WOMEN AND PEACE

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE OBSTACLES TO AND TRIUMPHS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABG - Autonomous Bougainville Government

ACPA - Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement

AHRC - Australian Human Rights Commission

ARB - Autonomous Region of Bougainville

ATSIC - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

BPA - Bougainville Peace Agreement

BRA - Bougainville Revolutionary Army

CEDAW - Convention on all Forms of Violence against Women

FI - Feminist Institutionalism

GM - Gender Mainstreaming

NAP - National Action Plan

PNG - Papua New Guinea

UAF - Urgent Action Fund

UN - United Nations

UNSCR 1325 - United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

UNDRIP - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

WHDRS - Women human rights defenders

WILPF - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WPS - Women, Peace and Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: This research project examines women's participation in peace processes in conflict-affected societies by engaging with the localised dynamics of conflict and peace-making in Australia, Bougainville and Liberia. It aims to contribute an evidence-base which informs the advocacy of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) on the upcoming installation of Australia's National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). WILPF encourages a shift from the previous (2012) NAP's heavy focus on the protection of women towards engaging with the benefits of women's contribution to peace at local, national and international levels.

Methodology: Christine Bell's typologies of power-sharing arrangements were applied as a sampling method for the three case study regions (Bell 2015: 13-32). Feminist Institutionalism (FI) provided a methodological framework to operationalise three research questions: What is a peaceful society? What factors facilitate and obstruct the ability of women to participate in peace processes? And where and how does women's participation improve the durability of peace? These questions were answered by coding secondary qualitative data to create a database of women's experiences of peace processes on the local level. The data was then subject to a comparative thematic analysis to identify wider patterns and the gendered nature of women's participation in peace processes in varied contexts.

Results: Women are active and empowered agents of peace who are able to transform their aims and environments to maintain peacebuilding and peace-making processes in four key ways: 1) through the use of customary conflict resolution and faith-based organisations to facilitate safe spaces; 2) through changing traditional gender norms and ideologies to publicly advocate for gender equality; 3) through direct participation in formal peace processes to institute mechanisms for future advocacy; and 4) through appealing to the international community to receive aid and the utilisation of international frameworks to further durable peace. The key recommendations highlight the importance of involving women at all stages of peace processes and a focus on the local dynamics to enable women to be attentive to local issues. Further, the research indicates that WILPF can more to meaningfully advocate to the government in implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), by working alongside women's indigenous groups domestically.

INTRODUCTION

UNSCR 1325 calls on member states to increase the participation of women in decision-making, their protection from violence, preventative measures against violence, as well as addressing specific gendered relief needs (United States Institute of Peace n.d.). Australia's 2012 National Action Plan (NAP) on the application of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda prioritised the protection of women over their participation (Australian Government 2012). The role of 'male protector' is less challenging a narrative for governments to adopt than women's importance in peace agreements (Young 2003: 10); only nine per cent of negotiators in peace agreements worldwide are women (UN Women 2016). Women are disproportionately affected by conflict yet are largely excluded and underrepresented in peace processes.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a non-profit organisation that has been engaging with notions of anti-war and peacebuilding in the international legal arena and creating change through nonviolent action since 1915. The organisation brings the international aims of women's inclusion in peace building and conflict-resolution to the local level (WILPF 2018). WILPF Australia plays an important role in monitoring Australia's implementation of UNSCR 1325, and as the second iteration of the NAP approaches, WILPF would like to prioritise women's participation. This report provides insight into the differences made when women participate in peace processes through an analysis of three case studies – Australia, Bougainville and Liberia. In doing so, it contributes to WILPF's advocacy for women in peace processes with a more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of peace work in various case studies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our research was guided by the following three research questions.

1. ***What is a peaceful society?***

Viewing Western visions of peace as universal, silences the exploration of alternatives, and often the voices of women (Sujaat 2011: 61). In inquiring into conceptualisations of peace and what constitutes a peaceful society, we consider cross-cultural differences in an effort to have all voices heard. This will allow us to understand how peace has become internationally

naturalised, and how this interacts with the peace work of women and impacts on distinct conflict transitions.

2. ***What factors facilitate and obstruct the ability of women to participate in peace processes?***

In examining meaningful participation, we aim to avoid defining tick-box attendance as participation in order to acknowledge the many forms of participation that may be invisible, formal, informal or overstated. This question uncovers what obstructs or assists women's participation in peace processes, breaking down the gap between policy and practice in the WPS Agenda and UNSCR 1325. Asking what it means to participate enlightens universal dynamics and reveals regional and cultural similarities and differences (de Vaus 2008: 252). This research was aimed at attaining an in-depth, contextual understanding of meaningful participation, rather than merely locating participation; in other words, "making women count - not just counting women" (Paffenholz et al. 2016: 22).

3. ***Where and how does women's participation improve the durability of peace?***

This question intends to emphasise those contexts in which peace is more durable and the factors connected to this outcome, with a specific focus on women's interactions with institutional mechanisms in instances of success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic studies of women's peace work gained traction in the 1990s as peace and conflict studies made sense of the rise of intra-state conflict. Conflict was changing, and so were its impacts, as women and children became more vulnerable in these 'new wars' than armed soldiers (El Jack 2003; Harris and Reilly 1998). Recognition of the specific impact of conflict on women, particularly sexual violence as a weapon of war, and women's vested interest in peace became central to women's groups lobbying at the UN (Rahmanpanah and Trojanowska 2016). After UNSCR 1325 was adopted in 2000, studies on the relationship between women and peace expanded rapidly.

Most early literature is primarily concerned with explaining *why* it is important to include women in peace processes. Some of these arguments are reminiscent of first-wave Western feminism's peace work and its basis in claims that women are naturally more tolerant and peaceful than men (Moynagh and Forestell 2012). The WPS Agenda is often critiqued as

biologically essentialist or limited by associating peace with women (Florea 2013). Most authors now emphasise a constructivist understanding of gender by explaining how norms, values and beliefs regarding gender are constructed socially and are shaped by various environments (Confortini and Ruane 2014; Jenkins and Reardon 2012). Women's conflict experiences are argued to increase their sense of urgency in ending violence, while masculine militarised norms in political decision-making can reduce conflicts to "hero/enemy dichotomies in which victims are inconsequential" (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007: 28).

