COMPLEXITIES AND CONTEXT:

WOMEN'S PEACE-BUILDING IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT BOUGAINVILLE

BY

DYLAN PAGE

A thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Victoria University of Wellington

2012

Abstract:

The potential role of women in conflict and post-conflict environments has been the subject of much debate in the field of peace and conflict studies. In 2000 the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325, which called for a greater involvement of women and acknowledgement of gender issues in conflict and post-conflict environments, and this has led to further discussion about what this might mean and how it might be implemented. Despite this women are continually under-represented in nearly all peace processes and there is no universally agreed upon way to ensure this situation does not come about. The barriers women face range from cultural to logistical and economic, and surmounting them can be hard to achieve.

One case where women have been involved at all levels in the peace process with substantial success is the Pacific island of Bougainville, where a conflict over mining issues and secession from Papua New Guinea was waged from 1988-1997. Women were active in attempts to bring all parties to negotiations during the conflict and have also been heavily involved in the continuing reconciliation and healing processes. For cultural reasons Bougainvillean women were well placed to perform the role of peace-builders but that is not to say that they did not face challenges and barriers to their involvement.

This thesis examines the involvement of women in both the immediate peace negotiations and the longer-term aspects of the peace process in Bougainville in order explain how and why they enjoyed these successes and what lessons can be learnt from this case in regards to the potential roles of women in other post-conflict environments. Four factors will be identified as key to women's involvement in the peace process: the history of Bougainville up to and including the conflict; the grassroots mobilisation and organisation of women; the traditional cultural roles of women in Bougainville; and the identification of women with motherhood and its associated traits.

These factors indicate that the involvement of women in peace processes is highly context-specific and although there are policies which can be pursued to encourage their participation the potential barriers to this are imposing.

CONTENTS

List of abbreviations used in this thesis

ABG – Autonomous Bougainville Government

ARB – Autonomous Region of Bougainville

ACC – Area Council of Chiefs

AusAID – Australian Agency for International Development

BIG – Bougainville Interim Government

BOCBIHP - Bougainville Community Based Integrated Humanitarian Program

BPA - Bougainville Peace Agreement

BRA – Bougainville Revolutionary Army

BRF – Bougainville Resistance Force

BRG – Bougainville Reconciliation Government

BTG – Bougainville Transitional Government

BWPF – Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom

COE – Council of Elders

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

IGO – Inter-Governmental Organisation

IWDA – International Women's Development Agency

LNWDA – Leitana Nehan Women's Development Association

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NSP – North Solomons Province

PMG – Peace Monitoring Group

PNG – Papua New Guinea

PNGDF – Papua New Guinea Defence Force

TMG – Truce Monitoring Group

UNDP – United Nations Development Agency

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

VCC – Village Council of Chiefs

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Background

Bougainville is an island of approximately similar size to Cyprus, with a population of around 150,000 and is located in the south-west Pacific. Bougainville Island is the island of Buka and, along with a number of smaller isolated islands and atolls, they make up the administrative division of Papua New Guinea currently known as the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARB). Before the conflict the ARB was known as the North Solomons Province (NSP), in acknowledgement of the fact that despite being a part of Papua New Guinea politically , Bougainville is part of the Solomon Islands geographically. For this thesis I will use the term "Bougainville" to refer to both Bougainville Island and the ARB/NSP, in keeping with popular usage.

Throughout the 1990s Bougainville suffered a secessionist conflict, officially and euphemistically called the Bougainville Crisis by the PNG government. This was sparked by disputes surrounding the massive Panguna copper mine in central Bougainville. The mine was economically vital to PNG but the nature of the consultation and mining process stirred secessionist sentiment among the Bougainville population. The PNG government's heavy handed response to civil unrest in the late 1980s quickly lead to full-blown conflict, and this in turn became more fractured and complex as pro-government and pro-independence factions tried to assert control. Several official attempts at peace failed until in 1997 an official truce was signed and honoured.

The peace process in Bougainville was notable for two reasons. Firstly, it was developed from a grassroots level up, and made use of indigenous roles and reconciliation methods. Secondly, women were prominently involved in both the process of bringing combatants to the negotiating table and in the post-conflict reconciliation and rebuilding phase. Bougainville, like PNG in general, is remarkably culturally diverse with as many as 26 languages being spoken. However the vast majority of these cultural groups share many similarities, including a system of matriliny which sees land and clan names pass down the female line. Women also play a traditional role as peacemakers and are generally respected by the men of Bougainville, which placed them in a position to be involved and accepted into the peace process in a way that is not seen in most conflict environments. This is not to say that the women of Bougainville did not have to struggle to be heard in the peace process or did not face challenges and problems along the way, but simply that they started from a position of greater relative empowerment.

A peace process or post-conflict reconciliation and development programme which excludes half the population cannot by any logic be considered fair or just.[1] Unfortunately in many conflict and post-conflict zones this is the case, as women are excluded for a variety of reasons. Understanding the nature of the involvement of women in the peace process of Bougainville provides an opportunity to apply theories of women and peacebuilding and test their relevance to this case. Given the relative lack of involvement of women in other peace processes around the globe, the Bougainville case can also provide some suggestion as to the merits of these theories themselves. This thesis will explain the complex process whereby women came to be involved in building peace in Bougainville. It will be argued that the unique cultural and historical context of the Bougainville case makes it difficult to draw universally applicable lessons from it. However, this in itself indicates that the reasons behind the under-representation of women in many peace processes are complex and contextual, and for this reason attempts to develop universal theories or approaches to address it may be misguided. Instead it might be that specific programmes have to be developed for each case to address the specific complexities and nuances of it. Such a programme can not be purely externally developed and driven but must also rely on the actions of grassroots peace activists to maintain not just an awareness of the issues and problems but also a sense of ownership and control. The nature of the involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville shows the potential of just such an approach.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the existing literature about women in peace processes in general and in Bougainville in particular. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which is the most significant official document in relation to the engagement of women in peace processes, is given particular consideration. There will also be a discussion of prevailing theoretical notions surrounding the issue of women in peace processes. Following this section there will be an explanation of the methodological approach I have used in my research for this thesis, both in general and specifically in the way in which I conducted interviews with men and women involved with the peace process in Bougainville. I will then provide working definitions for key concepts and terms which will be used in this thesis. Finally I will outline the overall structure of the body of the thesis. This introductory chapter therefore serves to provide a framework and background understanding which the thesis can be built on.

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1   Swanee Hunt "Moving beyond silence: women waging peace" in Helen Durham and Tracy Gurd (eds) *Listening to the Silences: Women and War.* (The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill BV 2008) 252.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, existing literature and theories

While there is a vast body of academic literature about the gender dynamics of war and peace, and a large proportion of that is concerned with the potential benefits of women as peacemakers in conflict zones, there has been little practical application of these theories to real-world situations for a variety of reasons. The lack of women involved in formal peace processes has been acknowledged not just by scholars but also by governments, NGOs and IGOs. The most significant official statement on this issue was United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000, which called for a greater acknowledgement and involvement of women in peace processes and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment.[2] However despite a decade passing since this resolution was passed there has been a negligible increase in the involvement of women in peace processes. A further discussion of UNSCR 1325 will follow later in this section, but for now it is important simply to note that the lack of women's involvement in peace processes raises serious problems with the understanding of the potential ways in which this could take place and the benefits it might bring. Bouta, Frerks and Bannon, writing for the World Bank, outline the problem of women being excluded from formal peace processes and what some of the benefits they might be:

> Most political institutions in conflict and nonconflict societies tend to perpetuate an exclusionary attitude and culture toward women. As a result, compared to men relatively few women become involved in formal peace processes during and after conflict beyond this quantitative *difference,* there is a qualitative difference; women are likely to make a different contribution to the peace process. When compared to men, women are more likely to put gender issues on the agenda, introduce other conflict experiences, and set different priorities for peace-building and rehabilitation, and they may bridge political divides better. Women's increased participation may also generate wider public support for the peace accords. However, one should avoid the view that all female politicians are gender sensitive, while all male politicians are not.[3]
> (Emphasis in the original.)

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2   UNSCR 1325, October 31, 2000 http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf Accessed December 9 2011.

3   Tsjeard Bouta, Georg Frerks and Ian Bannon *Gender, Conflict, and Development* (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2005) 49.

As well as the potential benefits of engaging women with formal peace processes, they also discuss the place of women in informal peace processes and the potential benefits of facilitating this. They state that in conflict and post-conflict environments around the globe individual women and women's NGOs who have been advocates for peace have often: "assumed the roles and tasks of public institutions, undertaken all forms of relief work, channelled international assistance to recipients, lobbied to incorporate rights and specific provisions in peace accords, and encouraged women to participate in elections."[4]

Beyond these pragmatic reasons for integrating women into formal and informal peace processes there is also the fact that as approximately half of any population regardless of race, class or ethnicity, women represent the single largest marginalised group in society.[5] Engaging women with peace processes and post-conflict reconciliation and development is not only necessary for pragmatic reasons but also for moral ones. Marginalised groups deserve a voice so that their interests and concerns are heard and addressed, and women are marginalised in the vast majority of conflict and post-conflict environments.

The roots of the problem of the lack of engagement of women in formal peace processes are many, and include both broad global issues as well as ones which are specific to certain situations and contexts. In some cases it is as simple as misogyny, as in the case of Northern Ireland where women were mooed at and called "cows" by male paramilitary leaders.[6] In other cases women's groups consider themselves apolitical and thus actively avoid involvement in peace processes. Perhaps the most significant reason is structural, as those negotiating are often military and community leaders and government officials and in most parts of the world women are severely under-represented in these areas, and are thus absent from formal peace processes.[7] It has been argued that women have a fundamentally different vision of peace and leadership, based on "feminine" values such as care and sustainability, and this is not compatible with the masculine or hypermasculine world of politics.[8] Given these systemic barriers towards women's involvement in formal peace processes it is not surprising that they are so conspicuously absent in the majority of cases.

Even in post-conflict environments where programmes have been promoted as empowering

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4   Ibid. 65.
5   Sanam Naraghi Anderlini *Women building peace: What they do, why it matters.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2007) 126.
6   Ibid. 83.
7   Ibid. 58.
8   Betty A. Reardon *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security.* (Albany: New York, 1993)166.

women they can instead be seen as simply an extension of neoliberal ideals, which themselves have an implicit gender bias. These programmes have a set of core values which are often individualistic and focussed on economic outcomes.[9] Furthermore, NGOs often adopt gender normative views of situations when they develop programmes, and this can serve to reinforce existing gender inequalities. For instance employment training offered to female excombatants in Sierre Leone was based on assumptions about the sort of work that women were thought to be suited to, rather than that which would provide the best chance for employment and future economic independence.[10] Examples such as this show that even attempts to improve the plight of women in post conflict situations can further entrench gender norms, or act as barriers to the empowerment of women.

The passing of UNSCR 1325 in 2000 means that UN missions in conflict and post-conflict zones should not only be aware of gender related issues around their operations but also be actively trying to engage women in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment programmes. The body of UNSCR 1325 states that the Security Council:

> *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:
>
> (a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;
>
> (b) 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;
>
> (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

and,

> *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament,

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9   Megan MacKenzie "Empowerment boom or bust? Assessing women's post-conflict empowerment initiatives" *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 22 No. 2 (2009) 203.

10 Ibid. 212.

demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs

of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the

needs of their dependants.

While this seems like a worthy goal it is important to note that the resolution does not provide a framework on how its goals might be achieved, and it has come under criticism from several quarters.

The criticisms of and reactions to UNSCR 1325 are many, but they can be at least partly categorised. Torunn L. Tryggestad outlines three key points about the criticisms of resolution: firstly, that they are largely written by women who are actively involved in women's rights NGOs or the UN itself; secondly, that they are made up of anecdotal accounts; and thirdly, that they are focused on the distance between the rhetoric of the resolution itself and its implementation at ground level. However, she counters these arguments by stating that it inevitably takes a long time for changes to be made in the area of international politics and that many current international laws started out as norms themselves. This means that in her opinion the resolution is changing the roles of women within the UN and UN led missions, just slowly.[11]

Another scholar who has addressed these issues is Laura J. Shepherd, who has critiqued UNSCR 1325 and the official discourse surrounding it for being a product of liberal ideals and a top-down approach to gender issues in post-conflict environments which itself has already come under much criticism in feminist literature.[12] Furthermore, she argues that the very concept of development as articulated by the UNSC is the value-laden product of an emphasis on neo-liberal economic and political structures. This serves to reinforce an imagined divide between the "international community" of wealthy neo-liberal states and undeveloped "zones of conflict" while continuing to focus on the sovereign state as the primary political unit. She states that:

Fetishising the sovereign state as a form of political authority in this way

precludes the conceptualization of alternative forms of political authority

that might deliver the radical reforms of social ∕ political order that the

Resolution (sic) and associated documents purport to seek.[13]

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11 Torunn L. Tryggestad "Trick or Treat: The UN and implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security" *Global Governance* (2009) Vol. 15, no. 4. 539-557.

12 Laura J Shepherd "Power and Authority in the Production of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325" *International Studies Quarterly* (2008) Vol 52. 398.

