$ ). El sujeto de estudio fueron los habitantes de dichas comunidades, mientras que el objeto de análisis fue la relación entre cultura de paz, participación ciudadana, género y percepción de conflictos vecinales. Se aplicaron escalas validadas de cultura de paz (7 ítems), participación ciudadana (9 ítems) y conflictos vecinales (12 ítems), con anclajes Likert de cinco puntos. Para el análisis se emplearon análisis factorial exploratorio, alfa de Cronbach, correlaciones de Pearson y regresión lineal con términos de interacción, a fin de evaluar el efecto moderador del género.

**Hallazgos teóricos y prácticos.** Se confirmó alta confiabilidad en todas las escalas ( $\alpha = .832–.931$ ). Tanto la cultura de paz como la participación ciudadana mostraron correlaciones positivas y significativas con la percepción general de los conflictos. El género emergió como moderador significativo de la relación cultura de paz–conflicto ( $B = .217, p = .043$ ), pero no de la relación participación–conflicto.

**Originalidad.** El estudio se clasifica como innovación social y de proceso organizacional, conforme al Manual de Oslo (OECD/Eurostat, 2018), al generar evidencia empírica para rediseñar prácticas comunitarias de participación, paz y gestión de conflictos con enfoque de género en la gobernanza urbana sostenible. Asimismo, contribuye a los ODS 5, 11 y 16.

**Conclusiones y limitaciones.** El género modera la relación entre cultura de paz y percepción del conflicto, pero no la relación entre participación y conflicto. El diseño transversal y la concentración geográfica en la ZMG limitan la generalización; por tanto, se requieren estudios longitudinales y comparativos.

## ABSTRACT

**Context.** Gender inequalities in civic participation and conflict resolution persist in urban communities of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), where between 62% and 91% of residents report insecurity or neighborhood conflicts, and fewer than half participate in democratic processes.

**Problem.** Despite growing interest in peacebuilding and participatory governance, the moderating role of gender in the relationship between culture of peace, citizen participation, and perceptions of neighborhood conflicts remains insufficiently explored. Therefore, it is relevant to ask how gender influences these relationships within urban communities.

**Objective.** To analyze how gender moderates the relationship between culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflicts in urban communities of the GMA, as a basis for designing social innovation interventions oriented toward sustainable development.

**Methodology.** A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted in ten communities of the GMA during March–April 2024, with a sample of urban residents ( $n = 229$ ). The subjects of study were the inhabitants of these communities, while the object of analysis was the relationship among culture of peace, citizen participation, gender, and perceptions of neighborhood conflicts. Validated scales were applied for culture of peace (7 items), citizen participation (9 items), and neighborhood conflicts (12 items), using five-point Likert anchors. The analysis employed exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlations, and linear regression with interaction terms to evaluate the moderating effect of gender.

**Theoretical and practical findings.** High reliability was confirmed across all scales ( $\alpha = .832$ – $.931$ ). Both culture of peace and citizen participation showed positive and significant correlations with the general perception of conflicts. Gender emerged as a significant moderator of the culture of peace–conflict relationship ( $B = .217$ ,  $p = .043$ ), but not of the participation–conflict relationship.

**Originality.** The study is classified as social innovation and organizational-process innovation, in accordance with the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018), as it generates empirical evidence to redesign community practices of participation, peacebuilding, and conflict management with a gender perspective in sustainable urban governance. It also contributes to SDGs 5, 11, and 16.

**Conclusions and limitations.** Gender moderates the relationship between culture of peace and conflict perception, but not the relationship between participation and conflict. The cross-sectional design and geographic concentration in the GMA limit generalizability; therefore, longitudinal and comparative studies are required.

## **1. INTRODUCCIÓN**

In recent decades, the analysis of contemporary social challenges has underscored the importance of examining power relations, participatory mechanisms, and conflict resolution from an integrated perspective. Gender, a culture of peace, citizen engagement, and community conflicts are not isolated phenomena; they are deeply interconnected elements that shape quality of life, substantive democracy, and social cohesion. Understanding how these variables interact in urban communities is essential for building stronger theoretical frameworks and designing more effective social interventions.

International scholarship has emphasized the need to integrate peacebuilding frameworks with participatory governance to address community-level conflicts. Galtung (1996) distinguishes between negative peace (understood as the absence of direct violence) and positive peace, which refers to the presence of social structures promoting justice, equality, and cooperation. Within this framework, conflicts are not necessarily dysfunctional; they can become opportunities for social transformation when managed through democratic dialogue and collective participation. This dynamic is well documented in urban contexts across Latin America, where neighborhood-level tensions frequently reflect deeper inequities in access to decision-making (Contreras-Ibáñez et al., 2019).

A gender perspective is indispensable for analyzing the structural inequalities that shape individual and collective experiences in social spaces. Women, historically excluded from public decision-making, face barriers that hinder their equitable participation and recognition as political actors. Incorporating gender into the analysis of social phenomena reveals these inequalities and supports the development of strategies for more just, inclusive societies. This is directly aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5: Gender Equality) and Goal 16 (SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The present study contributes to the literature on social innovation for sustainable development by examining how gender-sensitive governance dynamics shape peacebuilding, participation, and conflict perception in urban communities (Mejía-Trejo et al., 2025). Its originality lies in empirically testing a gender moderation model between culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflict perception in urban communities of the GMA (a nexus that has not been directly examined in Latin American metropolitan settings) and in translating the results into

actionable social and process innovation, as defined by the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018), for sustainable urban governance.