Normative democratic calls for women's participation in peace processes are increasingly accompanied by claims that this participation increases the durability of outcomes (Confortini and Ruane 2014; O'Reilly, Suilleabhan, and Paffenholz 2015). McKay (2004) has shown that men are more likely to define peace 'negatively' as the absence of formal conflict, whereas women tend to broaden the scope to 'positive' peace, integrating rights, accountability, and reconciliation (Strickland and Duvvury 2003). These differences in thinking are explained by standpoint theory's emphasis on the 'standpoint' of structurally disadvantaged people to more accurately perceive and understand inequality (Confortini and Ruane 2014). Arostegui (2013) understands the relationship between gender equality and peace as two-way; representing women in peace processes not only improves outcomes, but post-conflict settings are an opportunity for women to adopt new responsibilities and develop organising skills as a result of the solidarity of shared trauma, thereby resulting in shifting local gender ideologies and roles.

However, the process of translating these tendencies into practical outcomes remains largely theoretical. Women's participation rarely *negatively* impacts the outcomes of peace processes (Moosa, Rahmani and Webster 2013), but it has not conclusively been shown that it improves them (O'Reilly, Suillebhan and Paffenholz 2015). This lack of evidence is an obstacle for the WPS Agenda, which is not yet an accepted norm (Tryggestad 2014: 467). Between 1998 and 2013, just one of forty peace treaty signatories was a woman (Moosa, Rahmani and Webster 2013). The need for a stronger evidence base is deeply felt on the ground by women who observe that their inclusion is still seen as an obligation rather than genuinely beneficial (Paffenholz et al. 2016). To address this gap, work has emerged focussing on women's contributions to peace around the world (Anderlini 2000), identifying and promoting successes, as well as accounting for failures.

Findings from these studies suggest that women's participation tends to be informal, draws on existing cultural gender roles (Strickland and Duvvury 2003), and operates inclusively and flexibly at the grassroots level (Bop 2002). Common forms of participation include collective organisations of resistance movements and roles in making coalitions for peace (Manchanda 2001). Nevertheless, the persistent underrepresentation of women in formal processes remains a concern, particularly since the most successful implementations of the WPS Agenda have included women in commissions, at the negotiation table, with observer status, and with access to public decision-making (O'Reilly, Suilleabhan, and Paffenholz 2015: 1). Even once these aims of attendance are achieved, obstacles to exercising genuine influence remain, such as institutional "boys' clubs" and the "masculinised management culture" of the UN (Connell 2005; Paffenholz et al. 2016). Women's participation can be restricted by the dominant feminist discourse excluding multiple feminisms. Additionally, the narrative of women as 'peaceful' can hinder their participation. Gibbins (2011: 526), for example, argues that "in the corridors of the UN, discourses that are uplifting, positive and present women as peacemakers are the most valued". We know that more generally, perceptions of women as weak, low levels of literacy, intimidation, and burdensome formal and informal labour all function as barriers to women's participation in peace processes (Erzurum and Eren 2014: 247). However, the relationship between the cultural context in which women do peace work and the particular form these obstacles take in obstructing access to participation or the ability to make a meaningful difference remains largely speculative.

KEY CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Peace and Conflict

Perceiving peace and conflict as opposing concepts can be dangerous for two reasons. The first is that the common association of conflict (attributed to violence) with disorder and peace with order can produce oversimplified research attempting to understand the complexities of social life (Goodhand 1999). Second, if peace and conflict are considered as binary terms, conflict scenarios in which both are 'processes' working in tandem with each other are made invisible between mutually exclusive categories of 'conflict-affected' and 'peaceful' societies. In order to maximise the contribution of this research, a range of conflict scenarios must be visible in our analysis, benefiting from working definitions of peace and conflict which can recognise concordance.

Peace

While universal notions of peace can be understood as the absence of war or conflict, this interpretation of peace excludes social struggle where violence is not prominent (Galtung 1969). A more nuanced understanding of peace encompasses subjective perspectives on global peace, national peace, or peace within one's community.

We refer to both peace-making and peacebuilding as processes in this research. Peace-making can be understood as attempts of warring factions to reach a peace agreement, end violence, and reintegrate and disarm combatants (Theobald 2012). Peacebuilding is the process of overcoming existing divisions and preventing future conflict (Theobald 2012). The process of peace includes various actions often with a goal of signing a peace accord, and can be understood in both political terms, referring to actions that lead to settlements agreed upon by political parties, and social terms which refer to the resolution of social damage after conflict.

Conflict

Conflict refers to a state of disagreement between individuals or groups and can occur in violent and non-violent forms. Globally, definitions of 'conflict' include insecure settings, war or terrorism (Ní Aoláin 2016). While often considered negative, a state of conflict can be essential for the transformation of social tensions (Goodhand 1999). We acknowledge that conflict is a process; it progresses from a state of isolation or cooperation to a latent or incipient state, to a state manifest in conflict between parties or suppressed where one party is unable to challenge a stronger opponent and is coerced into accepting the status quo (Mitchell 1981). However, this conception is analytical and does not apply to all conflicts. Conflict between parties can go through repetitive cycles where one conflict outcome produces the substantive issues that drive the next.

Post-conflict

Post-conflict refers to a situation where warfare has ceased, but where circumstances remain hostile and the possibility for recurrence of conflict remains and efforts for effective peacebuilding occur at this stage (Krause 2005).

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming (GM) is a tool used for assessing, designing and implementing policies that are informed by an understanding of the gendered effects of actions and guided by the

objective of gender equality (Moser 2005). It begins with the recognition that gendered perceptions of difference shape policy processes and outcomes. GM focuses on the inclusion of women's participation at all levels rather than through separatist spaces for 'women's issues', although it recognises the need for the existence of these spaces (True 2003). Grasping the prominence of successful GM in peace processes also reveals whether gender positively influences lasting peace initiatives. Thus, GM helps to answer, 'Where and how does women's participation improve the durability of peace?'

Feminist Institutionalism

Feminist Institutionalism (FI) is an approach aimed at uncovering how gendered power dynamics are shaped by institutions. This approach sees formal and informal institutions as mutually constituting and subject to patriarchal structures which can devalue or empower feminised practices. These power dynamics occur at both the formal and informal levels, engendering political proceedings and rules and norms that tend to exclude women's participation (Ní Aoláin 2018). Through this lens FI can expose the ways women can be limited in local settings and differentiates the institutional context of gendered power dynamics.