13 Ibid. 399.

This analysis of the shortcomings of UNSCR 1325 is particularly relevant to the case of Bougainville where a sovereign state was not present for much of the conflict, and in the post-conflict environment has been relatively weak in its ability to maintain control over its territory and provide social services for its citizens. However, the focus on the sovereign state within the resolution is only to be expected from the UNSC, which is after all a group of sovereign states. It is also important to remember that UNSCR1325 itself does not offer methods to achieve its goals so there is still a large scope for a variety of approaches engaging women in conflict and post-conflict environments

One of the dominant themes in the literature surrounding women and peace processes is that in many cases women make substantial gains in terms of social, economic and political equality during violent conflicts but struggle to consolidate these gains after the cessation of hostilities.[14] The resumption of traditional gender power relations often begins at the formal peace negotiations where women are excluded. There are some exceptions, as in Somalia where women were initially a significant part of the official peace process managed by the Transitional National Council, although even given this early concession from male leaders women once again found themselves marginalised when later plans for each group to have at least one women present at negotiations were blocked by men who refused to have women be their representatives.[15]

This issue of women often being very vocal for peace during a conflict but then having no formal representation at official peace negotiations and in the post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment phase is addressed in an official UNIFEM independent experts' assessment on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace-building. The authors, Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is now President of Liberia and was a co-recipient of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize,[16] provide an overview of the situation(s) of women in conflict and post-conflict zones around the world and identify the difficulties and challenges they face. Although it was published in 2002 and thus is a decade old now, this report nonetheless retains its usefulness due to the clarity of its analysis and recommendations. Their position is summed up in their conclusion, where they state:

> Men alone cannot rebuild war torn societies. Too often women are

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14 Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen, "There Is No Aftermath for Women," in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-conflict Transformation*. (London: Zed Books, 2001) 12-13.

15 Meredith Thursen "Engendering Relations of State to Society in the aftermath" in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-conflict Transformation*. (London: Zed Books, 2001) 89.

16 http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/oct/07/ellen-johnson-sirleaf-profile Accessed January 28 2012.

given new roles and responsibilities when emergency relief is under

way, and then excluded once the structures of governance are re-

established. As countries emerge from the rubble of war, women

must be equal partners in rebuilding.[17]

Understandably, the assertion that women are subjugated by men appears in many places in the literature. While this is not directly applicable to the case of Bougainville which is being addressed here it is important to note, not only to give an impression of the general discourse around women, conflict and peace, but also to understand how the Bougainville case differs from most around the globe. An example of how this power imbalance between men and women is expressed can be seen in Tina Sideris' "Rape in War and Peace: Social Context, Gender, Power and Identity". In this chapter she states that:

We can begin to understand women's internalised sense of submission

or secondariness if we accept that society constructs the sense of

oneself as a man or as a woman – that not only internal

representations of primary relationships produce the self but also the

social world and culture, which is internal and external to the

individual. Equally, dominant discourses of gender fail to provide men

with alternatives to superiority and the necessity of control.[18]

Statements such as this, which assert that women are socialised into submissive roles and men into dominant roles, appear so often because they are easily applicable to the vast majority of societies and cultures around the world. However, even in societies which are considered highly patriarchal, such as Liberia, women still had limited but important power and authority prior to the outbreak of war. In the post-conflict environment in Liberia both international agencies and local groups often effectively ignored the political power women had held previously because it conflicted with their own framework for post-conflict development projects.[19] If these are the pitfalls of applying this model to a patriarchal society, it is easy to see how it might encounter problems when it is considered in regards to a society where power distribution between the genders is much more equal and reciprocal, such as Bougainville. Another understanding of the

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17 Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf *Women, War, peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building* (New York: UNIFEM, 2002) 138.

18 Tina Sideris, "Rape in War and Peace: Social Context, Gender, Power and Identity." in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-conflict Transformation*. (London: Zed Books, 2001) 143.

19 Mary H. Moran, "Gender, Militarism, and Peace-Building: Projects of the Postconflict Moment" *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 39: (2010) 267-268.

place of women in conflict and its aftermath is needed, one which accurately reflects the fact that there are still differences between male and female roles, but does not begin with the assumption that women are placed in an inferior position. Such models are much rarer, perhaps because there are not many cases where they are called upon. The reason for this state of affairs is not necessarily that academics and researchers have failed to address the more nuanced aspects of gender relationships in post-conflict environments but rather that Western aid agencies and IGOs choose to adopt an easily marketable "male-aggressor-dominant/female-victim-subjugated" position in their programmes.[20] Obviously this has the advantage of making any post-conflict peace-building or development programme transferable and explainable to the media and public, but this comes at the cost of its ability to implement lasting and productive change. At the same time this means that studies on how best to integrate women into formal peace processes are lacking because their simply have not been enough different approaches tried in order to compare and contrast their results.

A question which arises from considering this literature is whether women have a fundamentally different approach to conflict and peace than men. More often than not, scholars answer yes to this question, and one of the key reasons for this in terms of this thesis is women's cross-cultural role as mothers. It has often been argued that women's fundamentally different vision of peace and leadership arises from women's role as mothers and their more social outlook. This different vision of peace and conflict is based on "feminine" values such as care and sustainability and is not compatible with the masculine or hypermasculine world of politics as it exists both at a global level and local level.[21] Sanam Naraghi Anderlini states that the lack of women engaged in peace processes makes it difficult to gauge the accuracy of theories or the most effective way for women to gain greater involvement, but that the concept of motherhood could be vital. She suggests that because of their cross-cultural role as mothers and grandmothers women are often more likely to be perceived as trustworthy, and that this has the potential to bring belligerents together.[22] While this association with women, motherhood and nurturing is sometimes criticised for being a form of biological determinism and thus dangerously confining, Swanee Hunt points out that regardless of this argument this is in fact the way in which many women in conflict and post-conflict zones frame their actions for peace.[23]

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20 Ibid. 268-269.
21 Betty A. Reardon *Women and Peace: Feminist Visions of Global Security.* (Albany: New York, 1993)166.
22 Anderlini *Women building peace* 80.
23 Hunt "Moving beyond silence" 255-256.

This review of the literature around women and peace is necessarily short and therefore cannot capture the full extent of the debate around these issues. Nonetheless, I feel it represents an adequate cross-section of the existing positions on the specific issues regarding women, peace and post-conflict environments which are relevant to the case of Bougainville. Therefore I will now briefly consider the existing literature which examines the place of Bougainvillean women in the peace process and post-conflict environment there, and explain how my thesis fits into this literature. Much has been written about the Bougainville peace process but as is often the case there has not been a large amount written about the longer-term progress of the peace process. By the same token, women's role in the peace process is mentioned in nearly every piece,[24] but there is little comprehensive analysis of their engagement as a whole.

Some first hand accounts from women (and men) involved in the peace process have been collected together, and these are essentially descriptive in nature rather than analytical.[25] This reflects the fact that there is information about women's involvement in the peace process in Bougainville already available but that it has yet to be systematically collected and analysed as one narrative. Where analysis of primary data has occurred, it has focused on specific aspects of women's involvement in the peace process, such as the operation of a certain women's NGO born out of the conflict in relation to its external donors,[26] or the impact of gender mainstreaming by international NGOs and IGOs on Bougainville's indigenous gender roles.[27]

What is missing from this literature is a comprehensive account of the process by which women from both sides of the conflict came to be involved in building peace on Bougainville, and how and why this was the case. Such a study also has the potential to inform the broader literature covered in the first part of this review as the Bougainville case provides an example of a relatively high level of involvement of women with all aspects of the peace process. This thesis will address this gap in the literature and attempt to explain what factors were vital to women's engagement in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and development and how this affected the overall

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24   For instance: Pat Howley *Breaking spears and mending hearts: peacemakers and restorative justice in Bougainville.* (Leichhardt: Federation Press: 2002), and Yash Ghai and Anthony Regan "Unitary state, devolution, autonomy, secession: State building and nation building in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea" *The Round Table* Vol. 95, No. 386 (2006).

25   See Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) *...as Mothers of the land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004), and Rebecca Adams (ed) *Peace on Bougainville – Truce Monitoring Group: Gudpela Nius Bilong Peace"* (Wellington: Victoria University Press 2001)..

26   Jonathon Makuwira "Aid partnership in the Bougainville conflict: the case of a local women's NGO and its donors" *Development in Practice* Volume 16, Numbers 3 & 4 (2006).

27   Eleanor Rimoldi, "Force of Circumstance: Feminist Discourse in a Matrilineal Society" *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* Vol. 12, No. 2 (2011).

outcome of the peace process as a whole. In the conclusion it will also briefly consider how the lessons of women's involvement in the peace process in Bougainville can be applied to other conflict and post-conflict zones around the world, although it will be acknowledged that the potential lessons may be limited due to the highly contextual nature of the Bougainville peace process.

Methods

This thesis is essentially a process tracing account of women's involvement in the Bougainville peace process, drawing on both primary and secondary research. Process tracing is "a procedure designed to identify processes linking a set of initial conditions to a particular outcome." [28] It is particularly useful in extracting casual mechanisms from complex processes, but does have difficulties and limits. In particular, the reliance on available data and the potential for confirmation bias both introduce an element of potential inaccuracy into any process tracing approach.[29] However all methodologies have inherent limits and difficulties and as a researcher I have borne these potential problems in mind while conducting and writing up this research.

By using process tracing as my research method I am seeking not only to describe and explain the involvement of women in this process, which in itself is a complex narrative, but also to elucidate the key factors behind this relatively successful and inclusive engagement. Process tracing also often works as a theory development and evaluation tool especially when pre-existing theories are unsuited to the task of analysis or have yet to be tested fully.[30] In this thesis I have taken the approach of using the case of women's involvement in the peace process as a model to develop an approach or process which can be used in other conflicts to facilitate greater involvement by women in official peace processes. While the tentative model I have arrived at is only informed by one case it does represent a starting point for considering how official peace processes can become more gender-balanced. I chose to use process tracing as a methodology both because of the relative lack of available accounts of Bougainvillean women's place in the peace process, and the scarcity of accounts of women being broadly included and engaged with a peace process right

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28 Pascal Vennesson "Case studies and process tracing" in Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (eds) *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008) 224.
29 Ibid. 237.
30 Ibid.

through to the post-conflict development phase in any post-conflict environment. Obviously when covering such a long and complex period of history there is a sacrifice made in terms of the depth in which specific events and processes can be considered, but finding a balance between breadth and depth is a problem at any level of inquiry. In this thesis breadth has been favoured where applicable because the intention is to understand and explain women's involvement in the peace process and post-conflict environment as a whole.

In early October 2011 I travelled to Bougainville in order to conduct primary research with local community leaders. The information gathered was vital to developing an understanding of women's involvement in the peace process, particularly as much of it was conducted at a grassroots level. Furthermore, what secondary information was available was mostly written immediately following the conflict and I was interested to know whether the involvement of women in the long-term aspects of the peace process had continued along the same lines as during the conflict and in its immediate aftermath. The process of interviewing in Bougainville presented several challenges, but overall provided valuable insight into the ongoing nature of women's involvement in the peace process.

The interviews were semi-structured, with participants being asked ten questions relating to women and the peace process in Bougainville, and being encouraged to discuss any issues or dimensions they thought may not have been covered (see appendix for a list of the interview questions). Participants were given the choice of all information they gave being attributed to them, or quotes and information being used anonymously, or information provided being used just for general background information. It was made clear to participants that they were not required to answer any questions that they did not want to. All bar one of the participants spoke English, so for that interview I relied on a local who did speak English to act as an interpreter. Initially I was worried that cultural differences and my position as an outsider (both as a foreigner and a scholar, and as a man studying women's role in the peace process) might cause resentment or mistrust from my participants but this did not appear to be the case. All participants seemed comfortable with me as a researcher and eager to help and tell their stories. This may in part have been due to the fact that I am New Zealander and New Zealand is held in very high regard in Bougainville due to its role in the peace process, a point mentioned to me numerous times by the locals there. Nonetheless it is possible that the responses from participants were influenced by my position as a researcher in ways which I am unaware of, but this is an inevitable risk with the interviewing process.

Acquiring a broad range of representatives from different backgrounds was important in order to gain a fuller picture of the experience of Bougainvillean women in the peace process in general, but this presented some difficulties. I was initially in contact with two Bougainvilleans before my arrival there: Josephine Sirivi, founding member and first President of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (BWPF) and her husband Sam Kauona, former General of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA).[31] Obviously these two have a strong position in favour of Bougainvillean independence and as I relied on them to arrange interviews with most of my participants there is likely to be some bias in favour of this position. However, I was able to arrange several interviews myself with people I personally met while in Bougainville so this would have gone some of the way to balancing out potential bias.

Another potential source of bias in my research is that budgetary, security and time restraints meant that my time in Bougainville was limited to the northern and central regions. Excluding the southern region may obscure a full understanding of the peace process, as the Southern region has experienced the slowest transition from conflict to peace, with official engagement in the peace process in some parts of the region coming as late as the end of 2011.[32] This is especially interesting given the fact that the area around the town of Buin where the transition has been the hardest is also the only part of Bougainville where matriliny is not a traditional cultural practice. The question of how significant this is will be addressed in a later chapter, but it is important to note that for my research I was unable to interview anyone from the Southern region. However, having said this, there has also been a slow transition to peace in the area around the Panguna mine in central Bougainville as well, although this area does practice matriliny and the reasons for the slower engagement with the peace process in this area relate more to historical grievances rather than cultural practices. I was able to interview people from around Panguna and hope that this goes some way towards mitigating the potential bias towards areas where the peace process was most successful. Another way I addressed this possible bias was to specifically ask participants for their opinions on regional differences in the engagement of women in the peace process.