In terms of innovation type, this study aligns with organizational-process innovation as defined by the OECD/Eurostat (2018) it does not create a new product, but rather generates empirical evidence that supports redesigning participation practices, peacebuilding protocols, and conflict-management routines within urban community organizations. This framing situates gender-sensitive governance not as a normative ideal but as an actionable innovation input with measurable social impact, directly contributing to SDG 5, SDG 11, and SDG 16.

This study analyzes gender as a moderating variable in the relationship among the culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflicts in urban communities, addressing a gap in empirical evidence in Latin American metropolitan settings. The specific objectives are: (a) to assess the level of association between a culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflicts based on gender; and (b) to examine whether gender influences the strength or direction of these relationships. The central hypothesis states that gender significantly moderates the relationship between the culture of peace and perceptions of neighborhood conflict, with this link being stronger among men than among women. A secondary hypothesis proposes that gender moderates the relationship between citizen participation and conflict perception.

The article is organized as follows: Section 2 situates the study at global, international, national, and metropolitan levels. Section 3 reviews the theoretical literature across four axes and presents the measurement instrument and conceptual model. Section 4 describes the methodology. Sections 5 and 6 report results and discuss their theoretical and practical implications, respectively. Section 7 presents conclusions, limitations, and directions for future research.

## **2. CONTEXTUALIZACIÓN**

This section situates the study across four levels of analysis (global, international, national, and metropolitan) to show how gender inequality, civic disengagement, and neighborhood conflict converge into a structural problem that calls for social innovation in urban governance.

## **2.1. Global**

At the global level, peacebuilding and participatory governance research consistently identify gender inequality as a structural barrier to sustainable community development. The United Nations (2015) 2030 Agenda establishes explicit targets linking peace (SDG 16), gender equity (SDG 5), and sustainable cities (SDG 11), recognizing that these challenges are inseparable in metropolitan environments. Cross-national evidence shows that countries with deeper gender gaps in civic participation also exhibit higher rates of community conflict and lower institutional trust (UNDP, 2022).

## **2.2. International and Latin American context**

At the international level, Latin American cities reproduce and intensify these dynamics: urban insecurity disproportionately affects women, while civic engagement mechanisms remain structurally biased toward male participation (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [CEPAL] (2022)). Across the region, women's rates of political and community participation lag behind those of men by margins that persist even when controlling for education and socioeconomic status; CEPAL (2022) further documents that poverty and social exclusion (both more prevalent among women) reduce the capacity to engage in collective conflict resolution, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability that sustainable urban governance must directly address (UNDP, 2022).

## **2.3. National context**

Mexico, and particularly the state of Jalisco, presents a complex social landscape marked by insecurity, civic disengagement, and recurrent community conflicts. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI, 2024), between 62% and 75% of the population perceives their environment as unsafe, with a pronounced gender gap: women consistently report feeling more insecure than men. This pattern reflects broader structural inequalities that shape how different social groups experience and navigate urban life.

Civic participation rates in Jalisco reinforce this picture of social fragmentation. According to the Instituto Electoral y de Participación Ciudadana de Jalisco (IEPC, 2021), voter turnout in the 2021 local elections reached only 47.5% for state representatives and 47.84% for municipal

authorities. Participation in direct-democracy mechanisms was even lower: only 7% of the electorate voted in a state referendum on the fiscal pact, far below the 33% threshold required for a binding result.

## **2.4 Metropolitan context (GMA)**

Neighborhood conflicts are a pervasive reality in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA). According to the Eighth Citizen Perception Survey on Quality of Life in Jalisco (Jalisco ¿Cómo Vamos? [JCV], 2022), between 72% and 91% of GMA residents have experienced community conflicts related to excessive noise, waste disposal, parking disputes, or pets. Of these conflicts, between 23% and 50% escalated to confrontations, including shouting, insults, or other verbal altercations. These data reflect fragile social cohesion and limited capacity for peaceful conflict resolution in everyday life.

Survey data from the Eighth Citizen Perception Survey on Quality of Life in Jalisco (JCV, 2022) reveals that 70% of the population reports little to no interest in politics or public affairs. Furthermore, only 36% are willing to sign a petition, 25% to share information on social media, and a mere 16% to participate in protests or demonstrations. These figures highlight a worrying trend of civic disengagement, directly undermining communities' capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully and inclusively.

Taken together, these indicators reveal a pattern of distrust, institutional disengagement, and limited civic participation that directly affects social cohesion and communities' capacity to manage conflicts peacefully and inclusively. This context makes it urgent to develop gender-aware strategies that foster a culture of peace, civic education, and equitable participation.

