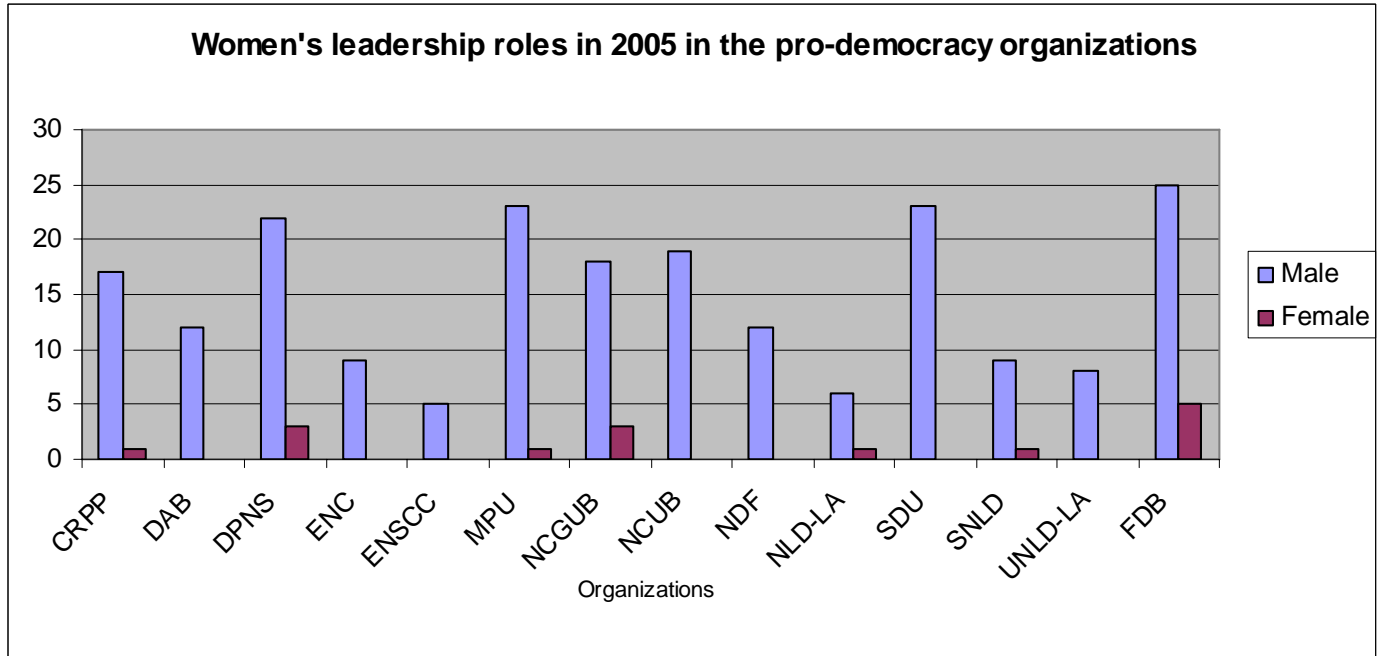


Women and Activism in Burma: Toward Democratic Participation in Pro-Democracy Activities



The fourteen major pro-democracy/ethnic groups working in exile from Burma.

The above graph illustrates the levels of women as compared to men involved in the current, exiled pro-democracy movement. As the graph illustrates, the involvement of women in leadership of crucial, pro-democracy organizations has traditionally been underwhelming. Many argue that institution of democracy should be the first concern in areas of conflict and post-conflict government-building – that once the democratic process replaces the military regime, then will come a more appropriate time to turn to gender concerns. However, the Global Justice Center argues that women must be involved from the very beginning to ensure that transitional processes include gender considerations. The composition of pro-democracy groups must itself be democratic, which means including women's participation at rates proportionate to their percentage of the population. If, for instance, the committee that drafts Burma's new constitution does not include a gendered perspective, then the safeguards for women's human rights will not be codified in the supreme law of the new government.