Having explained my overall approach, primary research methods, the possible biases they might create, and how these biases may be minimised, I have one final point to make on my methods as a researcher. Although every effort has been made to be as fair and balanced as possible, this is an interpretative peace of research and as such my own position as a researcher has had a significant

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31 "Notes on contributing authors" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 181.
32 http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/201201/s3414797.htm Accessed January 26 2012.

impact on the results. For this reason I have not refrained from using first person pronouns in the body of my thesis. As I am a pakeha male studying at a university in New Zealand my interpretation of the role of women in the peace process in Bougainville will undoubtedly differ in some respects to interpretations from researchers of other ethnicity, gender, nationality, or background.

Key concepts and definitions

This thesis examines women's roles both in seeking peace during the conflict in Bougainville and working at reconciliation and development after the conflict. In order to do this several key concepts must be briefly considered. These are conflict, peace, gender, culture and development. Arriving at working definitions of these concepts is necessary for explaining the intricacies of this process in meaningful terms. In this section I will explain the definitions I have decided on for the purposes of this thesis.

The terms peace, conflict and war can be difficult to define satisfactorily and often rely on somewhat arbitrary conditions. For instance, the United Nations recognised Uppsala Conflict Data Program defines armed conflict (or what most people would consider war) as "…a contested incompatibility which concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths", without ever explaining why the figure of 25 deaths is used.[33] Such strict definitions are necessary for statistical purposes but unfortunately do little to help conceptualise conflict and peace in a way that is meaningful for those who are interested in building peace. In a similar way, it is perhaps an intuitive response to consider conflict and peace as mutually exclusive opposites, but in terms of measuring the relative success of a peace process this is not particularly useful. Rather, it is more appropriate to consider the two as opposite points on a spectrum. Absolute conflict could be conceived as a state of total anarchy in the Hobbesian sense of "the war of all against all."[34] In contrast, absolute peace would be an environment where all people and their property were secure from harm at all times. The goal of peacebuilding can therefore be conceived of as being to shift society to the peace end of the spectrum through mitigating those factors which might impinge on the security of persons and/or their property.

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33 http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/definition_of_armed_conflict/#i Accessed April 10 2011.
34 Thomas Hobbes *De Cive* (1642) http://www.unilibrary.com/ebooks/Hobbes,%20Thomas%20-%20De%20Cive.pdf 6. Accessed November 3 2011.

Compared to conflict and peace gender is relatively straightforward to define, although the specific gender roles of individual cultures are not. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, defines gender as:

> The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a women or a man in a given context.[35]

This definition is the one upon which UN gender-based programmes are based, including post-conflict gender mainstreaming, and therefore is especially relevant for this thesis. However I feel that it is not particularly clear in its wording I would propose a definition of gender as the social and cultural roles associated with and attributed to notions of biological sex. I believe this avoids the issue of whether biology, society, or some combination of the two makes someone a "man" or a "women," which is not addressed by the UN definition.

Culture is a notoriously difficult concept to define in any case but in relation to a case such as Bougainville this becomes even more difficult. It is closely related to the concept of a society but the terms imply quite different ways of looking at peoples and their interrelationships. Culture can be defined as "the conduct, traditions, language, mores, customs, beliefs, institutions, art, literature, laws, religion, dress, and so forth that are passed down to community members from generation to generation,"[36] while a society is "A group of people… organized to cooperatively achieve common basic goals, including reproduction, sustenance, shelter, and defense."[37] Culture can therefore be considered that aspect of social relationships that contain and reinforce shared identities, and is therefore a more subjective quality. It is this subjectivity that makes the term so hard to define, and creates the problems of demarcating between cultural and sub-cultural groups so difficult. Society on the other hand is the more practical economic and political structures that bind individuals and groups together. There is obviously still an area of overlap where cultural

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35 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm Accessed April 10 2011.
36 "Culture (sociology)." *The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2009. SAGE Publications. http://www.sage-ereference.com/behavioralsciences/Article_n632.html. Accessed April 10 2011.
37 "Society." *The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2009. SAGE Publications. http://www.sage-ereference.com/behavioralsciences/Article_n2383.html. Accessed April 10 2011.

practices become part of social orders and society influences peoples' senses of identity and self-definitions, and it is important to note that culture especially is fluid and dynamic. In this thesis I will refer to Bougainvillean culture in the singular sense, which although not technically accurate, reflects the shared practices and roles of Bougainville's cultural groups and the sense of pan-Bougainvillean identity which has been developing since the onset of colonisation and has been accelerated by the conflict and its related events.

The final concept which needs to be defined for this thesis is that of development. In this context development is used to refer to the process of addressing social and economic issues in order to provide a greater quality of life. The UN's Millennium Development Goals provide a broad idea of the specific issues development relates to. There are eight in total:

1.   Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

2.   Achieve universal primary education

3.   Promote gender equality and empower women

4.   Reduce child mortality

5.   Improve maternal health

6.   Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

7.   Ensure environmental sustainability

8.   Develop a global partnership for development[38]

While the concept of development as it is often promoted is controversial due to its implications of the superiority of liberal and neo-liberal western values,[39] in Bougainville there is a common understanding that there are a range of social and economic problems which need to be addressed, and I use the term development to mean the process of addressing those issues. It is not meant to imply that Western culture is in any way superior to that of Bougainville, or anywhere else for that matter.

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38 http://www.beta.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview.html Accessed June 15 2011.
39 Shepherd "Power and Authority in the Production of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325" 399.

Outline of thesis

The conflict in Bougainville and the resulting peace process and post-conflict environment have been extremely complex processes and within them the involvement of women has reflected this complexity. The complex nature of women's involvement has made it difficult as a researcher to fully explain how this has come about, and to extricate which parts of the process are inherently tied to the culture and history of Bougainville and which can be considered applicable to other conflicts around the globe in order to try and increase the effectiveness and participation of women in peace processes there. The key factors I will identify as vital to the success of women's involvement in the Bougainville peace process and post-conflict redevelopment and reconciliation are the grassroots nature of their involvement; the establishment of formal women's organisations; the pre-existing cultural roles of women in Bougainville; and the place of women as mothers and the associated traits such as caring, nurturing, and long-term planning which come with it. Of these I feel that all but the place of motherhood are inherently tied into the cultural and historical context of the Bougainville conflict and thus while they are no doubt interesting they do not offer a potential path to women in other conflicts becoming more involved in their peace processes. For this reason I will argue that the key lesson that can be learnt from the case of women's involvement in the Bougainville peace process and post-conflict environment is that the role of motherhood can be adapted to both encourage women to become involved in building a just and sustainable peace themselves.

Having covered the relevant existing literature, methods, and key concepts and definitions in this introductory chapter, the remainder of this thesis will explain the complex process through which women came to play the role they did in seeking to build peace in conflict and post-conflict Bougainville, and an analysis of this process. The following chapter will consist of an explanation of the background to, and nature of, the Bougainville conflict. In order to understand the place of women in the peace process and post-conflict environment it is necessary to understand the complexities of Bougainvillean history, culture and the conflict itself. This chapter will explain this background information.

The third chapter will explain the nature of women's involvement in the attempts to bring peace during the conflict and the official peace process itself. It will draw on both secondary sources and my own interviews with Bougainvillean community leaders to understand how and why women came to be as involved as they were. Although this chapter will contain some analysis of these

processes and themes it will mostly consist of describing the nature of the involvement of women in the peace process.

This will be followed by the fourth chapter which will use the same approach as the previous chapter to describe and explain women's involvement in reconciliation and development in post-conflict Bougainville. It will present a thematical account of this process, which is particularly important if lessons are to be learned from it which can be applied to other conflicts. Given the ongoing problem of trying to engage women in this phase of peace processes this chapter will elucidate the key factors which were important for this happening in the Bougainville case, although it is important to bear in mind that there is no clear consensus among the people who were themselves involved about what some of these key factors were.

The fifth and final chapter will first present an analysis of the key factors in facilitating the involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville, and then suggest a possible model of how such an involvement might be encouraged in other cases. The unique position of women in Bougainvillean culture and the history of the Bougainville itself, both before and during the conflict, will be acknowledged as a stepping stone towards their involvement but rather than seeing this as a barrier to what the Bougainville case can teach academics, NGOs, IGOs and governments about how to facilitate women's involvement in peace processes it will instead be used as a key point in understanding how this model may apply to other conflict and post-conflict environments.

CHAPTER 2 - CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information about the culture of Bougainville and the conflict there. Understanding this information makes it easier to explain how and why women came to be involved in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment. If the Bougainville case is to help answer the question of how women can become less marginalised in official peace processes and post-conflict environments then the factors which make it unique are just as vital to acknowledge as those which can be applied universally.

 Bougainville is home to a surprisingly large number of cultural groups but almost all share broad similarities, not least of which is a matrilineal clan system which sees women as guardians of the land and bearers of the clan name. This is significant for this study for two reasons: firstly that women already occupied a place of relative social and political strength at a community level prior to the conflict and this meant that they were already well placed to engage with the peace process, although this does not mean that they did not face challenges in doing so; and secondly, that the differences between these cultures on Bougainville and the cultures of the rest of Papua New Guinea meant that they became a point of pan-Bougainvillean pride and identity during and after the conflict and this reinforced a desire to emphasise the differences, one of which was the role of women. This meant that women's input continued to be valued in part because it was seen as part of Bougainvillean identity to do so.

 Just as the culture of Bougainville has influenced the pattern of involvement of women in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment, so too did the course and nature of the conflict itself. As the conflict progressed it became increasingly fractured, complex, and chaotic, and this meant that individual women or small groups of women saw the potential to influence combatants towards peace at a local and small-scale level. This type of individual level intervention would most likely have not been possible had the conflict been fought by more structured and disciplined belligerent organisations. Furthermore the lack of social cohesion and inability of leaders to provide social services which this situation led to meant that regardless of their position on the merits of independence, women began to call for peace so that their families could be safe and receive education and medical care. Finally, the experiences of women in different parts of Bougainville during the conflict had an effect on how they approached the peace

process later, with women who were in government-controlled care centres forming one group and those who stayed with the BRA in the jungle forming another.

In writing this chapter I have tried to provide as comprehensive an outline as possible without over-elaborating on the themes which will be explored in more depth in subsequent parts of this study. In particular the role of women in Bougainville's cultures is necessarily discussed as part of this general background as it appears to constitute a significant part of the island's emerging singular identity as a counterpoint to the dominant patriarchal and patrilineal cultures of mainland Papua New Guinea. However the full ramifications of gender roles in Bougainvillean culture will be discussed later as part of the core of this study, examining as it does how women came to play a significant role in the official peace process.

Culture and Society

It can be hard to find information on the cultures of Bougainville, given the relative obscurity of the island prior to the conflict and the difficulties in studying there during the years of violence and their immediate aftermath. Such research that does exist comes from a limited range of sources and does not necessarily address those aspects of culture that are most significant for the study at hand. A further issue stems from the fact that some research carried out prior to the conflict was published in relatively obscure journals and thus is not readily available to this researcher, as it has not been digitised and hard copies are few and far between. With this caveat in mind I will proceed to discuss a broad outline of the picture that has emerged from the literature which was available to me.

The people of Bougainville had always considered themselves different from those of mainland Papua New Guinea. Geographically the island is part of the Solomon Islands chain and the physical appearance of its inhabitants that of the Solomon Islanders, being much darker skinned than the people of the Papua New Guinea Highlands. This has led to the adoption of the derogatory term 'redskin' applied by Bougainvilleans to the people of the mainland, although in the past it only was used to refer to the Highlanders themselves.[40] It would seem that the development of this perception of a distinct Bougainvillean identity had begun to take place well before the conflict but the decade of fighting both reinforced and exaggerated it. Within Bougainville itself however there

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40   Douglas Oliver *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville 1937-1991.* (Melbourne: Hyland House: 1991) 223.

is still significant variation between cultural groups to this day. Depending upon the exact definitions of the words "language" and "dialect" there are somewhere between 25 and 50 languages spoken within Bougainville and the other islands within the province including Buka, Nissan, and the various smaller islands. Of the lower number of 25, these are divided by linguists into 16 Austronesian and nine Papuan languages, with the two groups being considered unrelated linguistically.[41] If linguistic diversity can be taken to imply cultural diversity then the extent of the variation in cultures in such a small geographic area is significant, although no more so than Papua New Guinea as a whole, with its 700 or more languages.[42] Colin Filer even went so far as to say in 1990 "let me then suggest that the most important thing which distinguishes the North Solomons from the other 18 provinces of PNG, in historical, political, cultural, social and economic terms, is nothing more than the massive hole in the middle of it."[43] While this is an extreme view of the situation it is worth bearing in mind that resistance to the mine did not begin as a pan-Bougainville movement but rather was initially confined to those communities in the immediate vicinity of the Panguna, a fact which will be discussed later in the section on the history of the conflict. The complexities of how national identity is developed in heterogeneous societies are intriguing but beyond the scope of this study. However, the diversity of Bougainville's cultural groups must be borne in mind by any researcher trying to discuss Bougainville's culture, self-identity, or nationalism in order to avoid the pitfalls of over-generalisation.

Having said that, it is possible to make some broad statements about the peoples of Bougainville and their culture(s). Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, two significant historical processes shaped the cultures of Bougainville. The first was the onset of colonialism, while the second was World War II. Between them these two events drastically changed the fabric of Bougainville society as they brought the people of the island into much greater contact with the outside world, and created more mobility amongst the groups of the island themselves. Despite the changes this brought, some continuation of cultural practices from pre-colonial times seems to have occurred. The significant social groups of clans and villages remain important to a larger extent than language groups. Also, with the exception of Buin and some smaller atolls, all cultural groups in

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41 Darrell Tyron "The Languages of Bougainville" in Anthony J Regan and Helga M Griffin (eds.) *Bougainville before the conflict*. (Canberra: Pandanus Books: 2005) 31

42 Anthony Matthew "Bougainville and Papua New Guinea: Complexities of Secession in a Multi-Ethnic Developing State" *Political Studies* Vol. 48 (2000) 726.