METHODOLOGY

In this research we aim to understand the interaction between women's participation in peace processes and durable peace in localised settings, revealing wider implications of women's participation. It is essential to obtain an in-depth understanding of the impacts made through women participating in peace processes in contexts which differ as much as possible (de Vaus 2008: 8). This justifies our approach in comparing three different case study areas, which allows for a closer reading of local conditions to develop "sophisticated and more powerful explanations" (Miles, Huberman and Saldana 2014: 101). To obtain an in-depth understanding of women in peace processes, we adopted a case study approach which is appropriate for questions that blur the distinction between context and phenomena and the tracing of "operational links… over time" (Yin 2014: 10-16). This compliments the FI framework, which traces institutional change through temporally distinct processes and exposes the ways women create and sustain change, as well as the gendered power dynamics they navigate in local and international settings (Waylen 2014: 212). Although FI has become popular for comparative research, the institutional setting and gender deficits of peace processes have rarely been

explicitly explored (Ní Aoláin 2018: 119; Waylen 2014). By engaging with this focus through a comparative study, we hope to provide new insight into the differences women can make when they participate in peace processes.

Selection of Case Study Sites

With time and resources permitting a maximum of three in-depth case studies, the significance of our output depended on our data revealing peace processes which differ as much as possible. We employed Christine Bell's (2018) typology of power sharing arrangements which translate to three broad conflict types; ethnonational accommodation, Indigenous autonomy and interim transitional. Bell's (2018: 22) typology encouraged an engagement with distinct and enduring localised environments where women participate in political peace processes, with a focus on the institutional deficits through a gendered lens. Through employing a typology of three main peace processes, we can extrapolate some insight into the experiences of women globally. Bell's (2018) typology was used to provide context to understand the institutional context of women's experiences of peace processes.

Australia

Ethnonational Accommodation

In 1770, the East Coast of the landmass now known as Australia was claimed for Britain as 'terra nullius' or land belonging to no one. In reality, the custodians of the land belonged to the world's oldest living culture (Macintyre et al. 2000: 239). Australia falls under Bell's 'ethnonational accommodation' power-sharing type, characterised by the attempt of one group "to capture or 'own' the state at the expense of other groups" (Bell 2018: 17). The succeeding 150 years saw the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population reduce by ninety per cent (Booth 2016). Survivors have never ceded their sovereignty, and there is strong support for a treaty since their constitutional recognition as citizens in 1967. 'Makarrata' is a term adopted by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe a meaningful peace process with the Australian Government. Despite being the only settler-colony without a treaty with its traditional owners, governments continue to dismiss *Makarrata* as divisive or legally impossible (Petrice and Graham 2018). Makarrata comes from the "Yolgnu word meaning 'a coming together after a struggle'" and would involve a process of negotiation in agreement-making and truth-telling about Australia's history (1VoiceUluru 2018). The structural inequality suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in terms of mental and physical health, poverty, incarceration, and education is also indicative of the

ethnonational power-sharing type. Bell's (2018: 1) typology here makes visible a conflict otherwise invisible without a positive definition of peace.

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville

Indigenous Autonomy

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARB), located in Papua New Guinea (PNG), suffered a violent civil war from 1988 until a ceasefire in 1998 between armed Bougainvillean factions and the PNG Police and Defence Force, resulting in the death of around 20,000 people, the internal displacement of much of the population, and the destruction of regional infrastructure (Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018 2-6; Quay 2017: 14). Civil war erupted from ongoing resistance against the PNG Government's efforts to protect a lucrative Australian owned copper mine in Panguna, which resulted in unequal benefits to communities, environmental degradation and social changes in Bougainville (Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018: 2-6). Peace was achieved with the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) in 2000 which granted the territory political autonomy. In 2004 Bougainville established its own Constitution to formalise local-level government structures that involve capacities for autonomy from PNG (Quay 2017). The implementation of localised self-government structures to end or alleviate conflict which impacted diverse minority groups is indicative of Bell's (2018: 22) Indigenous Autonomy power-sharing arrangement. The continuing struggles for equitable socio-economic redistribution and autonomy also characterises the conflict experienced between Bougainville factions and the PNG government (Bell 2018: 22).

Liberia

Interim Transitional

Liberia faced violent civil war provoked by a long history of oppressive and corrupt politics by the Americo-Liberian settler minority's system. Ethnic divisions, unequal power dynamics, economic problems and the desire for Liberian people to have agency in their homeland since its foundation in 1822 gave rise to violent protests in 1989 (Theobold 2012: 40). The following 18 years consisted of two civil wars marked by rebel movements attempting to overthrow the Americo-Liberian oligarchy. Conflict depleted in 2003 after international pressure and Liberian women's groups pushed for an end to the fighting through peace talks in Ghana and the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which created a transitional government. During this conflict 250,000 people died and 50-75% of Liberia's population were displaced (Theobold 2012: 40). Characterised by its identity politics and intrastate and transnational

dimensions, this case study falls under Bell's Interim Transitional Power-Sharing type, whereby peace is manifested through temporary governance to immediately end conflict (Bell 2018: 23).

Methods

Interpreting our data through an interpretivist theoretical paradigm allowed us to access the meanings of phenomena through "people's motives and interpretations of the world", and recognise our subjective biases through continual "critical analysis and reflection" of secondary qualitative literature (Walter 2013: 389). Engaging with qualitative data was necessary to develop an understanding of complex social meaning-making (Miles, Huberman and Saldana 2014: 49). We triangulated our data sources between primary, secondary and grey qualitative literature to engage with the complexities of women's experiences of participation and the existing theoretical approaches to peace (Carter et al. 2014). Primary sources included media reports and articles, the academic work of women involved, and data from ethnographic research in relevant communities. Secondary data was literature sourced from the University of Queensland's access to academic journals. Grey literature was attained from the reports of non-government organisations (NGOs), the websites of women's organisations and groups, and the policy documents and reports from governments within each case study site. In total, approximately seventy-four documents were thematically coded. A list of these documents is provided in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

We conducted a thematic analysis of our data to engage with themes which are both predetermined and emerging, using both inductive and deductive approaches to analysis (Willis in Walter 2013). Thematic analysis involves a close engagement with reading and coding the data, sensitivity to the meanings participants are expressing, and the ability to interpret beyond participant descriptions to understand how these accounts fit within the wider research area (Willis in Walter 2013). We were able to recognise four strong themes across the case studies, through individually coding data and as a group using an FI lens to examine institutional change and continuity as social phenomena. We found differences in women's experiences and understandings of peace in formal and informal institutional contexts, as well as a strong emphasis on customary local-level peace approaches. We also identified a disconnection between formal political attendance and meaningful participation, and an

association between the mobilisation of international rights frameworks and agencies and the creation of enduring peace.