Read together, the data from the GMA trace a coherent causal pattern: pervasive insecurity disproportionately experienced by women, declining voter turnout, and widespread civic disengagement combine with frequent neighborhood conflicts to produce a fragile governance environment. This convergence (gender inequality, low participation and neighborhood conflict) defines the problem space that justifies the social and process innovation proposed in this study: empirical evidence to redesign gender-sensitive community governance for sustainable urban development.

### 3. REVISIÓN DE LA LITERATURA

This section reviews the state of the art across four theoretical axes: gender perspective, culture of peace, community conflicts, and citizen participation. The review draws on sources published predominantly between 2014 and 2025, retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, Redalyc, and Google Scholar using the following search terms: gender AND peace culture, citizen participation AND urban conflict, gender moderation AND community governance, and social innovation AND sustainable development. Seminal works published before this window [Galtung (1996), Arnstein (1969), Pateman (1970)] are retained as theoretical anchors given their foundational role in structuring the conceptual model; each is complemented by recent empirical studies that demonstrate continued scholarly engagement with these frameworks. See **Table 1**

**Table 1. Literature Review Protocol: Search Strategy and Selection Criteria**

| Element                            | Detail   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Databases consulted                | Scopus, Web of Science, Redalyc, Google Scholar  |
| Search period                      | 2014–2025 (seminal works retained regardless of year)  |
| Search terms                       | <i>gender AND peace culture; citizen participation AND urban conflict; gender moderation AND community governance; social innovation AND sustainable development</i>   |
| Initial results                    | 340 records (approx. across all bases)   |
| Inclusion criteria                 | Peer-reviewed articles and book chapters; thematic relevance to $\geq 1$ study axis; Spanish or English  |
| Exclusion criteria                 | Grey literature without institutional affiliation; duplicates; works without identifiable methodology  |
| Final documents reviewed           | 42   |
| Thematic clusters identified       | Gender perspective (n=12); Culture of peace (n=9); Community conflicts (n=8); Citizen participation (n=13)   |
| Seminal works retained (>10 years) | Arnstein (1969), Pateman (1970), Barber (1984), Galtung (1996), Marshall (1997), Lederach (2003), Ansell & Gash (2008), Fraser (2009) — retained as foundational anchors; each complemented by post-2014 empirical studies |

**Note:** Seminal works predating the search window are retained because their theoretical frameworks (positive peace, participatory democracy, feminist political theory, and collaborative governance) remain the canonical foundations for the constructs measured in this study. Their inclusion is standard practice in moderation-model research that requires theoretical grounding prior to operationalization. Source: Own elaboration.

#### *Gender Perspective*

Incorporating a gender perspective into the analysis of peace culture, citizen participation, and community conflicts is a crucial step toward understanding the power structures that have historically excluded women from the public sphere. In Mexico, the debate over women’s political

recognition has deep roots, as evidenced by the First Feminist Congress of Yucatán held in 1916, which highlighted fundamental debates about women's readiness to exercise political rights (Valles Ruiz, 2015; Peniche, 2017).

Over subsequent decades, feminist organizations such as the Mexican Feminist Council (CFM) and the United Front for Women's Rights (FUPDM) advocated for equal pay, maternity leave, access to employment, and voting rights. The constitutional reform of 1974 (Article 4) marked a milestone in establishing legal equality, reinforced a year later by the International Conference on Women in Mexico City (Rodríguez, 2015). Mexico's accession to CEDAW in 1980 formalized its international commitment to eliminating gender discrimination (United Nations, 1980).

The establishment of INMUJERES in 2001 institutionalized the gender perspective within government (INMUJERES, 2021). The General Law for Equality between Women and Men (2006) provided key definitional frameworks (Ministry of the Interior, 2013a). In 2018, Mexico achieved gender parity in Congress for the first time (INMUJERES, 2018), while the 2020 Protocol for Judging with a Gender Perspective issued by the Supreme Court (SCJN, 2020) further embedded gender analysis in institutional practice.

Contemporary feminist political theory further highlights the importance of analyzing participation and conflict through the lens of power and social inequalities. Fraser (2009) argues that democratic participation cannot be fully understood without considering structural asymmetries that influence individuals' capacity to impact public decision-making. Similarly, Young (2000) suggests that gender norms shape how people interpret conflict situations and engage in collective deliberation.

Taken together, this body of scholarship establishes that gender shapes civic life in structural and historically documented ways. A limitation common to these works, however, is the predominance of qualitative or descriptive approaches; quantitative evidence specifically testing the moderating effect of gender on the relationships among peace values, participation, and conflict perception in Latin American urban settings remains scarce. This gap justifies the moderation model proposed in the present study (H1 and H2). The growing attention to inclusive social innovation as a vehicle for reducing gender-based barriers in community contexts further reinforces the theoretical relevance of this inquiry (Carbajal-Silva y Aguilar-Cruz, 2025).

## ***Culture of Peace***

The culture of peace is an educational, social, and political framework that aims to transform human relations through dialogue, justice, and respect for human rights. Rooted in philosophical and religious traditions (from Confucian harmony and Christian theology to modern peace studies) it represents a fundamental shift toward nonviolent conflict resolution (Montserrat, 2010; Ruiz, 2014).