43 Colin Filer "The Bougainville Rebellion, the mining industry and the process of social disintegration in Papua New Guinea" in R. J. May and Matthew Spriggs (eds) *The Bougainville Crisis*. (Bathurst: Crawford House Press: 1990) 79.

Bougainville practice matriliny, with the inheritance of land passing down the female line.[44] The significance of this practice did vary, but it was an important factor in separating the cultures of Bougainville from the rest of Papua New Guinea. The matrilineal structure also made women particularly important in disputes over land as they were in almost all cases considered the custodians or guardians of their clan's land. The significance of matriliny can be found in various symbolic forms throughout Bougainville.[45] This aspect of Bougainvillean culture is one which is obviously particularly significant to this study and thus a further consideration of it will be included in Chapters 3 and 4.

Hilson has suggested that in many ways the culture of Bougainville does not correspond well with the liberal capitalist cultures it has historically interacted with, including the mining companies and the PNG national government as well as the Australian and German colonial administrations. This is because of the complex relationship of people to the land, including the lack of private ownership, and no tradition of democracy to choose leadership.[46] This reference to the political organisation of Bougainville raises the difficult question of what exactly the leadership structures of Bougainville's cultures are. Throughout much of Melanesia leadership is considered to be based on the "big man" model, where the head of a tribe or village maintains his position through a kind of reverse patronage. In this system the "big man" uses his economic and social capital to provide gifts and support for those under him, and they in turn listen to his influence and follow his leadership. This contrasts significantly with the more familiar tradition of hereditary patriarchal chiefs as seen in much of Polynesia.[47] Unfortunately these simple distinct categories do not always stand up to closer scrutiny, as the case of the Siwai people of south Bougainville, studied by Douglas Oliver, shows.[48]

Siwai culture is matrilineal with land being customarily owned by women and inherited down the female genealogical line. This gives women a significant position of power but men still function as rulers in a "big man" system of patronised influence rather than acquiring a hereditary title as chief. Interestingly polygyny is also practised in Siwai culture but it is rare as marrying is expensive and wives are not only status symbols but provide crucial access to the land they hold.[49] A complex

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44 Anthony J Regan "Identities Among the Bougainvilleans" in Anthony J Regan and Helga M Griffin (eds.) *Bougainville before the conflict*. (Canberra: Pandanus Books: 2005) 425.

45 Eugene Ogan "An Introduction to Bougainville Cultures" in Anthony J Regan and Helga M Griffin (eds.) *Bougainville before the conflict*. (Canberra: Pandanus Books: 2005) 49-50.

46 Christopher J Hilson "Mining and Civil Conflict: Revisiting Grievance at Bougainville" *Minerals and Energy –Raw Materials Report*. Vol. 21 No. 2 (2006) 26.

47 Richard Feinberg "Elements of leadership in Oceania" *Anthropological Forum* Vol 12 No 1 (2002) 11.

48 Oliver *Black Islanders*.

49 Ibid. 28.

system of obligatory gifts, feasts and other social events exists for men to show their value as "big men" and this creates a competitive environment in which ambitious young men can attempt to rise up the social ranks. Sorcerers and medicine men also exert considerable influence as they are in a position to declare which men have been favoured by the spirits and which have not. Although the system is not hereditary, elders can help favoured sons or nephews establish themselves by giving them gifts to be used in gathering influence.[50] If the Siwai can be considered a 'typical" cultural group from Bougainville then it is easy to see how this complex but informal leadership structure could create many difficulties when interacting with or being integrated by a modern state. Further complicating the picture is the interwoven feuds and alliances between the different cultural groups, clans, and sub-clan groups. This patchwork of animosities and alliances was a major factor in the deterioration to full-scale civil war between the secessionist BRA and the loyalist BRF after the PNGDF left the island in 1990.[51] This will get discussed further in the section on the history and course of the conflict.

As mentioned above, land plays a vital role in the social life of Bougainville. The use of and access to land is mediated through complex systems of custom such as those of the Siwai people, and group ownership of land (inherited and managed by women) reflects the generally egalitarian nature of Bougainvillean cultures. The close relationship of the people to the land means that "loss or scarcity of land does not only pose economic problems, but has far-reaching effects on the social structure, the spiritual life and the psychic conditions of the affected groups and their members."[52] The nature of this close relationship with the land would seem to imply that women have had a significant role in Bougainvillean political decision making but unfortunately this has not always been the case. It has been noted that in the consultation process prior to the opening of the mine women were marginalised and excluded, despite their traditional role as custodians of the land in question. This came about because of language barriers, greed on the part of the men in the communities affected, and the ethnocentrism of the mining company officials who failed to recognise the need to include women in the consultation process.[53] Examples like this highlight the complex nature of gender relationships within Bougainville's cultures which like the political

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50 Ibid. 29-31.
51 Eleanor Rimoldi "Involution, Entropy, or Innovation: Cultural Economics on Bougainville" *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 118, No.1 (2009) 54.
52 Volker Boege "Peacebuilding and state formation in post-conflict Bougainville" Paper presented at the International Peace Research Association conference, Sydney 6 – 10 July 2010; Peace and Development Commission. Session 4: Hybrid Political Orders, Peacebuilding and State Formation – Experiences from Africa, the Pacific and Asia. 2.
53 Martha MacIntyre, "Informed Consent and Mining Projects: The view from Papua New Guinea" *Pacific Affairs* 80:1 (2007) 55-56.

relationships defy any attempt at simple categorisation.[54] This complexity provided a significant barrier to both the mine officials in their consultation phase and the peace negotiators during and after the conflict. Explaining how the intricacies of the webs of gender relationships were managed in the peace process in order to allow the greater participation of women is the primary goal of this paper. A later chapter will further explore the position of women in Bougainville's political landscape.

The preceding brief discussion of Bougainville's cultures has been based primarily on research conducted before the conflict but a decade of violence and the resulting loss of any semblance of stability on Bougainville had a dissipating effect on culture and identities.[55] This means that the post-conflict social environment was not a strict continuation of the cultures that had existed prior to the outbreak of violence. Of course, culture is never static but is a fluid and dynamic construction which changes over time. However the severity of the upheaval experienced by Bougainville was far beyond what most cultures could expect in a century, let alone a decade. Understanding these changes is also vital to understanding the course of the peace process.

Perhaps the most significant shift in the culture of Bougainville was to a greater shared identity across the cultural groups, although this process had its roots long before the outbreak of hostilities. The process by which this occurred was not a simple or linear one though. Initially the colonial process actually served to further widen the gap between the cultures occupying the three different ecological zones of the island; coastal areas, valleys, and mountains. This is because those culture groups situated in coastal areas enjoyed easier access to the outside world and thus always had more interaction with other groups from different parts of the Solomons chain. With the onset of the colonial period this meant that these groups were further removed from their counterparts in the interior by their engagement with colonial powers, traders, missionaries and the like, a process which saw the cultures grow further apart.[56] However the interaction with the outside world also had the effect of helping to foster a specifically "Bougainvillean" identity in opposition to the groups of mainland Papua New Guineans, Australians, and others they came into contact with. There were various aspects to this process of emerging national identity and some of them had very early roots. For instance, the practice of taking people (mostly men) from Bougainville either willingly or as indentured servants to work on sugar plantations in other parts of the South

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54 Hilson "Mining and Civil Conflict" 25-26.

55 Roderic Alley "Ethnosecession in Papua New Guinea: The Bougainville Case" in Rajut Ganguly and Ian MacDuff (eds) *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia: Causes, Dynamics, Solutions.* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003) 239.

56 Anthony J. Regan "Causes and course of the Bougainville conflict" *Journal of Pacific History* 43:3 (2008) 270-271.

Pacific including Samoa, Fiji, and Queensland had begun well before Bougainville came under official German colonial rule in 1898.[57] This may have contributed to a sense of superiority amongst Bougainvilleans relative to other Pacific Islanders as they were often employed as "strong-arm" men on the plantations to enforce rules. The burgeoning sense of superiority was then given further fuel in the post-colonial era as many Bougainvilleans were less than impressed with the behaviour of external workers who came to the mine in the 1960s and 1970s.[58]

Other factors contributing to the rise of a pan-Bougainville nationalist identity was perceived neglect of the island and its surrounds the colonial powers, the traumatic experience of World War II, and of course the grievances related to the mine, on which more will be said in the following section.[59] The resulting sense of shared identity might seem incongruous when viewed in light of the cultural diversity in Bougainville but the two are not incompatible. If the nation is an imagined community created by a shared belief in its existence which is held by its constituent members then it is irrelevant that people may consider themselves part of the nation while still identifying with sub-national ethno-cultural divisions. Indeed, nationalism across cultural divides exists in many places throughout the world and the vast majority of nation-states in existence encompass multiple significant cultural groups within their borders, with Papua New Guinea itself being an extreme example.[60] Obviously national identity is often heavily reliant on an ethnic or cultural other, but the conditions of inclusion or exclusion into the nation are not necessarily ethnically, culturally or biologically determined. In the case of Bougainville the national identity is based on geography and history: the people of those islands which were part of the Solomons chain but colonised by Germany, then Australia, and ended up as a part of Papua New Guinea. History has set them apart from the Solomon Islands, while geography has set them apart from Papua New Guinea. The subsequent chain of events surrounding the establishment of the Panguna copper mine merely served to strengthen the sense of national identity through the shared experience of the conflict.

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57   Rimoldi "Force of Circumstance" 52.

58 Regan "Causes and course of the Bougainville conflict" 273.

59 Ibid.

60 Anthony Matthew "Bougainville and Papua New Guinea: Complexities of Secession in a Multi-Ethnic Developing State" *Political Studies* Vol 48 (2000) 727-728.

History of the Conflict

The roots of the Bougainville conflict can be traced to the events which saw the island become a part of Papua New Guinea. In the 1884 an agreement between the governments of Great Britain and Germany drew a border in the sea south of Bougainville, with Britain laying claim to the Solomons and Germany the island of Bougainville including the smaller island of Buka just to the north. Initially the German territory was not controlled by the German government but by a private colonial company which was ultimately a failure and handed over full control to the government and was officially disbanded in 1899.[61] The onset of World War I saw an Australian military occupation of the German territories in the region which became a League of Nations mandated stewardship after the war. The Australian administration of the New Guinea territories was highly centralised and remote areas like Bougainville (now, with its surrounding islands, called the North Solomons Province) received little attention from the colonial bureaucracy. This colonial neglect was to be one of the factors that led to the development of a cohesive Bougainvillean identity, which was to lead to calls for secession even before the establishment of an independent Papua New Guinean state.[62]

World War II was also to have a significant impact on Bougainville as fierce fighting between the Allies and Japan eventually ravaged the territory after an initially quiet start. Large-scale combat did not begin until 1943 but continued until the last months of the war, and in those two years it accounted for the lives of between 16% and 25% of the population. Furthermore there were at one stage around 135,000 Japanese, Australian, American and other Allied troops on the island and this brought Bougainville into contact not only with their cultures but with modern warfare, when before their contact with the outside world had been effectively limited to missionaries and colonial officials.[63] However, despite the huge impact of the war on Bougainville arguably the most important development to emerge from it was the resulting change in administrative boundaries. Following the end of hostilities the Australian controlled territories in the region were combined, thus formally creating the political boundaries which would later become the basis for the state of Papua New Guinea. At the same time the long process of decolonisation began, with Australia

61 Donald Denoon, *Getting under the skin: the Bougainville Copper Agreement and the Creation of the Panguna Mine.* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press 2000.) 11-12.

62 Yash Ghai and Anthony Regan "Unitary state, devolution, autonomy, secession: State building and nation building in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea" *The Round Table* Vol. 95, No. 386 (2006) 591-592.

63 Hank Nelson "Bougainville in World War II" in Anthony J Regan and Helga M Griffin (eds.) *Bougainville before the conflict*. (Canberra: Pandanus Books: 2005) 195-196.

creating an indigenous government in Port Moresby, the first step on the road to independence which would culminate in 1975 when Papua New Guinea became an independent nation-state.[64]

By the early 1960s mining exploration had begun around Panguna in Bougainville by the company then known Cozinc Riotinto Australia (CRA) as part of a World Bank development programme, and significant copper deposits were discovered which lead to an agreement between the colonial administration and a subsidiary of the mining company, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) to extract these deposits.[65] The consent of the locals was sought but the degree to which this was informed consent is open for debate, as is the question of whether those who gave their consent had the right to do speak for the people they were representing. The problems of the complexities of customary land tenure systems engaging with a Western capitalist view of land ownership and capital investment were significant. Furthermore, the negotiation process with the mining officials was dominated by the men of the Nagioisi peoples who lived around Panguna and the women were excluded despite their traditional role as custodians of the land. The reasons for this are varied; ranging from language (the men spoke English while the women did not), to ethnocentrism on the part of the mining company, to greed on the part of some of the men. Also many of the customary landholders were absent at the time of negotiation because they were away overseas or in other parts of Papua New Guinea working or studying, and thus their opinions were not sought.[66] This created the potential for grievances later on, but even at the time not all on Bougainville were happy with the arrangement.