Research Limitations

Our research approach faced limitations which restricted the scope of our outcomes. Feminist research usually employs methods of "ethnography, life histories, and memory work" (Walter 2013: 18). An ethnographic study into one or more local contexts would have been ideal, however, a comparative case study approach using documentary material better suited our fiscal restraints, lack of time to establish rapport and reciprocity, and language barriers. As a result, we were reliant on our ability to access existing ethnographic data, which was complicated in unforeseen ways by the limited resources available to women's groups to release reports and maintain an internet presence, as well as unexpectedly restricted access to formal political documents concerning peace processes. Consequently, our triangulation of data was skewed towards academic literature, and across the board we were frustrated by our comparative lack of primary data in light of our intentions to foreground the voices of women in local contexts. When experiencing difficulty accessing the voices of local actors, as well as the formal institutional arrangements or reports concerning peace processes, we sought direction from academics involved with the WPS Agenda.

Ethical Considerations

As our research does not involve primary data collection or participants, it has been exempted from review by an ethical clearance board (Ember and Ember 2009: 68). However, ethical issues result from the highly politicised nature of our research and our reliance on secondary data and ethnographies. To ensure ethical responsibility we aimed to uphold the context of our data and analyse our findings in consideration of the original agenda of the author (National Health and Medical Research Council 2007). This was crucial to uphold feminist ethics which focuses on overcoming "the inherently exploitative nature of research" by including participants in the process (Habbis in Walter 2013: 74). Despite this not being possible, our research was feminist in that it aims to further women's positions in society. As one of our case studies involves an Indigenous-settler conflict in the country on which we conduct this cross-cultural research, we recognise, as four settler Australian women situated within a university, the power imbalances inherent in this work. For this reason, we sought

consultation with the University of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit and received ethical advice on the respectful academic representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, without homogenising those perspectives or selecting only convenient voices which share our approach to feminism and peace. The distinctiveness of each First Nation is acknowledged wherever possible throughout the text.

EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S TRIUMPHS AND OBSTACLES IN PARTICIPATING IN PEACE PROCESSES

Our thematic analysis identified four key themes across our three case studies:

Theme One – Customary Approaches to Peace

Each case study reveals that varying cultural contexts influence conceptualisations of peace, approaches to conflict resolution and usage of non-violent spaces. The implementation of culturally appropriate policy also differs considerably across the cases.

Imaginings of peace and traditional use of conflict resolution

Conceptualisations of peace in Australia among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been described as closer to balance than order (Rose 2011). Community decision-making is structured to retain the balance of peace and respect individual truths (Graham, Brigg and O'Walker 2011: 77). In Bougainville, peace is recognised as a continual process, and is practiced through initiatives of women's societies (Braithwaite 2012: 473; Kirkham 2018: 9). Liberian women's perception of peace is aligned with a narrative of economic empowerment, accessibility to healthcare, nutritious goods, education, and freedom to speak out against domestic violence (Moosa, Rahmani et al. 2013). Post-conflict attitudes in Liberia reveal a majority view that the absence of violence equals peace. Others consider peace to also include social cohesion, reconciliation, general freedom and development (Vinck, Pham and Kreutzer 2011).

In Liberia perceptions of peace have been pursued successfully by women through discussion of conflict resolution strategies, planning and training in women's groups such as the 'Sande' secret society (Theobald 2012). Contrastingly, in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' varied use of customary law towards conflict resolution and peace-making

has been undervalued by the Australian government; often misperceived as 'violent' (Rose 2011). Rather than ostracise wrongdoers, one's place in society is secured and they are seen as owing debt to aggrieved kin (Rose 2011: 110). Moreover, in Bougainville, women's traditional domestic influence regarding conflict resolution activities, combined with efforts for neutrality, led to a maintenance of dialogue between the warring factions during the conflict (Gasaru 2013: 27; Soavana-Spriggs 2010). A women's initiative of customary conflict resolution included the use of ceremony to begin processes of weapons disposal and power sharing (Braithwaithe and Nickson 2012: 451).

Religious and spiritual influences in post-conflict resolution

In Bougainville the combination of traditional and Christian beliefs increases value over land. Traditional beliefs regarding sacred spaces and holy land (Me'ekamui), the birth rights of indigenous people to their land and an ideology that opposes outsiders (Demang) informed the desire for a secessionist movement among people in the community and were crucial in the development of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) principles (Hermkens 2007: 271-289). Women's use of religious associations became integral in peace processes, in the emergency conflict situations and post-conflict (Garasu 2013: 28). In both Bougainville and Liberia, women established several groups for people from different faiths and ethnicities to unify their pursuit of peace, healing and protection (Quay 2017: 21; Sirivi and Havani 2003; Theobald 2012). In Australia, a non-gendered, Indigenous collective identity has been utilised in order to form a more powerful political movement (McGregor 2009: 352-353; Yamanouchi 2010: 217). Gendered exclusion in a collective identity is seen as disadvantageous, as the racial injustices are seen as more significant than gendered debates (Behrendt 1993: 32-34; Huggins 1992).

Women's groups in Bougainville and Liberia created safe spaces where, in Bougainville, women's groups mobilised the community through "prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, peace marches and petitions" which culminated in 1991 in the declaration of a 'Peace Area' by the Selau people (Garasu 2013: 28). Conversely, Liberian women planned non-violent tactics to end the civil war including a decision to provide men with an ultimatum: pursue peace or lose intimacy with their wives (Kuwonu 2018). Women created 'peace huts' for relating to each other about experiences of rape, loss and conflict-based violence, empowerment, and peace advocacy (Pillay, Speare and Scully 2010). In Australia, the use of sacred spaces for women's and men's business allows for the protection of traditional

knowledge and acts as a form of resistance to colonial domination. Women's ability to utilise such spaces has also been restricted historically (Behrendt 1993: 34; Bell 2017; Weiner 1999: 197).