Galtung's (1996) theory of positive peace provides the foundational framework for understanding how social systems can prevent violence through structural justice and cooperative relationships. Lederach (2003) extends this by introducing conflict transformation, emphasizing long-term processes of dialogue, reconciliation, and social learning. These perspectives are particularly relevant in urban environments, where diverse interests and social identities interact in complex ways.

In Latin America, the pioneering work of Felipe MacGregor in Peru during the 1980s (culminating in the publication of "Culture of Peace" in 1986) established a systematic framework for educational and political transformation (Giesecke, 1999). Authors such as Jiménez-Bautista (2020), Andrade (2015), and Villalba (2016) have since emphasized that conflict should be viewed not as a problem but as an opportunity for positive transformation in social and educational relationships. Similarly, Martín, Extremera, and Martín (2018) demonstrate that school mediation can transform institutional culture by introducing democratic decision-making processes.

The literature on peace culture converges on the idea that violence is prevented through social structures rather than mere rule enforcement. What the empirical record has not addressed systematically is whether the relationship between peace-oriented values and conflict perception differs by gender — a question with direct implications for how peacebuilding interventions should be designed. Aguilar-Rosado and Campos-Sánchez (2024) offer a parallel lesson from the entrepreneurship domain: gender conditions not just access to resources but the very meaning actors assign to social action, suggesting that peace-culture studies would benefit from similar disaggregation.

### ***Community Conflicts***

Community conflicts are complex expressions of social tensions that arise when the interests of different groups clash. Far from being anomalies, they are natural components of social and territorial dynamics that should be managed with a focus on equity, participation, and dialogue (Reátegui & Álvarez, 2010). Research on social innovation in rural and indigenous communities has further illustrated how participatory and circular-economy strategies can transform conflict dynamics by fostering social cohesion and equity—an insight increasingly applicable to urban contexts (Mejía-Trejo y Mora-Pérez, 2025).

Pérez-Pereyra (2012) emphasizes that community relations structures must go beyond instrumental roles to ensure communities' rights to participation and self-determination. Trust, cultivated through consistent actions and active involvement of legitimate community representatives, is foundational to constructive conflict management (Ventura, 2010). Espinoza-Freire and Campuzano-Vásquez (2019) further highlight that citizen platforms must be built as ongoing processes involving both technical and community oversight.

Recent research indicates that local conflicts arise from competing interests, communication failures, and unequal access to decision-making; however, it still offers limited evidence on how these dynamics are perceived differently across genders in urban community settings. Rather than treating conflicts solely as governance failures, scholars suggest they can serve as signals of active civic engagement (Reátegui y Álvarez, 2010). This perspective is consistent with broader frameworks of democratic governance that view conflict as productive when managed through inclusive participatory mechanisms.

Despite these contributions, the field still lacks rigorous quantitative evidence on gender differences in conflict perception within urban residential settings. Most studies focus on ethnic or class-based conflict; gender as a moderating variable in everyday neighborhood disputes remains underexplored. This absence defines the empirical gap that the present study seeks to address through its interaction-term regression approach.

### ***Citizen Participation***

Citizen participation is a vital component of modern democracies; however, its effect on conflict perception is neither linear nor universal, and may vary according to gendered experiences of the public sphere. Marshall (1997) identifies three aspects of citizenship (civic, political, and social) noting that the political dimension involves rights to exercise political power directly or through elected representatives.

From a democratic theory perspective, Pateman (1970) argues that participatory mechanisms not only enhance decision quality but also cultivate more informed and engaged citizens. Barber (1984) similarly emphasizes that participatory democracy promotes a citizenry capable of tackling collective challenges. In Latin America, Montecinos (2006) documents the adoption of participatory budgeting as a mechanism that strengthens local democracy.

Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation" (1969) maps levels of participation from manipulation to citizen control, emphasizing that genuine, meaningful involvement requires structural support. Ansell and Gash (2008) further develop this idea through collaborative governance frameworks, showing how cooperation among public agencies, civil society, and private actors can address complex social issues. Martínez-Palacios (2017) underscores the necessity of integrating feminist and intersectional perspectives to ensure that women, minorities, and marginalized groups are heard and valued in decision-making.

The accumulated evidence supports a consistent finding: participation is structured by social position, and gender is one of the most consequential dimensions of that positioning. Yet whether gender moderates the statistical relationship between participation and conflict perception (rather than simply shaping participation rates) is a question that the literature has not directly examined. This research gap is the second hypothesis tested here. Mejía-Trejo and Aguilar-Navarro's (2022) work on inclusive community protocols in Mexico provides methodological precedent for operationalizing social innovation in contexts where participation and equity are tightly coupled.

#### **3.1. Diseño del instrumento de medición y/o materiales.**

The measurement instrument was developed through a systematic review of validated scales for the three constructs: culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflict perception. Items were selected to capture the theoretical dimensions identified in the literature review and

adapted to the specific socio-cultural context of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area. The process of indicator design adhered to rigorous criteria for pertinence and social-impact relevance (Mora-Pérez, 2024), ensuring that each item reflected meaningful variation in the constructs of interest.