Secession and the creation of an independent Bougainvillean state had been mooted before the Panguna mine opened in 1972 but it was not until the establishment of the state of Papua New Guinea in 1975 that the first serious attempt was made. The declaration of Bougainville as a sovereign state was met with indifference by the international community and the fear of military intervention forced the fledging government to an agreement with Papua New Guinea in 1976. The resulting model of semi-autonomous provincial government was adopted throughout the whole of Papua New Guinea as the leadership in Port Moresby attempted to bring unity and stability to its extremely heterogeneous population. However, unlike the other provinces Bougainville was promised a referendum on independence but this was never delivered.[67] Crucial to the negotiations was the distribution of revenue from the mine and part of the agreement was that

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64 Hilson "Mining and Civil Conflict" 24.
65 Ibid. 25
66 MacIntyre "Informed Consent and Mining Projects" 54-56.
67 Eleanor Rimoldi, "Human Sacrifice and the Loss of Transformative Power," *Social Analysis,* Volume 49, Issue 1 (2005) 95.

the government of the North Solomons Province as it was now known would receive a greater share than had previously been arranged.[68] The question of the costs and benefits of the mine and how these were to be managed was to become by far and away the single most important issue in the following years not just for Bougainville but for Papua New Guinea as a whole.

The reason for the importance of the mine to the Papuan government was a simple one: money. It has been estimated that in its years of operation the Panguna copper mine was responsible for between 40% and 50% of Papua New Guinea's total foreign exchange, as well as 15-20% of internally generated revenue. The Papua New Guinea government received around US$387 million dollars from the mine, while shareholders received approximately $207 million dollars. Compared to this the $27 million received by the provincial government and the $9 million received by landowners seems paltry.[69] However for the people of Bougainville, and specifically the area around Panguna, the issue of financial compensation was only one of a series of grievances. Of these, pollution and environmental degradation were perhaps even more significant than financial compensation. The mine, while hugely profitable, was a low-yield operation and thus generated significant amounts of waste material. In the 17 years it was open 1.25 billion tonnes of material was removed to extract only 10 million tonnes of concentrate, meaning that on average the mine produced a staggering 120,000 tonnes of material every 24 hours, with 80% of it being pumped into the Jaba river and out to sea. Furthermore the arrival of the mining company disrupted the economic and social order by bringing in large numbers of external workers and forcing people of their land which in turn led to greater crime and unemployment due to the oversupply of labour. The introduction of a cash economy into a culture which until that point had been subsistence-based also created new inequalities between age-groups and genders. In 1979 the Panguna Landowners Association was formed as a means of distributing the compensation from the mine to 850 "customary title holders" who were mostly older males from different matrilineal clans, a process which further provoked disharmony as women in general and men of younger generations felt excluded or under-compensated.[70]

The mine was not the only influence on Bougainville's socioeconomic changes throughout the postcolonial period though. A less localised issue was the rise of cash crops, particularly cocoa, which disrupted the traditional economic and cultural patterns all over the islands just as the mine's arrival had done around Panguna. As well as this the rising population in some areas was

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68 Ghai and Regan "Unitary state, devolution, autonomy, secession" 594.
69 Hilson "Informed Consent and Mining Projects" 29.
70 Ibid. 27-28.

beginning to strain local resources and was also beginning to effect local identities, perhaps facilitating a more inclusive pan-Bougainvillean identity in the process.[71] All these factors finally came to a head in April 1988 when a group of young landowners who were frustrated at their lack of compensation and the destructive impact of the mining operations claimed K10 billion (approximately US$10 billion) in compensation. The Papua New Guinean government commissioned a study of the environmental and other impacts of the mine but the landowners group was not happy with the result and responded by destroying BCL property with explosive and demanding the mine be closed. The Papua New Guinea government's heavy-handed and ill-judged response, first with police and later with the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF), which saw the localised issues become part of a broader movement. By February 1989 Francis Ona, leader of the rebellion and the newly formed Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) added secession as a goal of his movement and full-scale civil war erupted.[72]

In the following years Bougainville was effectively under martial law and random acts of violence were commonplace. Stories circulated of rape, torture, and other human rights abuses and the conflict spread from the villages in the vicinity of the mine to every corner of the province.[73] By March 1990 the PNGDF was unable to maintain control and a temporary ceasefire was followed by the withdrawal of government forces. The BRA leadership celebrated this retreat by announcing a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 17 May. This action was followed by Papua New Guinea's suspension of the North Solomons Provincial Government due to its premier, Joseph Kabui, working closely with the rebels.[74] Consequently Bougainville was blockaded off from the outside world by the PNGDF, while the leadership on the island established the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) which was led by Ona and included Kabui as vice-president. However the BRA itself struggled to maintain discipline and cohesion amongst its units after the withdrawal of the government troops and the young men that made up most of the force started to direct violence at rival groups, educated Bougainvillean, and what few outsiders remained. The Bougainville Resistance Force (BRF) emerged at this point to combat the BRA and protect those it was attacking. The BRF was armed and assisted by the PNGDF which in September 1990 returned

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71 Regan "Identities Among the Bougainvilleans" 443.
72 Regan "Causes and course of the Bougainville conflict" 277.
73 Marilyn Taleo Havini "Journey into Exile" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*as Mothers of the land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for peace and Freedom.* Canberra: Pandanus Books (2004)17.
74 James Tanis, "Nagovisi Villages a Window on Bougainville in 1988" " in Anthony J Regan and Helga M Griffin (eds.) *Bougainville before the conflict*. (Canberra: Pandanus Books: 2005) 447.

at local request to the island of Buka, just to the north of Bougainville Island proper.[75]

It is important to note that although the BRA and BRF are often discussed as if they were united hierarchically structured military groups, in reality they consisted of many different factions and there was often conflict between groups within these entities. This played into the hands of the PNGDF who in 1992 stepped up their campaign at the request of the new Prime Minister who had been frustrated at the lack of progress. However the PNGDF itself lacked discipline and in the face of the fierce fighting that ensued there were human rights abuses conducted by all sides. By 1994 much of the population had either fled to the Solomon Islands or into the jungle, while the Care Centres (government run refugee camps) housed around 50,000 people.[76] By this phase the war had broken down into an almost anarchic state of violence and retribution with its main impact being upon the civilian population. Even the PNGDF avoided conflict where possible, preferring the BRF to fight the BRA instead. The distinctions between sides became even more blurred as all the functions of a modern state – healthcare, policing, and education – collapsed.[77] The people who had fled into the jungle, men and women, civilians and soldiers, made the most of the resources available to them as they lived in constant fear of attack. Ad hoc justice systems were developed by BRA to deal with disputes, while the people worked together to feed and educate children and care for the sick or elderly. Supplies were smuggled from the Solomon Islands through the blockade and critically injured or sick people were smuggled back the other way, but these were dangerous operations and the amount of goods that could be brought was limited by both the size of the canoes used and the fact that they would have to be carried through the jungle by foot.[78]

By 1997 several attempts at peace negotiations had failed but the toll on the people and land of Bougainville was beginning to force the BRA and BRF leadership to consider a truce. Meanwhile the Sandline affair, which involved foreign mercenaries being hired by the Papua New Guinean government to fight in Bougainville without PNGDF knowledge, had rocked the Papua New Guinean government and nearly created a constitutional crisis. In short, all sides were prepared to end a war which had taken anywhere from 12,000 to 50,000 lives in just under a decade – a staggering number even at the lowest estimate considering that the population of Bougainville in 1988 had been less than 200,000.[79] Negotiations between BRA and BRF leaders, with the noticeable exception of Francis Ona, were held at Burnham military camp in Christchurch, New

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75   Regan "Causes and course of the Bougainville conflict" 278-279.
76   Ibid. 280.
77   Boege "Peacebuilding and state formation in post-conflict Bougainville" 3.
78   Daphne Zale "Human Rights Abuses and Survival Behind the Blockade" *...as Mothers of the land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for peace and Freedom.* Canberra: Pandanus Books (2004) 49.
79   Jim Rolfe "Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville" *International Peacekeeping* Vol. 8 No. 4 (2001) 43.

Zealand and the terms of a peace agreement were decided in July 1997.[80] How this happened and what exactly the peace agreement entailed will be discussed in a later chapter.

Conclusion

During the conflict in Bougainville, women's pre-existing cultural roles meant that they already occupied a position in society where they could influence political decisions, but this did not mean that they did not face barriers to doing so. Regardless, the culture in which they operated is a vital part of explaining their involvement in the peace process and post conflict reconciliation and redevelopment. If the Bougainville case is to be used as an example of how women can be involved in peace processes and the benefits this can bring, then the culture which was the foundation for them doing so must be acknowledged.

Similarly, the course of the conflict itself helped to create an environment in which women were able to make appeals for peace and consequently become involved in the official peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment programmes. This point will be thoroughly explored in the chapter on the nature of women's attempts to foster peace during the conflict, but it is important to note that the conflict's complex and sometimes chaotic nature, and the resulting collapse of state control and social services meant that there was scope for women to take on roles filling these social niches. Furthermore, as the conflict became less about addressing secession and the grievances from the Panguna mine and more of a violent disintegration of social structures, the desire for peace among women became ever stronger. An acknowledgement of these factors and trends is vital to explaining and understanding the overall place of women in the peace process.

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80 Regan "Causes and course of the Bougainville conflict" 282.

CHAPTER 3 - WOMEN SEEKING PEACE THROUGHOUT THE CONFLICT AND THEIR PLACE IN THE OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS

Introduction

Although the conflict in Bougainville was not brought to an end until 1997, almost a decade after it began, there were multiple attempts to achieve peace before this. Most notably there were failed ceasefires in 1990 and 1994 which were followed by another round of official peace negotiations at Cairns, Australia in 1995. As well as failing to bring an end to hostilities these talks also proved divisive for the leadership of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army. BRA General Sam Kauona and Justice Minister Joseph Kabui both attended the negotiations in Cairns but were threatened with violence for doing so by their political leader and nominal Prime Minister, Francis Ona, who remained determined to achieve full military victory over Papua New Guinea. Even in 1997 when the successful Burnham peace negotiations were held in Christchurch, New Zealand Ona remained opposed to the process despite General Kauona's belief that his forces had gained the upper hand over the PNGDF and were in a strong position to achieve their goals through negotiation.[81]
However despite the lack of involvement from Ona and some of his close allies within the BRA the Burnham talks were successful in both ending large-scale violence and laying the foundation for the granting of autonomy to Bougainville with a later possibility of full secession.

This chapter will consider the ways in which women were involved in trying to build peace through informal and unofficial channels at a grassroots level while the conflict was ongoing, and in the official attempts at peace throughout the period of the conflict through to the successful Burnham and Lincoln talks in New Zealand. Like all aspects of Bougainvillean culture and history this was a complex process and a balance must be struck between focusing too much on the various different experiences and approaches to peace of the women of Bougainville during this time, and oversimplifying this complexity for the sake of clarity. This chapter is arranged into three chronological sections based on significant events in the course of the conflict, examining women's roles: before the PNGDF blockade; during the blockade and after the return of PNGDF forces; and during the official peace negotiations at Burnham and Lincoln and the establishment of the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) and Peace Monitoring Group (PMG).

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81 Sam Kauona "Freedom From Fear" in Rebecca Adams (ed) *Peace on Bougainville – Truce Monitoring Group: Gudpela Nius Bilong Peace"* (Wellington: Victoria University Press 2001)83-94.

Before the Blockade: The first stages of women's quest for peace

Bougainvillean women have traditionally had a cultural role as peacemakers in inter- and intra-clan disputes, both ending conflicts and engaging in reconciliation ceremonies. Furthermore, there is a strong sense of maternal responsibility among the women of Bougainville and this is recognised by the men there as well. Because of the desire to ensure a safe and stable future for their children and grandchildren many women from Bougainville felt obligated to try to do anything within their power to bring about peace. Marcelline Maliku, a woman who was heavily involved in trying to build peace, said: "we had to come out and speak for our people and for our women, for the powerless, for the weak, and for the children of tomorrow."[82]

This attitude was shared by many women on Bougainville but there were significant barriers to them speaking out during the first stage of the conflict. The first and most obvious was the security situation. Before the PNGDF left the island in late 1990 there were two years of what was effectively martial law, with curfews and escalating violence commonplace. People from villages in the mountains were forced into government run care centres in towns on the coast where they were cut off from events outside and the PNGDF acquired a reputation for excessive force and thuggery. For instance, on one occasion soldiers violently beat two German Catholic priests who wanted to enter a care centre to check on the well-being of their parishioners, and stories abounded of rape, torture, abductions, and even summary executions. Meanwhile Bougainvilleans who had been in positions of power before the crisis were the targets of suspicion on the part of some BRA-aligned youths even if they openly supported the cause.[83]

In this environment anyone who spoke out for peace was a target and this continued to be the situation for most of the conflict, as can be seen even at the highest level of the BRA with Francis Ona's response to Sam Kauona and Joseph Kabui's involvement in the Cairns and Burnham peace talks. Bravery was therefore a necessary attribute for anyone, man or woman, attempting to bring peace to Bougainville during the conflict. As John Donna, a former head of the Council of Elders for North Nasoi district, near the Panguna mine at the heart of the conflict, said: "You must be ready to die when you are negotiating for peace – both sides want to kill you."[84] From his own experience

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82 Interview with Marcelline Maliku, October 12 2011.
83 Marilyn Taleo Havini "Journey Into Exile" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004)17-19.
84 Interview with John Donna, October 10 2011.