Political sphere in each context

The political sphere also reveals varied gendered and cultural considerations. For instance, Australia's 2012 NAP on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 included the resolution itself, which recommends that states delegate more funding to "measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements" (Australian Government 2012: 54). Despite this, efforts by Indigenous people for reconciliation, such as 'Makarrata' processes, have been largely ignored. 'Makarrata' is a Yolngu word with many meanings, often used to describe "conflict resolution, peacemaking and justice" (Pearson 2017).

Makarrata 'processes' include the formation of a treaty and would be synonymous with GM, and centre Indigenous perspectives (Australian Government 2012: 54). An Indigenous referendum council was formed and Megan Davis (a Cobble Cobble woman, professor of law and member of the expert panel on Constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians), delivered the 'Uluru statement from the heart' as part of the broader agenda of Makarrata, calling for more "destiny over our children" (NITV Staff Writers 2017). However, this recommendation of a Voice to Parliament was rejected by Prime Minister Turnbull. In Bougainville, women's organisations are inhibited by scarce resourcing from the Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) (Eves and Korendong 2015: 21). However, women continue to transform ongoing peace processes which move to empower women to be literate, have more impact in political roles and shape formal texts (Rimoldi 2011: 191; Ruth 2010: 203). Similarly, in Liberia, grassroots movements, such as the women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) mobilise and educate women about achieving peace (Theobold 2012; WONGOSOL n.d). More women are now involved politically due to organisations such as WIPNET which enable women to vote, leading to the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2006 (Bekoe and Parajon 2007).

Theme Two – Shifting Gender Ideologies

In all three cases, when women participate in peace processes, local gender ideologies shift and change, as representation rapidly equalises and social attitudes struggle to catch up.

Creating equitable gender roles

The destabilising impact of conflict and women's peace work on societal gender roles emerged from each case study. Findings align with Arostegui's (2013) claim that opportunities for women arise post-conflict to adopt new responsibilities, thereby challenging and altering gender ideologies. Broadly, matrilineal traditions can be sources of authority for women to lead peace processes in Bougainville and Australia (Sirivi and Havini 2003: 91; Yalmambirra 2018: 121-122). Aboriginal women like Dr Mary Graham, a Kombumerri and Wakka Wakka activist and academic, frame women's leadership as "taking stock of what is being maintained… our rightful path and fulfilling our obligation to run the country alongside our men" (The Koori Mail 2017: 18). Yet women in traditionally patriarchal Liberia can also draw on the discourse of the 'powerful African mother', as evident in the successful campaign of Africa's first female president (Bekoe and Parajon 2007; Moran and Pitcher 2004: 501-519). This is one factor that has assisted transitions into new socioeconomic roles for women and provides an opportunity for influence and agency through women's societies (Popovic 2009; Theobald 2013). Bougainvillean women have indirectly shaped peace processes by influencing powerful men (Garasu 2013: 27; Soavana Spriggs 2010), and more directly through taking formal leadership positions which can be thought to demean the women's esteem which was derived from access to custom, lineage and status in relations between clans (Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018; Rimoldi 2011). Cultural knowledge lost through colonial violence and the misrepresentation of early Western anthropological work on gender in Aboriginal communities also produces contestations about the traditional authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, although the diversity of Indigenous cultures in Australia can account for some of these contradictions (Conor 2016: 255). Then-chairman of the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) Geoff Clark claimed that his 2002 re-election indicated a return of the 'traditional role' to men (Davis 2009a: 77). Some Aboriginal women's activists have always represented their leadership and knowledge as new rather than customary; the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal men and resultant violence and alcoholism has required them to "get up off their backsides and do something" (Watson 2007: 95).

Backlash from participation

However, if the effect of conflict on men causes women to seize new responsibilities, Clark's statement is not at odds with our other case studies as an example of backlash from men against the roles of women changing. Some women and many men in Bougainville are

concerned that GM frameworks may disempower men (Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018). Women have to leave their communities for peacebuilding training and families struggle with the changes they observe, which can result in violence or urges for women to get gainful employment or remain in the home (Eve and Korendong 2015: 23; Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018). Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) are threatened, harassed and attacked by men and women (Smee and Leddra 2018: 12), necessitating The Urgent Action Fund (UAF) to support WHRDs and increase community cohesion through the Nazareth Centre (Smee and Leddra 2018: 9). Gender anxieties also surface in Liberia, where some men express fears of gendercide as women gain power through relationships with UN peacekeepers (Jennings 2012), and commonly retaliate with sexual violence (Pankhurst 2016: 180-193). It is frequently argued that protecting women from this backlash requires including men in social change and the gender equality agenda, and Bougainvillean women have demonstrated an active effort to do so in their peace work (Jennings 2012: 131; Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018). The inclusion of men has long driven a wedge between settler-Australian feminists and Aboriginal women's activism. Leading Aboriginal rights activist Jackie Huggins responded clearly to feminist attacks on oversensitivity to race as creating a feminist silence on 'intra-racial rape':

> Our fight is against the state, the system, social injustices, and primarily racism, far in excess of patriarchy. We continually find we are being jockeyed into the position of fighting and separating from our men and we will not. Huggins et al. 1991: 507 cited in Stringer 2012: 27.

Not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women reject feminism, with many finding it useful (Davis 2009a: 124), but feminists seeking to welcome multiple 'feminism(s)' into the WPS Agenda must accept participants whose political priority is driven by identities other than 'woman'. The anxieties of men identified in our case study areas indicate that academics and other members of the international community must be conscious of their potential to influence constantly shifting gender roles which result in misrepresentation.

Theme Three – Participation in Formal Peace Processes

Women's participation in formal peace processes takes many forms at local, national, and international levels, but there are varying levels of access to decision-making and leadership.

Formal participation

Evidence shows that increased roles for women in political and public arenas are a result of changing gender ideologies and shifting power dynamics in post-conflict situations. Quotas have been implemented in peace processes to increase women's participation across all three case studies. However, they generally work as a 'ceiling' rather than a minimum and women find it difficult to 'participate' so much as 'fill a space' (Eves and Korendong 2015: 15; Kirkham 2018: 7-11). The most influence that Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islander people have been granted has been on the elected national board and local regional councils for ATSIC (Robbins 2010). Yet they remained underrepresented and the women who gained leadership positions struggled to exercise influence. In Bougainville, the ABG guarantees three reserved seats for women and on women ministerial post in the government, although this post is often changed or moved before the woman who holds it has a chance to make a meaningful impact. Nevertheless, these women are still able to impact decision-making through persuasion and attempts to influence the men involved (Garasu 2013: 28).