The final instrument comprised 28 items distributed across three latent constructs: Culture of Peace (7 items), Citizen Participation (9 items), and Neighborhood Conflicts (12 items). All items used a five-point Likert scale with verbal anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); conflict items were reverse-coded so that higher scores indicate greater perceived conflict, consistent with the negative theoretical direction of that variable.

Scales for culture of peace and citizen participation were adapted from instruments validated in previous Mexican and Latin American studies, with modifications to vocabulary and contextual referents reviewed by two subject-matter experts prior to application: one specialist in social measurement and survey design with doctoral-level training, and one researcher with fieldwork experience in urban communities of the GMA.

Both experts evaluated item clarity, contextual pertinence, and alignment with the construct definitions; their observations were incorporated through an iterative revision process until consensus on wording was reached. Structural validity was evaluated through exploratory factor analysis, and reliability was assessed via Cronbach's alpha, both conducted before proceeding with inferential analyses. See **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Measurement Instrument: Constructs, Items, and Operationalization**

| Variable         | Definition  | Items  | Scale      | References   |
|------------------|---|--|------------|--|
| Culture of Peace | Level of agreement with practices of dialogue, respect, cooperation and non-violent conflict resolution | I agree that equality, freedom of expression, and the right to education should be promoted; I understand the importance of empathy and tolerance in building a culture of peace; I recognize conflicts or situations of violence in today's world; I know educational programs or initiatives that promote a culture of peace in my community or country; I actively participate in activities or projects that promote a culture of peace in my environment; I recognize how the media can influence public perception of peace culture and conflicts; I am informed about national and international laws, treaties, or policies related to promoting a culture of peace; | Likert 1–5 | Galtung (1996); Lederach (2003); Jiménez-Bautista (2020); Martín et al. (2018) |

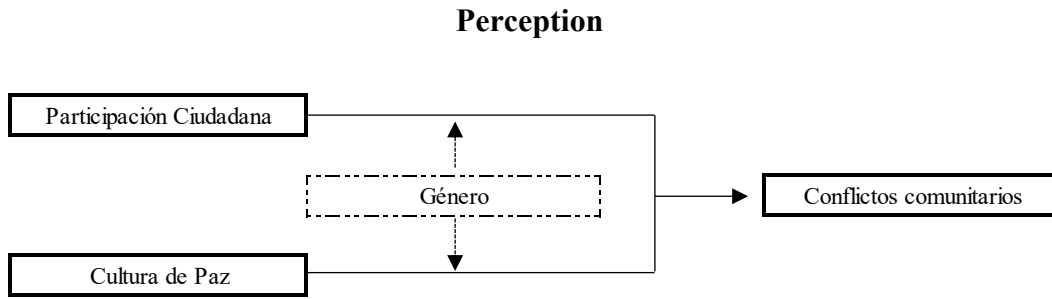
| Variable               | Definition   | Items  | Scale       | References   |
|------------------------|--|--|-------------|--|
| Citizen Participation  | Frequency or willingness to participate in community, deliberative or democratic actions | Promoting reforms to current legislation; Proposing effective public policies; Monitoring public spending and demanding accountability; Supporting investigative journalism; Organizing demonstrations and protests; Monitoring public management; Fostering a culture of civic reporting among citizens; Participating in public decision-making; Participating in citizen councils or commissions  | Likert 1–5  | Arnstein (1969); Pateman (1970); Barber (1984); Contreras-Ibáñez et al. (2019) |
| Neighborhood Conflicts | Perception of presence, intensity or frequency of community conflicts                    | Noise; Garbage thrown or burned by neighbors; Parking problems; Problems related to domestic animals; Gossip or misunderstandings; Disturbances caused by intoxicated individuals, drug users, or gangs; Conflicts in public or private transportation; Conflicts with neighbors' children; Parking disputes; Disputes with family members; Graffiti or vandalism on homes; Street vending conflicts | Likert 1–5  | Andrade Correa (2015); Lederach (2003); Jalisco ¿Cómo Vamos [JCV] (2022)       |
| Gender                 | Categorical variable used as a moderator   | NA   | Categorical | Fraser (2009); Young (2000); INMUJERES (2018, 2021)                            |

Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.2. Modelo Conceptual/Modelo Experimental.

The conceptual model proposes gender as a moderating variable that conditions the relationship between two independent variables—Culture of Peace and Citizen Participation—and the dependent variable, Neighborhood Conflict perception. This configuration reflects the theoretical argument that social identities, and gender in particular, shape how individuals perceive and respond to their community environment. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed relationships. Because the study employs a cross-sectional design, the model is understood to test statistical associations and moderation effects, not causal directionality; regression coefficients should therefore be interpreted as measures of association conditional on gender, not as causal estimates. See **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1. Conceptual Model: Moderating Effect of Gender on Community Conflict**



**Notes:** Solid arrows represent hypothesized direct relationships (IVs → DV); dashed arrows represent the proposed moderating paths (Gender × IV). This figure depicts the ex-ante theoretical model; empirical results are reported in Section 5.

Source: Own elaboration.