campaigning for peace Donna was able to see how women campaigners managed to cope with the threat of physical violence, rape or even death, and credits the courage they showed to their desire to build a better life for their children.[85]

In some respects the security situation favoured women as peace-builders when compared to men because women came under less suspicion when crossing checkpoints or if randomly stopped by soldiers from either side. Although rape was a very real possibility they were also less likely to be physically harmed or killed than their male counterparts. Women's role in the early stages of the conflict thus evolved into that of intermediaries between the BRA and pro-independence Bougainvilleans and those who favoured staying as part of Papua New Guinea. Before the conflict there had been a number of women's organisations operating in Bougainville but the pressures of the conflict had hindered their ability to function effectively.[86] As the conflict progressed new groups were formed with a focus on peace which were often secular in nature, in contrast to the church-based women's groups which had existed prior to the conflict.[87] Regardless of whether they were secular or not, the same problems with logistics, time and finance which had hampered the predecessors were also barriers to the new generation of groups. At the same time the violence of the conflict and the social problems it created undermined women's previous position of relative influence within Bougainvillean culture, and in many cases forced women to focus on more immediate issues of food, safety and health for themselves and their children, rather than engaging with political issues.[88]

The experiences and attitudes of individual women and groups of women varied greatly as the conflict wore on, and it is hard to make general statements about the women of Bougainville as a whole. It is important to note that women were providing support for fighters by making them food and helping out logistically and thus even if they were not involved in direct combat they were often very much a part of the military effort. As one ex-combatant said: "when there is fighting, it is not men alone making the fighting, there are women behind them as well, giving them a bed... and that is why we need the women to get involved in the peace process."[89]

Women's role as peacemakers started to expand beyond the traditional cultural role while still retaining its essence, and opinion is divided to this day amongst Bougainvilleans as to the extent of the transformation of women's roles in their culture as a result of the conflict. The disagreement

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85 Ibid.
86 Rolfe "Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville" 51.
87 Interview with Marilyn Taleo Havini, October 13 2011.
88   Ibid.
89 Anonymous interview.

over whether this is the case stems from both the differing experiences of Bougainvilleans during the conflict, and an underlying view of their culture as permanent and unchanging. From the evidence I examined both in terms of secondary literature and the responses given in interviews there have definitely been some changes in the cultural roles of women in Bougainville both during and after the conflict. Of course the change of all cultural roles in some way is to be expected in an environment where violent conflict has seriously undermined existing social structures, but this raises the question of how much they have changed and in what way. Furthermore, there is the question of whether the way in which women's roles changed was consciously directed or rather simply an inevitable and unintended consequence of the conflict. On balance it seems that many women were intentionally adapting their cultural roles to address the unintentional changes in cultural roles that men, especially young men, had experienced as a result of the conflict. As gender roles are always constructed in relation to each other it is unsurprising that a change in the role of men would see a change in the role of women. In fact, this is common in conflicts as women often take on more economic responsibility and family leadership roles in the place of absent combatant men. [90] In Bougainville this also occurred but was accompanied by an intentional increase in the scope of women's engagement with politics and the socio-political decision making processes in general. The full extent of the changes to women's cultural roles and the ongoing impact of this in the post-conflict environment of Bougainville will be addressed in a later chapter, so for now it is important only to note that in the opinion of some, women were beginning to step outside of their traditional cultural role.

The Blockade and the Return of the PNGDF: The growth of women's groups

The situation on Bougainville changed significantly in 1990 when the PNGDF withdrew from the island and instigated a naval blockade to try and choke off the BRA and its support. Although the withdrawal meant a freedom from fear of PNGDF troops, it also signalled an end to access to healthcare and other social services. Further problems arose from the lack of centralised authority. Despite a declaration of independence by BRA leadership following the PNGDF's withdrawal their control over many parts of Bougainville was weak or non-existent. While the PNGDF were present the secessionist movement had enjoyed broad popular support but with the enemy no longer present and faced with an inability to provide basic services (mostly as a result of the blockade),

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90 Interview with Marilyn Taleo Havini, October 13 2011.

conflict began to intensify between various factions from within Bougainville.[91] This would later become a more formal split, as the Papua New Guinean government supported anti-BRA factions which became known as the Bougainville Resistance Front (BRF) or simply the resistance. This led to the conflict changing character from being a purely secessionist movement to a hybrid secessionist-civil conflict.[92] The shift to Bougainvilleans fighting each other rather than the PNGDF was also to have the effect of strengthening the indigenous peace movement, as it meant appeals for peace could be made without appearing to be biased towards one side or the other. Furthermore, the sight of Bougainvilleans fighting each other spurred more people into promoting peace than had been when the conflict had been simply the BRA fighting the PNGDF.[93]

As the effects of living cut-off from the external world began to be felt, women began to mobilise. Faced once more with a dangerous security situation and particularly concerned with the health problems caused by the lack of medication, many women tried to promote peace between belligerents. Their methods for doing so evolved along with the conflict itself, as they organised into a range of local and pan-Bougainvillean groups. Regardless of whether they supported the claims for secession or not, these groups shared common goals and methods in their attempts to bring peace back to their homeland. In many ways this process was the result of the actions of the Papua New Guinean leadership, along with a growing dissatisfaction with the horrors of war. One example of the type of action women took at this point was a peace march followed by an all night vigil organised by women from the area around Selau. Up to 5000 people may have attended this event, although there is no way to verify such a claim.[94] Nonetheless, this sort of grassroots action characterises the type of approach women used to try to build peace at this phase in the conflict. The case of Selau is particularly interesting as in August 1991 women and the local council of chiefs staged a reconciliation ceremony which included the PNGDF and led to the village being officially neutral for the rest of the conflict. This in turn provided an example to neighbouring areas and Bougainville as a whole saw to the potential for peace and reconciliation, even at this early stage in the overall conflict.[95]

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91 Ghai and Regan "Unitary state, devolution, autonomy, secession" 597.
92   Anthony J. Regan "The Bougainville intervention: political legitimacy and sustainable peace-building" in Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka (eds) *Intervention and state-building in the Pacific: The legitimacy of 'cooperative intervention'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2008) 187.
93 Interview with Hona Holan, October 12 2011.
94 John Braithwaite, Hilary Charlesworth, Peter Reddy, and Leah Dunn "6. Reconciliation and reintegration" *Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment: Sequencing peace in Bougainville* (2010) http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Reconciliation+and+Architectures+of+Commitment%3A+Sequencing+peace+in+Bougainville/5301/ch06.xhtml#toc-anchor Accessed November 20 2011
95 Ibid.

In 1994, after another failed attempt at an official cease-fire, the PNGDF returned to Bougainville and again established "care centres" for IDPs, which would eventually house approximately 60,000 people, or around a third of the population.[96] This massing of people in government controlled areas provided a catalyst for the creation of new women's organisations. Being in a care centre meant that it was easier for women to organise and plan their actions because they were not preoccupied with daily survival, and were all in one location and therefore obviously found it much easier to communicate between group members than the women who were still in the jungle in the BRA-controlled areas. "Initially they formed the organisations to try to talk to women on the other side, and to the men... that was the main aim, the goal, to achieve a peace process".[97]

The growth in women's groups was not just consigned to the government controlled areas. In the BRA controlled regions there was also a concerted effort on the part of women to mobilise and organise. This was in part driven by the necessity of providing social services to their communities such as medical care and education. These groups worked with networks of Bougainvillean refugees in the Solomon Islands to ferry supplies and information past the PNGDF blockade. Organised under the overall coordination of the Bougainville Community Based Integrated Humanitarian Program (BOCBIHP), the women's groups in the BRA controlled areas achieved significant results given the barriers they faced. For instance, by the time of the 1997 peace process they had established 47 village health centres and 71 community schools with 4,726 enrolled pupils.[98] Although these women's groups were not established with a stated goal of promoting peace it was almost inevitable that this would become part of the agenda. Government controlled media promoted the idea that their attempts to defeat the BRA were in the best interests of the women and children of Bougainville, and this spurred them into attempting to achieve peace on their own terms.[99]

Another notable example of women's desire for peace and their organisational capacity at this stage of the conflict was a peace conference of church-affiliated women in Arawa in 1996 which drew 700 attendees.[100] This is a remarkable achievement given the fact it took place near the centre of hostilities at a time of fierce fighting. Those attending did not just come from the

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96 Marilyn Taleo Havini "Women in the Community During the Blockade" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 69.
97 Anonymous interview.
98 Marilyn Taleo Havini "Women in the Community During the Blockade" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 71.
99 Ibid. 72.
100   Rolfe "Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville" 51.

surrounding area either, but from all over Bougainville. Many put themselves at significant personal risk to attend but felt it was vital to do so to try to create a sense of solidarity and unity between many different women and groups of women who had been working less formally for peace. At the meeting women formed groups which then went back to their villages and sought permission from chiefs and the PNGDF to negotiate with combatants to end the fighting. Monica Samu, of the Bougainville InterChurch Women's Forum, which initiated the conference, described the situation these women faced when they met with the combatants:

> [When] we went they asked us not to go further to their camps but to meet them half way. They had all their guns pointing to us. Some of them were from our village . . . some of them were more aggressive than the others. We told them to come home. It wasn't easy. They were saying we were trying to get them to be afraid of the PNGDF.[101]

This case also highlights the important but often unrecognised role church groups played in the peace process in Bougainville. Most Bougainvilleans are Catholic, and religious leaders hold considerable sway within the community. The fifth commandment was invoked by many mothers (and fathers) who sought peace, telling their sons that they had to listen to them when they told them to lay down arms, because God commanded them to obey their mothers and fathers.[102] This appeal was given further strength because the traditional role of women and the deep respect for mothers which is ingrained in Bougainvillean culture. Marcelline Maliku described this by saying: "in our culture a women is someone very valuable... men know that we are there so when things get hard they often come back to ask how things should be done."[103]

The role of women in seeking peace on Bougainville also extended out into the international community. A Bougainvillean woman who had escaped the blockade, Daphne Zale, was one of the attendees at the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. There she was not only able to describe the plight of women and children behind the blockade, but also able to gain contacts with other women from around the world, many of whom had suffered similarly in other conflicts.[104] Other women fled to exile and continued to work there to bring peace and help those still in Bougainville, but even away from the conflict they were not always safe. Scholastica

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101   Sharon Bhagwan Rolls "Women Mediators in Pacific Conflict Zones" femLINKPACIFIC
        www.apmec.unisa.edu.au/apmf/2006/papers/rolls.pdf Accessed May 23 2011. 8.
102   Anonymous interview.
103   Interview with Marcelline Maliku, October 12 2011.
104   Daphne Zale "Human Rights abuses and Survival behind the blockade" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and
        Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.
        (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 47.

Raren Miriori and her husband Martin set up a humanitarian centre for refugees from Bougainville in the Solomon Islands, but were forced to flee again when their house in Honiara was fire-bombed, possibly by order of the Papua New Guinean government.[105]

Women also travelled overseas as part of the formal peace attempts that took place during the conflict. In 1995 the parties met at Cairns to try to find a mutually acceptable agreement, and women were invited to attend as well as the combatants. Among the delegates was Theresa Jaitong from the Provincial Council of Women, yet another women's group which had been created in response to the conflict. She credited the attempts to organise and mobilise women throughout 1994 and 1995 with getting women acknowledged at the official peace talks.[106] When the Burnham talks were initiated two years later women were given even greater representation, as will be discussed in the following section.

The dominant theme in women's involvement in the peace process in the latter stages of the conflict is that of organisation into more formal groups and structures, which in turn provided in enhanced capacity to make positive changes and influence the combatants. As will be seen in the following chapter this process has continued in post-conflict Bougainville but the environment in which women are working and the challenges they face have changed markedly. Before discussing this it is important to understand how peace finally came about and the role which women played in this process.

Women's involvement in the Burnham and Lincoln negotiations and with the TMG and PMG

By 1997 pressure had begun to mount on the Papua New Guinean government to resolve the situation in Bougainville. The embarrassment of a constitutional crisis brought about by the Prime Minister's decision to hire South African mercenaries to take over the management of the conflict was a key point in the chain of events that led to a peace agreement. The Sandline affair, as the incident was known after the name of the mercenary contractor involved, showed just how frustrated the Papua New Guinea government had become at the situation and encouraged some in the BRA to consider negotiations while they had the upper hand both militarily and psychologically. This position was further strengthened by a series of military victories gained by

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105   Scholastica Raren Miriori "Escaping Assassination and Refugee Flight Overseas" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 55-58.
106   Theresa Jaitong "Refuge At Last!" in Rebecca Adams (ed) *Peace on Bougainville – Truce Monitoring Group: Gudpela Nius Bilong Peace"* (Wellington: Victoria University Press 2001) 101-102.

the BRA in the months before. Sam Kauona and Joseph Kabui both agreed to arrange peace talks with BRF representatives (but not PNGDF representatives). Francis Ona and some of his close allies refused to engage with the peace talks and stayed in Bougainville near the Panguna mine.[107]

The initial round of these peace talks was held at the Burnham military base in Christchurch, New Zealand and became known as the Burnham I talks. It consisted solely of parties from Bougainville, mostly consisting of representatives from the BRA and BRF, with the New Zealand government acting as a neutral host and not becoming involved in the negotiations themselves. Representatives of the PNG government did not take part until the second round of negotiations or Burnham II, and the formal peace agreement was not reached until a third round of talks, known as the Lincoln Agreement after the university in Christchurch where they were held. The Lincoln Agreement stipulated a 6 year peacekeeping mission made up of unarmed troops from New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and Vanuatu which was known as the Peace Monitoring Group or PMG. This was effectively an extension of the Truce Monitoring Group or TMG which had been operating in Bougainville as a result of the Burnham talks.[108] Women were heavily involved in both the negotiations themselves and the implementation of the agreements and operations of the TMG and PMG, which is a relatively unusual occurrence in such operations.