Similarly, members of Liberian women's groups were granted a place as observers in peace talks in Accra, meaning they were present but unable to speak or vote in negotiations (Theobald 2012). We found that when women are excluded and unable to participate, they force their way into peace processes. After Liberian women's groups actively brought rebel group leaders to the negotiating table only to be excluded from decision-making themselves, they "approached decision-makers on airport tarmacs to get a meeting or barricaded the meeting room to force delegates to reach a settlement" (Diaz and Tordjman 2010: 11). They also wrote themselves into peace processes by demanding that "women leaders who are currently observers at the Accra Peace Talks be made delegates and be given voting rights including a place on the Vetting Committee" (The Golden Tulip Declaration 2003). This was reflected in the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (ACPA), stating that the National Transitional Government would reflect a gender balance in elected appointments (UN Security Council 2003). Further, the Liberian Government included women's voices on the WPS Agenda with a direct line of influence to politics through peer reviews with former President Johnson Sirleaf regarding the implementation of the WPS Agenda. The women of Bougainville have also used their opportunities to force change. The 'Women's Speak Out' brought together activists to negotiate formal documents advocating for an end to conflict, which involved meeting Australian senators in Canberra that became a "stepping stone for future peace talks" (Garasu 2013: 28). The women facilitated meetings with BRA and wrote

their way into formal peace processes, insisting that "women leaders must be party to all stages of the political process in determining the future of Bougainville" (Garasu 2013: 31).

In Australia, Indigenous women are obstructed by the expertise of non-indigenous men when providing sacred and secret women's knowledge as evidence supporting their land claims. However, in the Northern Territory's Kidman Springs-Jasper Gorge case of 1989, women performed a humorous adaptation of sacred ritual to re-enact the hearing from their perspective as a way of drawing attention to the gender imbalance (Rose 2011: 112). A further example of writing women into peace processes came from Indigenous Australian activist Jackie Huggins using her platform as a member of the ATSIC review panel to advocate for mandated equal representation for women at all levels of ATSIC leadership. As she argued, both genders "have always shared responsibility in Aboriginal society, and if women are not supported in leadership roles today and in the future, our communities have no chance of becoming viable" (Davis 2009: 80).

While the implementation of quotas is a positive step in increasing women's participation in peace processes, there is little scope for women to act upon their roles due to the structures embedded within the political system. The narrative of the "male protector" (Young 2003: 10), is visible within these case studies, yet women do not accept their exclusion from peace processes in their own countries. Our findings show that Indigenous Australian, Bougainvillean and Liberian women will take any opportunity to push their peaceful agenda and make their voices heard.

Theme Four – Mobilising International Frameworks

Women with access to NGO status in all three case study regions made appeals to the international community and achieved varying levels of success and assistance to continue sustained peace initiatives.

Appealing to the international community

In all three case studies, women successfully appealed to the international community to institute policy mechanisms which resulted in durable local peace processes. In Bougainville, women are recognised both domestically and internationally as crucial in initiating a cease-fire and sustainable peace by advocating at local, national and international levels (United Nations 2009). Women initially alerted the international community to the suffering in Bougainville and successfully advocated for the 1979 Convention on all Forms of Violence

against Women (CEDAW) and the 2000 UNSCR 1325 to progress local peace. They have since localised international frameworks through the Bougainville Women Peace and Security Action Plan and the Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality, Peace and Security policy (George 2018). Similarly, the persistent campaign led by women's groups brought Liberia to the post-conflict stage by pushing for a peace agreement through several embargos, UN resolutions and the implementation of a peace mission. Women's political power and women's organisations in Liberia are directly linked to the international level through their work alongside UN liaison officers, the Liberian government, the international community, and Liberian civil society organisations.

The strong connections between Liberia and the international community could be due to strong formalised peace agreements, whereas where Indigenous Australian women have had success this has been in despite of an unaccommodating government. Fighting for Indigenous rights rather than women's rights, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including many women, appealed to the UN to mobilise the clauses in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), with the support of the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) (United Nations 2012). UNDRIP, which Megan Davis assisted in drafting, was strongly opposed by Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada, and framed by *Reconciliation Australia* as not offering any more than currently facilitated in Australian law (Tickner 2015). Despite this, the AHRC went on to force the establishment of The National Congress of Australia's First People in 2010, now the largest and most highly representative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation in the country, with a stated commitment to gender equality (The National Congress of Australia's First People 2018b: 2).

Evolving institutions for peacebuilding

Australia's case is consistent with findings that in conflict-affected societies, women are active agents of peace at the local level but are generally not recognised by national governments, community members or other women as being so (Moosa, Rahmani and Webster 2013: 24). The Congress' arrival was met with cynicism due to the perceived illegitimacy and/or failure of past representative bodies (Anthony 2010: 8). Persisting to fight for peace at the grassroots level, in 2016 the Congress delivered the *Redfern Statement*, which called for Australia to reinstate disassembled advisory bodies, programs and funding (National Congress of Australia's First Peoples 2018a: 14). They continue to advocate for culturally safe services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over top-down

approaches (Davis 2009b 9-13; Stinger 2012: 23), and issues of family violence and the disproportionate incarceration rates of women and men.

In Bougainville, women contend with local conceptions of international organisations such as the UN as operating in conflict with local structures and resulting in incongruent policy which can result in backlash (Kirkham, Close and Yosuf 2018). To localise the terminology and aims of international frameworks, women's organisations in Bougainville, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga formed *The Pacific Peace-Women Project* in 2000, which has enabled Bougainvillean women to translate the aims of the WPS Agenda through their matrilineal custom and legitimise their peace work locally (George 2014: 318). In Liberia, cynicism results from the concerns that the current post-conflict state is maintained through the presence of UN peacekeepers within the nation, and may break out once they leave (Vinck, Pham and Kreutzer 2011: 81). Revealing their capability, Liberian women work within the international community to mobilise women in neighbouring countries to pursue peace and have become objective intermediaries in similar conflicts in West Africa (Gbowee 2011).