The model draws on three theoretical pillars: (a) Galtung’s positive peace framework, which situates peace culture as a structural quality of social environments; (b) democratic participation theory (Pateman, 1970; Barber, 1984), which links civic engagement to community resilience; and (c) feminist political theory (Fraser, 2009; Young, 2000), which emphasizes that structural gender inequalities mediate participation and conflict. The integration of these perspectives reflects the multidisciplinary approach aligned with SDG 5, SDG 11, and SDG 16.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A structured questionnaire was administered in person using a non-probabilistic convenience sampling strategy across ten communities in the GMA (Guadalajara, Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá, and Tlajomulco) during March–April 2024. Communities were selected to ensure coverage of different socioeconomic strata and geographic zones within the metropolitan area; inclusion required that participants be adult residents (18 years or older) with at least six months of continuous residence in the community. Individuals who did not complete more than 20% of items or who failed an attention-check question were excluded. Of 251 questionnaires collected, 22 were discarded on these grounds, yielding 229 valid responses. The sample size exceeds the minimum recommended for exploratory factor analysis, commonly estimated at five to ten cases per item (Hair et al., 2019); in this study, 28 items × 5 = 140, while the final sample was n = 229 and provides sufficient statistical

power for multiple regression with interaction terms at the conventional  $\alpha = .05$  level (Cohen, 1988).

Gender was measured as a single categorical item with two response options (male / female), coded dichotomously (0 = female, 1 = male) for use in regression interaction terms. The sample comprised 121 women (52.8%) and 108 men (47.2%). The limitation of this binary operationalization — which does not capture non-binary or gender-diverse identities — is acknowledged and discussed in the conclusions.

Previously validated scales were culturally and contextually adapted to the GMA setting through item revision, adjustment of contextual wording, and internal consistency testing prior to inferential analysis. The operationalization of social impact variables, such as the culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflict perception, adhered to rigorous indicator-design criteria (Mora-Pérez, 2024). **Table 3** summarizes the measurement structure.

**Table 3. Variables and Items Used in the Research**

| Variable              | Items | Sense | Type        |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Culture of Peace      | 7     | +     | Independent |
| Citizen Participation | 9     | +     | Independent |
| Conflicts             | 12    | -     | Dependent   |

Source: Own elaboration.

Reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.26. For the EFA, principal axis factoring was used as the extraction method, given the ordinal nature of the Likert data and the non-normality of several items confirmed via Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests ( $p < .05$ ). Oblimin oblique rotation was applied because theoretical correlation among the factors was expected. Factor retention followed Kaiser's criterion (eigenvalue  $> 1$ ) and was confirmed by a scree plot inspection. Missing data were minimal ( $< 1\%$  per item) and handled via listwise deletion. Interaction terms for the moderation models were constructed by mean-centering each continuous predictor before computing the product term with the dichotomous gender variable, in order to reduce multicollinearity (Cohen, 1988). All analyses were conducted after confirming data completeness and valid-range distributions through descriptive statistics and frequency distributions.

Two regression models were estimated for each independent variable. Model 1 assessed the direct relationship between the predictor (Culture of Peace or Citizen Participation) and the dependent variable (Neighborhood Conflicts). Model 2 introduced the Gender variable and the interaction term (Predictor  $\times$  Gender) to test for moderation.  $R^2$  change and ANOVA were used to evaluate model fit improvement.

**Ethical considerations.** Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Prior to data collection, all participants received a plain-language explanation of the study's purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without consequence, and the confidential treatment of their responses. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant, consistent with the non-sensitive, non-clinical nature of the study. No personally identifiable information was recorded. Data were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team and will be retained for five years in accordance with institutional guidelines. The study was conducted in adherence to the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013), for research with human participants and did not require formal ethics committee review, as it involved anonymous survey data with no foreseeable risk to respondents.

## 5. RESULTS

This section presents the quantitative results from 229 valid surveys. It first verifies data completeness and instrument reliability, then examines factorial validity through KMO, Bartlett's test, and subscale reliability. Finally, it analyzes correlations and regression models to determine whether gender moderates the relationships between Citizen Participation, Culture of Peace, and Neighborhood Conflicts.

### 5.1 Descriptive statistics and reliability

Initial descriptive analysis confirmed that data from all 229 surveys were complete and within valid ranges. The Cronbach's alpha for the full model was .871, indicating strong internal consistency. **Table 4** presents the case processing summary, and Table 5 presents the overall reliability statistics.

**Table 4. Reliability Analysis – Case Processing Summary**

| Cases | N   | %     |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Valid | 229 | 100.0 |

|          |     |       |
|----------|-----|-------|
| Excluded | 0   | .0    |
| Total    | 229 | 100.0 |

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 5. Overall Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's alpha | Number of elements |
|------------------|--------------------|
| .871             | 28                 |

Source: Own elaboration.

## 5.2 Factorial analysis

Exploratory factor analysis yielded a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .863 (excellent) and a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $p < .001$ ), supporting the appropriateness of factor analysis for this dataset. Three main factors emerged, explaining 56.66% of the total variance, which is acceptable in social research. **Table 6** presents the KMO and Bartlett's results.