There were a variety of reasons for women becoming formally involved in these areas. As has already been established many women on Bougainville had already been engaged in informal attempts at peace, but it does not necessarily follow that they would make the transition to the formal peace process. Volker Boege points to the hybrid nature of the conflict and the failure of both the Papua New Guinea government and the BRA/BIG leadership to act as a functioning state with a monopoly on the legitimate use of power as opening the door for a return to customary methods of political control through chiefs and clan elders throughout the course of the conflict. In the post-conflict environment this meant that there was much use of customary peacebuilding methods, in which women played significant roles. Furthermore, the political vacuum meant that there was scope for a larger role to be played by civil society groups which included the many women's groups operating at the time.[109] In light of their heavy involvement in providing social services during the crisis, the women's groups had in fact assumed much of the role of the state and thus it may well have been that there was a sense that they had a right to be involved in the

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107   Sean Dorney, *The Sandline Affair: Politics and mercenaries and the Bougainville crisis.* (Sydney: ABC Books for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation 1998) 350.
108   Peter Reddy "Reconciliation in Bougainville: Civil war, peacekeeping and restorative justice" Contemporary *Justice Review* 11:2 (2008) 119-120.
109   Boege "Peacebuilding and state formation in post-conflict Bougainville" 33-34.

formal peace process as a result.

I would also suggest that a significant reason that women were able to successfully engage with the formal peace process is cultural but is not strictly restricted to their customary peacebuilding role. Rather, the close-knit nature of Bougainville's communities and the respect for women as mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters meant that the male combatants and political figures were willing to accept them into the formal peace process. Rather than having to fight to be heard, Bougainville's women already had a voice and they were invited into the formal peace negotiations with the knowledge that they would be respected and listened to. This process has been ultimately successful, not just for women but for the overall peace process itself. Most Bougainvilleans openly acknowledge that the involvement of women in the peace process was one of the keys to its success. For instance, Francis Semoso of the LNWDA said "their involvement was very vital. They were the only people who were open to all parties."[110] Similar views also came from people at the top of the political structure during the conflict. Sam Kauona considered women's involvement as vital in conjunction with the involvement of all interested parties."When it came to the peace process they were equal partners. No one was leading. Even my force, the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, we played our part in the peace process, as well as other parties like women, churches, government agencies."[111]

The nature of women's involvement within the formal peace process was as varied as the factors which led to it. In the Burnham I talks women were vital in pacifying the male leaders when they were struggling to agree on points "like a cooling system for the engine".[112] After participating at the first round of talks women were excluded from the Burnham II talks much to the dismay of many who felt that women deserved representation. In the wake of the Burnham I talks the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (BWPF) was founded by women from the BRA side of the conflict. The founding president was Josephine Sirivi, wife of BRA General Sam Kauona, and this connection was vital in helping the BWPF get access to the Lincoln talks and acceptance from the combatants.[113] BWPF was to go on to play a pivotal role in the ongoing peace process, helping to facilitate reconciliation ceremonies and dialogue between belligerent groups.

The Lincoln talks saw 22 women delegates take part in the negotiations with the BRA and BRF factions as well as the PNG government. The delegates included women from different factions and backgrounds but their desire for peace came out of a shared understanding of their roles as

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110   Interview with Francis Semoso, October 13 2011.
111   Interview with Sam Kauona, October 8 2011.
112   Interview with Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, October 8 2011.
113   Ibid.

mothers and as Christians.[114] When the women delegates met at Lincoln they embraced each other and shared their personal stories of the conflict even though many of them were from opposing sides.[115] This was perhaps a useful icebreaker for the male delegates as many of them viewed their opposites with suspicion and seeing the women embrace encouraged them to be more open about their interactions with each other. Women then helped to draft the formal peace agreement and one of the significant influences they had on the resulting constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (ARB) was the establishment of three women's seats in the new parliament, although the women themselves had argued for 12 (out of a total of 41).[116] However as three ex-combatant seats were also created at the same time and all combatants were men, the three women's seats can also be seen to be a balancing mechanism against the three seats that only (certain) men could stand for. All voters, men and women, ex-combatants or not, can vote for all six of these special seats. As the ex-combatant seats will be phased out at an unspecified point in the future it will be interesting to see if the special women's seats are retained when this happens.[117]

Women also played a vital role in the success of TMG and PMG operations. Many of the foreign officers involved in peacekeeping recognised the role that women had in Bougainvillean culture, and the presence of women amongst the peacekeeping troops helped them be accepted by local women.[118] The TMG/PMG also provided logistical support for women's peace efforts, transporting them to remote villages for further negotiations and reconciliation ceremonies. In many ways the peacekeeping forces were more facilitators for the peace process rather than enforcers of a peace, and this helped them to be accepted by the locals. Often seemingly small or simple things could make positive differences in the peace process. For example, one Bougainvillean woman interviewed for this study claimed that the PMG laundry, where women gathered to use the foreign troops' clothes washing facilities, was a vital factor in getting women from both sides to talk

114   Marilyn Taleo Havini "Women's Voices for Peace at the Lincoln Negotiations" in Josephine Tankunani Sirivi and Marilyn Taleo Havini (eds) ...*As Mothers of the Land: The birth of the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom.* (Canberra: Pandanus Books 2004) 143-147.
115   Ibid.
116   John Braithwaite, Hilary Charlesworth, Peter Reddy, and Leah Dunn "9. Interpreting the conflict in summary" *Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment: Sequencing peace in Bougainville* (2010) http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Reconciliation+and+Architectures+of+Commitment%3A+Sequencing+peace+in+Bougainville/5301/ch09.xhtml Accessed January 25 2012.
117   John Braithwaite, Hilary Charlesworth, Peter Reddy, and Leah Dunn "6. Reconciliation and reintegration" *Reconciliation and Architectures of Commitment: Sequencing peace in Bougainville* (2010) http://epress.anu.edu.au/apps/bookworm/view/Reconciliation+and+Architectures+of+Commitment%3A+Sequencing+peace+in+Bougainville/5301/ch06.xhtml#toc-anchor Accessed January 25 2012.
118   Rolfe "Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville" 49-50.

to each other again after the conflict.[119] This anecdote shows the community-focused nature of Bougainvillean culture, particularly as it relates to women, and the way in which this could be used to help maximise the effectiveness of the peace process.

Conclusion

It is difficult to establish the exact effect that women's attempts to build peace during the conflict in Bougainville had. Many different factors came together to get all parties to the negotiating table in 1997 , and as well as women campaigning for peace there was also a significant and largely unacknowledged campaign from various church groups to halt the violence.[120] This, coupled with the external factors such as the Sandline affair and the intercession of the New Zealand government, and the military successes that gave the BRA a stronger position to negotiate, mean that it is not possible to single out any one factor as influencing the path to the peace negotiations more than the others. By the same reasoning women's quest for peace cannot be dismissed as a minor or insignificant factor in bringing about the negotiations. Many people on Bougainville give women a large amount of credit for their courage and tenacity in seeking peace and claim that the peace process could not have been a success without women becoming involved. As Roger Mortlock, leader of the TMG operations stated: "Women are a force for peace. For them, war has no glamour – they bear the suffering and pain of reality."[121]

When considering the 1997 negotiations themselves women's role becomes much clearer. The unusual condition of having women present at negotiations between male military leaders undoubtedly helped to create an environment where compromise was more possible, and allowed a wider range of views and opinions to be heard. Given the traditional place of women in Bougainvillean culture both as peacemakers and landowners, women already had substantial social capital to use in peace talks. The further development of informal networks and women's groups created a parallel peace process to the official one, one that served to strengthen and validate other efforts at peace. The fact that women from all factions of the conflict were actively involved in this parallel process shows both the breadth of its appeal, and the strength of solidarity between the women of Bougainville by the final stages of the conflict.[122] However, despite their common

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119   Anonymous interview.
120   Roger Mortlock "A Good Thing To Do" in Rebecca Adams (ed) *Peace on Bougainville – Truce Monitoring Group: Gudpela Nius Bilong Peace"* (Wellington: Victoria University Press 2001) 78-79.
121   Ibid. 78.
122   Rolls "Women Mediators in Pacific Conflict Zones" 9.

actions and goals, it is important to note that the experiences of women from different sides of the conflict were far from uniform. Those who had been in the care centres were sometimes viewed as traitors by those who had lived on the other side of the lines and while both sides suffered traumatic experiences during the conflict the nature of those experiences also differed greatly.[123] Despite the fact that the care centres were nominally for the protection of civilians, and that people who were in them were viewed with suspicion by those who remained in the jungle, women in the care centres experienced the trauma of the conflict as captives, and faced threats, physical violence, and sometimes even rape at the hands of the PNGDF.[124]

Also of interest is the way in which this process of engagement with the official peace process by women laid the foundations for women to be involved in the post-conflict aspects of the peace process. These include reconciliation, which women already had a substantial traditional role in Bougainvillean culture, recovery, and rehabilitation. Many of the individual women and collective women's groups who were most actively involved in the peace negotiations during the conflict were to become prominent voices in the post-conflict environment, and this is at least in part traceable back to the empowerment they experienced by mobilising and uniting for peace while the fighting was still raging.

It has been noted in other conflicts that women are often excluded from the post-conflict stage of peace processes even if they had heavy involvement in the quest for peace during the conflict.[125] The differing situation in Bougainville raises the obvious question of what exactly led to this unusual case. Clearly some of the factors involved were unique to the Bougainville case, but equally some were not. The three factors which appear to have been the most important in women's involvement in the peace process are the grassroots mobilisation and organisation of women into formal groups, the influence of traditional Bougainvillean culture, and the appeal to the role of women as mothers. The relative importance of these factors and how they might possibly inform future peace processes will be further weighed up in the conclusion chapter of this thesis.

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123   Anonymous interview.
124   Interview with Hona Holan, October 12 2011.
125   Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen "There Is No Aftermath for Women" 12-13.

CHAPTER 4 - WOMEN IN POST-CONFLICT BOUGAINVILLE

Introduction

For the women of Bougainville the end of the conflict saw a significant shift in their role in society. Obviously with the end of hostilities there were far fewer security risks, and the goal of the peace process shifted, in most cases, from ending fighting and trying to get combatants to negotiate to reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. The improved security situation and renewed contact with the outside world also saw the engagement of external NGOs and IGOs with the people of Bougainville. Many of these agencies were committed to "gender-mainstreaming", to promoting gender equality and awareness of gender issues. Because of this the environment in which women were working was vastly different in the post-conflict stage than during the conflict itself. For these reasons the ways in which women worked to achieve their goals also shifted as a plethora of grassroots women's NGOs were founded.

While the previous chapter was arranged chronologically this one will be arranged thematically. The course of the conflict was the fundamental influence on the development and evolution of women's quest for peace before the 1997 negotiations, but after that point women's work in the post-conflict stage became less focused on a single goal and more varied and multifaceted. This chapter will address the various themes that have emerged from women's involvement in the post-conflict stage of the peace process in Bougainville and the responses of other Bougainvilleans, scholars and the international community to it.

It is important to note that many of the issues raised in this chapter are ongoing, despite the fact that it has been 14 years since the end of hostilities in most of Bougainville and a decade since the formal establishment of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and the adoption of its constitution. There are still two areas in Bougainville where government control is secondary to the influence of former combatants, in the southern town of Buin and in the vicinity of the Panguna mine in the central part of the island. Opinion is divided as to the causes of this, especially in the case of Buin, as the situation around Panguna can be more directly traced to Francis Ona's refusal to engage with the peace process there in the late 1990s. Nonetheless both cases highlight the perils of overstating the success of the peace process in Bougainville. These issues, as well as other ongoing challenges and barriers to the post-conflict recovery will be discussed in a later section.

Social problems and Bougainville's post-conflict environment

The conflict in Bougainville and its aftermath has left behind a social environment with many issues which stand as barriers to reconciliation, rehabilitation and development of Bougainville. While some of these issues are specifically related to women, such as an increase in domestic violence and sexual assault, others affect the whole community equally, such as the lack of trauma counselling that has been offered for civilians and the fact that a whole generation missed out on formal education because of the conflict. Women are concerned with all of these issues, and addressing them is one of the key goals of the women's groups which were mentioned in the previous chapter and will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter. However I think it is important to further explain and understand these issues at this stage as they play such a significant role in the environment in which women in Bougainville operate.

Because of the lack of funds on the part of the ABG and the logistical difficulties involved in such studies there is a lack of hard statistical data about much of the ongoing social problems in Bougainville. However there is much anecdotal evidence that issues resulting from trauma and a lack of access to services are widespread. John Donna, former head of the Council of Elders for the North Nasioi district, told me that up to 80% of young men may have missed out on education because of the conflict.[126] Another interviewee, Marilyn Havini, talked about the breakdown of family structures, the lack of access to basic services and facilities and the rise of domestic violence and rape.[127] While there is no hard data available to support these claims the sheer volume of anecdotal evidence indicates that they are very real. This is not surprising but it nonetheless needs to be acknowledged to understand the post-conflict situation in which Bougainvillean women now find themselves.