Our findings reveal how women continue to advocate for peace processes through international frameworks where, dependent on their level of government support, women are able to strengthen connections and evolve peace mechanisms. All cases were consistent with findings from Moosa, Rahmani and Webster (2013: 460), who found that where women were able to "freely associate and work collectively" to maintain peacebuilding institutions, these were usually developed at the local level and while not typically understood as 'peacebuilding', contributes to 'positive' peace in communities.

FOCUSING ON THE QUESTIONS

Drawing from our findings, we can return to our research questions.

What is a peaceful society?

This question centres on the importance of local women's visions of peace and understandings of conflict. In Bougainville, peace is seen as a continuum, suggesting that definitions of peace as a process allow for more complex understandings of the state of conflict. While Liberia is seen externally as in a state of 'post-conflict', private violence suffered by women means their experiences are still characterised as ongoing conflict. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

'worldviews' are pluralistic in their accommodation of difference, so peace is not the absence of violence, but a balance of perspectives. The conflict in Australia has the most uneven power relations between parties of all our case studies. Yet in traditional Western frameworks of peace and conflict, Australia is not a conflict-affected society. Dichotomies underpinning Western peace and conflict practices (public/private, international/domestic) are not useful in the lived realities of women, which is unsurprising given the historic power relations underpinning them.

What factors facilitate and obstruct the ability of women to participate in peace processes?

Not only are the multiple forms of women's participation in peace work often invisible in implementations of the WPS Agenda, but the complexity of relationships between factors such as formal mandates and informal restrictions also affects their access. Discourses that draw on traditional gender roles are seen in our case studies as both empowering and silencing women at different times, while the use of international frameworks of peace and human rights both assist and deter women's participation. The gender trope of 'mother' was actively evoked by the women's peace movement in Liberia with great success in accessing formal political representation and now advocating for peace in neighbouring countries. In Australia, localised cynicism towards an historically unresponsive international community is shifting as women's advocacy makes gains in the implementation of UNDRIP. Bougainvillean communities resist international frameworks on the basis of protecting traditional gender roles, a legitimate concern for women who often derive their authority to participate in formal and informal peace work and awareness-raising from custom. The WPS Agenda can only be optimised by local women pursuing the peace work deemed important and effective by women themselves. Much of this less visible work contributes to the gradual social change required for women to influence outcomes since attendance alone, even at the most formal levels, is limited by enduring resistance to women's input due to institutional masculine norms.

Where and how does women's participation improve the durability of peace?

Where women's participation has most clearly strengthened peace outcomes, mechanisms for women to directly consult policymakers about the implementation of the WPS Agenda have been normalised, such as the Former Liberian President's 'peer reviews'. This suggests that

peace endures when women maintain access to formal political participation in post-conflict settings. The durability of peace outcomes also appears to be linked to the peace work of creating safe spaces for women and the power of solidarity and collective mobilisation. It might be suggested that peace outcomes will have the best chance at survival when safe spaces endure in post-conflict settings. Alternatively, the significance of faith-based women's movements in Bougainville and Liberia may lie in supporting the argument that even as women experience conflict differently from men, their identities as women are not always most salient in their mobilisation for, or their visions of, peace. Peace priorities from Muslim and Christian women in this study are disarmament and non-violence, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women prioritise self-management and achieving 'Makarrata' with settler-Australia.

CONCLUSION

Despite the stacked odds of political exclusion, the women in our case studies demand participation in peace, forcing their way into processes through any means possible. While beyond the scope of our research to record each meaningful contribution made to peace by women, our three regional case studies are a testament to what women can achieve even in the face of multi-layered exclusion. When these cases are examined in-depth and the voices of local women are foregrounded, the complexities of the peace they envision, their triumphs and obstacles in working towards it, and its maintenance are illuminated so that the positive impact of women's participation on peace outcomes cannot be oversimplified. Broadly, key recommendations for maximising the difference made by women's participation in peace work include: the establishment of mechanisms for direct input and feedback from local women with policymakers, as well as the provision of inclusive peace training to reduce backlash from men, or for women's peace training to take place in local areas so social change is visible and gradual. In more specific reference to Australia's implementation of UNSCR 1325, WILPF Australia might consider the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on shifting priorities from protecting women to increasing their participation. WILPF Australia is in a unique position in the early years of the National Congress to forge new partnerships between feminist peace organisations and struggles against colonial racism. Access to legal justice, a key issue of the Congress' agenda, is gendered in ways that disadvantage Aboriginal Australian men *and* women. The next step for the WPS Agenda is mastering an intersectional

approach in recognition of each conflict's racial and cultural dimensions, so that all women fighting for peace feel welcome.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Case Study Data

	Primary	Academic	Grey
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Appendix B: Feedback Summary Sheet

Women and Peace

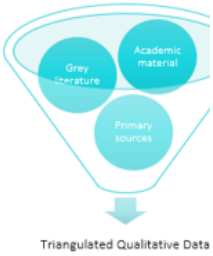
OBSTACLES TO AND TRIUMPHS OF PARTICIPATION IN DIVERSE CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Project Summary

Our research project explores the ways in which women participate in peace processes in conflict-affected societies, using the case studies of Liberia, Australia and Bougainville. We intend to determine if this participation makes a difference to the durability of peace. Our aim is to create a small but detailed evidence base to respond to WILPF's hypothesis that a positive difference is made when women are involved in peacebuilding and peace processes.

Methodology

To select our case study sites, we employed Christine Bell's (2018) typology of power-sharing arrangements which translate to three broad conflict types. This typology allowed us to access conflict affected sites which differed as much as possible and added validity to our findings. To properly engage with the institutional processes which impact women, we went on to conduct a comparative thematic analysis and draw out the common patterns as well as the disparities between our case study sites. This allowed us to create an empirical database of women's experiences across diverse context, through coding primary, secondary and grey literature. From which we recognised four major themes and drew out the institutional deficits and sites of agency which women navigate to participate in peace processes.



Triangulated Qualitative Data

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WILPF is a non-profit, international organisation that has been engaging with notions of anti-war and peacebuilding in the international legal arena and creating change through nonviolent action since 1915. The organisation operates across 32 national sections and has a strong focus on linking the international to the local.