**Table 6. KMO and Bartlett's Test**

|   |                        |          |
|---|------------------------|----------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy measure. | .863                   |          |
| Bartlett's sphericity test                    | Approximate Chi-square | 3989.933 |
|   | df                     | 378      |
|   | Sig.                   | 0.000    |

Source: Own elaboration.

The rotated factor matrix grouped items clearly into the three theoretical constructs (Citizen Participation, Culture of Peace, and Neighborhood Conflicts), confirming structural validity. Individual reliability analyses for each subscale further corroborated this: Citizen Participation ( $\alpha = .911$ ), Culture of Peace ( $\alpha = .832$ ), and Neighborhood Conflicts ( $\alpha = .931$ ), all exceeding the recommended .70 threshold—see **Tables 7, 8, and 9** for these results.

**Table 7. Reliability Analysis for Citizen Participation**

| Cronbach's alpha | Number of elements |
|------------------|--------------------|
| .911             | 9                  |

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 8. Reliability Analysis for Culture of Peace**

| Cronbach's alpha | Number of elements |
|------------------|--------------------|
| .832             | 7                  |

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 9. Reliability Analysis for Neighborhood Conflicts**

| Cronbach's alpha | Number of elements |
|------------------|--------------------|
| .931             | 12                 |

Source: Own elaboration.

### 5.3 Correlation analysis

A weak but significant positive correlation was found between Citizen Participation and Conflict ( $r = .159$ ,  $p = .016$ ). A moderate and significant positive correlation was found between Culture of Peace and Conflict ( $r = .202$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Citizen Participation and Culture of Peace were also significantly and positively correlated ( $r = .258$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### 5.4. Correlations by gender

When variables were disaggregated by gender, a distinct pattern emerged. Among women ( $n = 121$ ), neither Citizen Participation nor Culture of Peace showed a statistically significant correlation with Conflict ( $r < .12$ ,  $p > .19$  for both); means were 3.41 (SD = 0.62) for Participation, 3.67 (SD = 0.58) for Culture of Peace, and 2.89 (SD = 0.71) for Conflict. Among men ( $n = 108$ ), both associations were significant: Citizen Participation correlated positively with Conflict ( $r = .26$ ,  $p = .007$ , 95% CI [.07, .43]) and Culture of Peace correlated positively with Conflict ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [.17, .51]); means were 3.38 (SD = 0.65), 3.59 (SD = 0.61), and 2.94 (SD = 0.74), respectively. This gender differential constitutes preliminary evidence of a moderating effect, particularly in the culture of peace–conflict relationship.

### 5.5. Regression Analysis: Culture of Peace

Model 1 showed that Culture of Peace significantly predicted conflict ( $B = .208$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $R^2 = .048$ ). In Model 2, the introduction of the Gender interaction term rendered the main effect non-significant, while the interaction emerged as significant ( $B = .217$ ,  $p = .043$ ,  $R^2 = .065$ ). This

increase in  $R^2$  from .048 to .065 confirms that gender moderates the relationship between the Culture of Peace and Neighborhood Conflicts.

### **5.6. Análisis de regresión: Participación ciudadana**

Model 1 showed that Citizen Participation significantly predicted Conflict ( $B = .151$ ,  $p = .020$ ,  $R^2 = .032$ ). In Model 2, the interaction term between Participation and Gender was not significant ( $B = .145$ ,  $p = .123$ ), and  $R^2$  increased only marginally (from .032 to .043). These results indicate that gender does not serve as a significant moderator in the participation–conflict relationship.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

The results reveal a complex and nuanced picture of how urban residents experience community conflict, shaped by their civic values, engagement in participation, and (critically) their gender. The overall finding that both Culture of Peace and Citizen Participation correlate positively with neighborhood conflict perception challenges conventional assumptions that these variables are straightforwardly conflict-reducing. A plausible interpretation is that higher levels of peace-oriented values and civic engagement heighten individuals' awareness of social tensions rather than suppressing them—a view consistent with democratic participation theories that highlight the constructive role of conflict in diverse societies (Barber, 1984; Pateman, 1970).

Citizen engagement can expose people to the tensions inherent in social pluralism, making conflicts more visible rather than creating them. Similarly, promoting a culture of peace may lead to greater recognition of injustice and community grievances, rather than their immediate resolution. These findings contribute to the literature on peace-building by underscoring that peace is not the absence of conflict but its conscious and participatory transformation. The moderating role of gender constitutes the most significant empirical contribution of this study. The finding that gender significantly moderates the culture of peace–conflict relationship (but not the participation–conflict relationship) highlights the uneven ways in which peace values are experienced and expressed across genders.

Among men, higher scores on peace-oriented values were associated with greater conflict perception. One plausible account is that internalizing pacifist values heightens sensitivity to injustice (making tensions that might otherwise go unacknowledged more perceptible) though the

cross-sectional design does not permit causal attribution and this interpretation warrants longitudinal testing.

One possible interpretation is that gendered socialization patterns influence how women perceive or report community conflict; however, this explanation should be corroborated through qualitative or longitudinal research. Women's lower conflict perception scores may reflect social roles oriented toward conciliation that led them to frame community tensions differently, or may reflect structural barriers that reduce their visibility in contexts where conflicts are measured. Either way, the absence of significant correlations in the female group calls for more targeted investigation rather than definitive conclusions about women's experiences of conflict.

The absence of gender moderation in the participation–conflict relationship suggests that civic engagement has a more direct and structurally shared effect: participation exposes both men and women to the tensions of social pluralism. This finding is consistent with Arnstein's (1969) conceptualization of participation as a structural position within the public sphere. However, it does not imply that participation is equally experienced across genders; rather, its relationship with conflict perception is statistically consistent.

### **6.1. Theoretical contributions (*Scientia*).**

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes several key contributions:

First, it provides empirical evidence that peace-oriented values are not gender-neutral constructs, challenging universalist models of peace culture and calling for gender-disaggregated conceptualizations of peacebuilding mechanisms.

Second, the study demonstrates that the relationship between civic engagement and community conflict perception is context-dependent and gender-conditioned. This contributes to theoretical frameworks of collaborative governance (Ansell y Gash, 2008) by showing that socially constructed identities mediate the effects of participation on conflict.

Third, the multidisciplinary integration of peace studies, feminist political theory, and participatory democracy theory advances an innovation-oriented understanding of community governance consistent with innovation management frameworks for sustainable development (Mejía-Trejo y Mora-Pérez, 2025). This positions gender equity not merely as a normative

aspiration but as a functional input for sustainable community development aligned with SDG 5, SDG 11, and SDG 16.

## **6.2. Practical contributions (*Praxis*).**

The practical implications of this research are significant for the design of community policies aimed at fostering peace and civic participation. First, the finding that gender moderates the culture-of-peace–conflict relationship underscores the need for gender-differentiated approaches in community peacebuilding programs. Universal interventions that promote peace values without addressing gender dynamics risk generating unintended effects on perceptions of conflict.

Second, the study suggests that promoting citizen participation is a relatively gender-neutral strategy for enhancing conflict awareness, but gender-sensitive support structures must accompany it. The design of inclusive participation mechanisms—informed by circular-economy and social innovation frameworks for regional sustainable development (Mejía-Trejo y Mora-Pérez, 2025)—can help bridge existing structural gaps.

Third, local governments, NGOs, and academic institutions should collaborate in designing community programs that integrate peace education, civic training, and gender equity as mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable urban development. The finding that only men show significant correlations among all three variables should not be interpreted as evidence that women are less relevant actors; rather, it highlights the need for research and policy tools that are sensitive to the different channels through which women engage with and manage community conflict.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This section presents the conclusions of the study in three parts. First, the central research question is answered and both hypotheses are evaluated against the empirical evidence obtained. Second, the principal theoretical and practical findings are synthesized, highlighting the moderating role of gender and its differential expression across the variables studied. Third, the limitations of the research are acknowledged and future lines of inquiry are proposed to advance the understanding of gender-moderated community dynamics in urban settings.

### **7.1. How to answer the question and research hypothesis.**

This study posed the central question of whether and how gender influences the relationships among a culture of peace, citizen participation, and neighborhood conflicts in urban communities. The evidence supports the first hypothesis: gender significantly moderates the relationship between culture of peace and conflict perception ( $B = .217, p = .043$ ), with the effect concentrated among men. The second hypothesis—that gender would also moderate the participation–conflict relationship—was not supported, as the interaction term failed to reach statistical significance ( $B = .145, p = .123$ ). These findings confirm that gender functions as a culturally embedded filter shaping how peace values—but not civic engagement per se—translate into perceptions of conflict.

## **7.2. Research findings**

Three principal findings emerge from this study. First, both the culture of peace and citizen participation are positively associated with perceptions of neighborhood conflict, a finding explained by the heightened awareness of tensions that accompanies civic engagement and peace-oriented values. Second, gender significantly moderates the culture of peace–conflict relationship, indicating that this construct operates differently across genders. Third, significant correlations between all three variables are observed only among men, pointing to important gendered differences in how community tensions are perceived and expressed. These findings provide empirical support for gender-sensitive, multidisciplinary approaches to sustainable community governance and reinforce the need to treat peacebuilding as a socially innovative process shaped by gendered experiences.

Specifically, the study's evidence contributes to SDG 5 by demonstrating that gender conditions how peace values translate into civic practice; to SDG 11 by identifying participation and peace culture as modifiable levers for urban conflict reduction; and to SDG 16 by grounding the call for inclusive institutions in quantifiable differences across gender groups. As a form of social and process innovation in the sense of the Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018), these results inform the redesign of community governance interventions rather than merely documenting their current limitations.

### 7.3. Final research scope

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference. Self-reported data may be affected by social desirability bias. The sample is geographically concentrated in the GMA, limiting transferability to other urban or rural contexts. Additionally, the binary operationalization of gender does not capture the full diversity of gender identities.

Future research should incorporate longitudinal designs to trace the evolution of gender-moderated dynamics over time. Comparative studies across regions and mixed-methods approaches that combine surveys with qualitative interviews would provide a richer understanding of the mechanisms linking gender, peace values, participation, and conflict. Expanding the operationalization of gender to include non-binary identities and integrating intersectional variables such as age, class, and ethnicity would further advance the explanatory power of this research agenda.

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