WILPF Australia plays an important role in monitoring Australia's implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which asserts that conflict prevention and peacebuilding are more sustainable when they have equal involvement. Australia's 2012 National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 focused heavily on protecting women in conflict, and WILPF would like the upcoming 2018 NAP to focus on increasing women's participation.

Research Questions

- What is a peaceful society?
- What factors facilitate and obstruct women's participation in processes of peace?
- Where and how does the participation of women improve the durability of peace?

Case Studies

In 1770, **Australia**'s East Coast was claimed by Britain as land belonging to no one ('terra nullius'). Over two centuries, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations who survived frontier violence and disease had their lives controlled under policies of assimilation. Communities now face incarceration, mental illness, low life expectancy and poverty at disproportionate rates. Current policies tend to overlook the structural sources of disadvantage and instead claim issues are of personal responsibility, thus justifying the reduction of community funding and self-management entitlements. Such processes are gendered in ways that silence Aboriginal women in discussions of their own communities. The identity politics central to Indigenous-settler relations in Australia mask structural inequality and unequal resource allocation, characteristic of Bell's **ethnonational accommodation** or conflict i.e. one group gaining or attempting to gain state power over another (2018: 17). While Bell prescribes new institutions which facilitate ongoing mediation, Aboriginal peoples' repeated calls for a treaty continue to be dismissed.

Conflict in The Autonomous Region of **Bougainville** within Papua New Guinea (PNG) relates to deep-seated tensions dating back to mining operations in the 1960s and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)'s fight for independence from PNG from 1988. The Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) was ordered to stop these protests and the conflict escalated into a civil war which claimed an estimated 20,000 lives and displaced a large portion of Bougainville's population. The 1998 ceasefire negotiations led to a transitional government in Bougainville, characteristic of the **Indigenous autonomy** power-sharing typology (Bell 2018: 21). Localised self-government structures are thought to end or alleviate the impacts of conflict through socio-economic redistribution.

Liberia, a country in West Africa, faced violent civil war from 1989 until 2003, killing over 200,000 Liberians and displacing 1.5 million. The war erupted after years of unresolved ethnic divisions, economic disparities and political instability under the corrupt presidency of Samuel Doe. Characterised by its identity politics and intrastate and transnational dimensions (Bell 2018: 23), this case study falls under Bell's (2018) **Interim Transitional** Power-Sharing type. Various women's groups were integral in forcing a peace agreement between the president and ethnic group leaders to form a transitional power-sharing governance structure, paving the way for a democratic future. It is suggested that peace is manifested through temporary governance to immediately end conflict.

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Findings

PREVALENT THEMES

Participation in formal peace agreements

Women's participation in formal peace processes takes many forms at local, national, and international levels, but with varying levels of access to decision-making and leadership.

- In Australia, the political role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is generally valued at the local level, and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples has close to equal gender representation. However, a formal peace agreement has not been achieved between the sovereign state and the Indigenous population, and reconciliation processes such as native title negotiations often structurally exclude women from claims on the grounds of their secret knowledge of the land, because the judge, lawyers, and anthropologists are so often white men.
- In Bougainville, women are underrepresented in national politics, despite having three quotas mandated for them by the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Women are politically involved in peacebuilding organisations, where many hold leadership positions. Decision-making is exercised locally by influencing the perspectives of men who have more leverage at the national level.
- In Liberia, women participated in vigils, corridor negotiations and demonstrations to ensure that their call for a peace agreement establishing a post-war transitional government was heard by local and international leaders. Africa's first female president conducts 'peer reviews' with women's peace groups, concerning the

Changes to traditional gender norms and ideologies

Women's participation in peace processes has been shown to change local gender ideologies, at times equalising representation or destabilising gender power dynamics.

- In Australia, rather than adopt the dominating narratives, Indigenous Australian women continue to fight against colonialism and racism before patriarchy and reframe peace processes as gender inclusive which opposes mainstream interpretations of feminism.
- In Bougainville, a matrilineal society means that women are seen as 'mothers of the land' and hold responsibilities over divisions of property. Through contentious relations women continually assert their voices in peace processes and access their matrilineal privilege to further their aim, although these shifts in gender ideologies sometimes produced violent backlash from men in families, as women have also been relegated to the domestic realm.
- In Liberia, as a patriarchal society, war was typically seen as men's work while women were victims. Contrastingly, women are now regarded as agents of change, increasing women's progress in economic and social structures. However, some men have struggled with shifting power dynamics and gender roles, resulting in domestic violence against women.

Appeals to the international community

Women's participation in peace processes can take the form of seeking assistance from multilateral agencies like the United Nations, to varying levels of success.

- Appeals from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) to the he international community have been unsuccessful in the past. However, as women like Cobble Cobble human rights lawyer Megan Davis gain positions of influence at the UN, Australia has been forced to establish the National Congress to fulfil the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. This research occurs at a moment of huge potential for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda to become useful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- In Bougainville, women have utilised the gender mainstreaming frameworks underpinning UNSCR 1325 and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women to negotiate ceasefires and mobilise aid from the international community. However, the use of international frameworks is contended by some Bougainvillean women who see them as deconstructing women's traditional power.
- In Liberia, the UN's use of resolutions and embargos, as well as the deployment of a peacekeeping mission, played an important role in ending the initial conflict and bringing about peace agreements. Liberian women continue to work alongside UN liaison officers, allowing them to exercise more control publicly and privately.

Use of customary conflict resolution and perceptions of peace

Customary approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding pursues different ideas of peace through the creation of non-violent, peace-making spaces.

- Peace is often seen as closer to balance than order in Aboriginal communities. In 2017, the Uluru Statement of the Heart called for a 'Voice to Parliament' as part of a broader process of 'Makarrata'. This word means peacemaking as well as referring to the spearing of an enemy to hinder. A significant obstacle to conflict resolution in Australia is the lack of accommodation for understanding the complexity of Indigenous forms of peacemaking.
- Bougainville moved towards peace when women's groups established a 'peace area' and mobilised community through ongoing vigils and demonstrations. Christianity and traditional approaches to peace also allowed women to create places of sharing and connection with other women, providing a platform for negotiations.
- Crucial to the end of Liberia's violence was the creation 'peace huts' and 'secret societies' by Christian and Muslim women. Here, women could share their experiences of the war with one another and plan peace building strategies by way of public demonstrations or private tactics in the home to force their husbands to drop arms and pursue peace.

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