The trauma of the conflict has deeply affected the people of Bougainville, and the problem has been further exacerbated by the fact that trauma counselling has only been offered to ex-combatants, with civilians being excluded from any official help. Even the counselling given to ex-combatants has been very limited. As a result of this many Bougainvilleans still consider the problem of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (although for obvious reasons this is almost never clinically diagnosed) as the biggest barrier to development that they face. The issues arising from this also seem to have had a disproportionately large impact on younger generations. Addressing

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126   Interview with John Donna, October 10 2011.
127   Interview with Marilyn Taleo Havini, October 13 2011.

this is a key concern for many women.

> "These are very young boys all they knew was guns and murder, all they saw was their mother being raped or their uncle being killed... this is what I call the lost generation. Something must be done with this lost generation. You can't just go on and blame and blame and blame, you have to find a way to change."[128]

Trauma affects every aspect of life and as such is vital to understanding Bougainville's social problems. Although there is no empirical data it seems safe to assume that much of the rise in domestic and sexual violence since the end of hostilities stems at least in part from the trauma of the conflict and its effect on individual and community relationships.[129] The issue of trauma as a barrier to the overall development and reconstruction of Bougainville is broadly acknowledged by Bougainvillean leaders but there is a lack of resources available to address it, both from the government itself and from NGOs.[130]

There are also other social problems which have developed as a result of the conflict. As has been mentioned earlier there are still two parts of Bougainville where government control has not yet reached, Panguna and Buin. This leads to problems with providing healthcare and other social services to these areas. Even outside of these areas though there is still are big problem with providing these services to people. The state of the infrastructure on much of the island is poor to say the least and the government lacks funds to develop it, which makes it hard to reach many villages. Furthermore the lack of education for many people as a result of the conflict makes it harder to spread disease prevention awareness. Health issues have wider implications too, as if illness strikes it may stop adults being able to go to markets to trade, and children from being able to attend school.

Women's place in these issues is a complex one, like much of the social structure on Bougainville. On the one hand, women are traditionally viewed as carrying the culture because of both the matrilineal clan structure and because of their role as bearers of future generations. On the other hand this traditional position has been strongly challenged by the massive social upheaval caused by the creation and operation of the mine, the conflict, and its long aftermath.

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128   Interview with Marcelline Maliku, October 12 2011.
129   Anonymous interview.
130   Interview with Magdalene Toroansi, October 12 2011.

Women's work and goals in post-conflict Bougainville

One of the most notable trends in post-conflict Bougainville is the rise to prominence of small, grassroots level NGOs aimed at helping the recovery and development from the conflict. Many of these groups are organised and arranged by women and address women's issues, and they carry on a tradition of local women's groups that has its origin in the pre-conflict days.[131] As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there were also already a significant number of women's groups active at the end of the conflict and these have taken up the mantle of addressing the development needs of Bougainvillean women in particular and society in general as it recovers from the conflict.

The most widely recognised example of this is Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA). The LNWDA was formed in northern Bougainville in 1992 to promote peace through empowering women and promoting non-violence and development, and remains as one of the most prominent NGOs in Bougainville, in part due to its relationships with external aid donors such as AusAID.[132] While the primary goals of the LNWDA have not changed since its inception, the methods it uses to achieve them have, as they now have access to greater resources and a safer environment in which to operate. The LNWDA now runs advocacy, literacy, and vocational training programmes for women, and has also hired a Male Projects Officer to address men's issues as well.[133] Among the issues which are addressed is domestic violence, and the LNWDA runs a "Living Without Violence" programme aimed at men., which demonstrates the acknowledgement that it is often impossible to separate men's and women's issues at a practical level. Because of the breadth and quality of its work, the LNWDA has now developed a significant international profile as well, and has been widely recognised for its role in peace and development in Bougainville. It has received acknowledgement in the form of the United Nations Millennium Peace Prize in 2000, and a Pacific Peace Prize in 2004.[134]

Women who were involved in peace-seeking NGOs during the conflict and negotiation phases have also transitioned into purely social problem orientated community projects as well. For instance

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131   Rolfe "Peacekeeping the Pacific Way in Bougainville" 51.

132   Jonathon Makuwira "Aid partnership in the Bougainville conflict: the case of a local women's NGO and its donors" *Development in Practice* Volume 16, Numbers 3& 4 (2006) 324.

133   Interview with Francis Semoso, October 13 2011.

134   http://www.iwda.org.au/2010/11/09/sad-news-in-bougainville-iwda-extends-sympathy-and-solidarity-to-leitana-nehan-women%E2%80%99s-development-agency/ retrieved on 08/01/12.

Josephine Sirivi, wife of BRA General Sam Kauona and founding president of the BWPF, is now running the Tunaniya Open Learning Centre which is modelled after the Open Learning Centre in Palmerston North, New Zealand, where Sirivi and Kauona briefly lived after the conflict. The Tunaniya Open Learning Centre offers literacy training to Bougainvilleans of all ages as well as actively promoting awareness of human rights in Bougainville. This example shows how the burden of post-conflict development has been taken up by the same people who were prominent in the secession movement. This is not say that they are the only people to do so but simply that their sense of community responsibility has continued on despite the end of the conflict and the change in political situation in Bougainville.

As well as pre-existing NGOs and individual women who were already involved in socio-political roles working towards post-conflict development there are also examples of women who have not been previously involved in such areas organising and mobilising. One example of this is Joyce Menau who is arranging a landowner's collective with the other women of her clan to protect their rights to the land and work together towards creating economic opportunities for the next generation.[135] While this process is still in its embryonic stage and thus it is far too early to pass judgement on its success, it nonetheless represents the desire amongst the women of Bougainville to engage with the post-conflict redevelopment process, regardless of their previous involvement in politics or social/community development, or the barriers which they face. It also shows that because of their traditional cultural role as clan landowners women are integral to the future economic development of Bougainville, as they are in a position to make decisions on land use. This is particularly important as Bougainville's economy is still largely subsistence agriculture based and shifting to cash crops, or other forms of land use, requires the consent of the women of the clan whose land it is. Unfortunately this form of collective land ownership has caused some difficulties in Bougainville already, with the disagreements over who had the right to grant mining consent at Panguna stemming in part from this issue. More recently this has caused more problems, with the former international airport unable to open because of similar disputes, and a brand new bio-diesel plant also not currently operating because of land ownership issues.[136] Women sometimes clash with the male chiefs over the best way to utilise a clan's land resources, a tension which can be seen as resulting from imposing a Western capitalist economic model on a culture which is not structured to deal with it.

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135   Interview with Joyce Menau, October 11 2011.
136   http://bougainville.typepad.com/newdawn/2010/06/some-news-on-irccorporate-update-in-2009-the-company-raised-us-6323500-in-two-tranches-initially-through-the-help-of-a-n.html Accessed on October29 2011, and personal correspondence with Bougainvillean residents.

Another area where women have experienced changes in post-conflict Bougainville is politics but explaining this transition is difficult. The political landscape of contemporary Bougainville is a complex and sometimes confusing one, which can make understanding the relative gains of women in this area a difficult task. On the one hand certain advances have been made, most noticeably the creation of women's seats in the Bougainville parliament and the election of a women speaker of the house, there are still significant barriers to women becoming involved in politics. Chief among these barriers are a lack of confidence from both male and female voters in woman politicians, and a lack of education for women which means that many do not feel confident engaging in the political process.[137]

While some women think that Bougainvillean women can make up a quarter to a half of elected representatives in parliament in the near future due to their increased visibility as a result of the women's seats, this seems like an overly optimistic goal.[138] Given the initial problems in establishing the women's seats and the current lack of any women elected to the general seats there is still a long way to go before women's representation in parliament reaches 25%.[139] Even if women can manage to greatly increase their representation in parliament they will still have no formal representation in the traditional culture-based power structure which makes up a significant part of Bougainville's political landscape. Because of both the deep respect and attachment to cultural traditions, and the inability of the ABG to extend control to remote areas, chiefs and clan elders still provide much political leadership in the villages. As chiefs are always male this obviously excludes the direct participation of women, although their opinions are generally heard and respected. There is a hierarchical, pyramid-style structure whereby each village has a Village Council of Chiefs (VCC), which provides a representative to an Area Council of Chiefs (ACC), which in turn provides a representative to a Council of Elders (COE). Each constituency for the ABG has a COE, and these and the ACCs and VCCs provide much of the local area governance.[140]

Although this structure would seem to imply that women are excluded from local area politics, their place as landowners once again means that they can in fact exert considerable influence. However, there is a significant difference between informal power based upon control of land and formal, legal power vested by a constitution. The 3 women's seats in parliament guarantees at least

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137 Interview with Magdalene Toroansi, October 12 2011.
138 "Bougainville woman MP says reserved seats have changed attitudes"
  http://www.rnzi.com/pages/news.php?op=read&id=59632 Accessed on June 6 2011.
139 Interview with Magdalene Toroansi, October 12 2011.
140 Interview with David Dapoung, October 10 2011.

that many women will be members of parliament, and women can contest any other seat as well. At a national level (meaning in this case the Autonomous Region of Bougainville rather than PNG) women are formally acknowledged and represented, but at a smaller, village and town level this is not generally the case. Despite this, most of the efforts at getting women involved in the political process on Bougainville seem to be directed at the parliamentary level. It may be that women are happy with the current situation at local levels, or perhaps they are addressing the large-scale problem before the small scale one. The latter option seems unlikely as there is a clear trend on Bougainville to address problems from the grassroots level, so therefore it appears that women on Bougainville are generally happy with the current local level political structure because it reflects their cultural traditions and they still have a large amount of scope to influence it informally.

Local responses to women's work and goals in post-conflict Bougainville

The response of the ex-combatants and the wider community to women's involvement in the post-conflict aspects of the peace process in Bougainville has been generally positive. Bougainville is held up as an example of successful indigenous peacemaking in several places. The role of women in this context is less mentioned but still acknowledged and presented as evidence of the success of indigenous peacemaking in this case, because of their traditional cultural role as peacemakers. Whether women's involvement was in fact indicative of the success of traditional indigenous peace-building is not a question which appears to have been asked. In the final chapter I will address this assessment but for now I will outline other responses to women's involvement. These responses come from both the people of Bougainville and the international community.

The men of Bougainville, including excombatants, have generally positively welcomed the involvement of women in the post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment, although in some cases there was initial scepticism and suspicion during the first steps towards peace. Former BRA General Sam Kauona said "we have some marginalised people who were opposed to women participating, but generally it has been accepted. Only a few had very strong feelings against women participating."[141] Those who were opposed were often the younger fighters, as they did not have the same respect for women as their elders. Women had to be careful managing this relationship with the young combatants, particularly at the height of the conflict: "Sometimes the young boys they would get angry and it would be hard for women to defend themselves. But the

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141   Interview with Sam Kauona, October 8 2011.

way they (the women) talked up, they had to be smart enough."[142] These kinds of negative reactions to the peace process from combatants were not just in response to women's involvement, but rather to making peace in general. This was particularly the case early in the conflict, but as time passed people felt more need to end the fighting.[143]

In the longer-term post-conflict redevelopment phase, men have continued to respond positively to women's involvement. Interestingly there is a common awareness of the need for a balanced approach to gender-specific development issues from both men and women, one example of which is the fact, mentioned above, that the LNWDA has an employee tasked with addressing male concerns and issues.[144] There are two key reasons why Bougainvillean men were willing to listen to women's calls for peace and to allow them to take part in the more formal aspects of the peace process, which otherwise could have easily been an exclusively male environment. The first of these reasons is the role that women traditionally played in reconciliation almost all of Bougainville's cultures, and the generally high level of respect in which women are held in those cultures due to their matrilineal system. The second reason is related to the first but deserves to be considered separately both due to the emphasis placed on it by Bougainvilleans themselves and because it can be applied to other conflicts regardless of their cultural contexts. This is the appeal to women's place as mothers giving them a special perspective on events and the right to influence events which have a significant impact on future generations.

International engagement with and responses to women's work and goals in post-conflict Bougainville

The international community's response to Bougainville during the conflict itself was generally muted, with only Australia and New Zealand actively attempting to address the problems there. These attempts were discussed in the previous chapter so I will not return to them again but they are mentioned simply to point out the relative paucity of international attention that the Bougainville conflict received. This was to change in the immediate aftermath of the conflict as external NGOs and IGOs started to address women's place in Bougainville, and scholars wrote about the conflict and peace process. This scholarly attention often did not pay much specific

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142   Interview with John Donna, October 10 2011.
143   Ibid.
144   Interview with Francis Semoso, October 13 2011.

attention to women's role in the peace process, although the Australian National University in Canberra published a book of the experiences of the women of the BWPF ...*As Mothers of the Land*, which I have mentioned previously. Part of the reason for this relatively thin consideration from academics might be Bougainville's geopolitical situation as a small island in the South Pacific. Other parts of the world inevitably receive more attention and although in some ways this is understandable it is also unfortunate as the Bougainville case is a particularly interesting one and has the potential to test not just theoretical notions about women in peacebuilding but also indigenous peacebuilding as well.

In comparison to this rather limited academic interest IGOs and external NGOs were much more engaged in the post conflict environment, both funding local NGO and government programmes and running their own. Gender issues are often a priority of these agencies and this has meant that the women's aspects of the post-conflict redevelopment process have received significant attention. Furthermore, because of the proliferation of women's groups in Bougainville and their place in providing social services they were often the best placed local groups to co-operate with external NGOs and IGOs. Once again, the LNWDA is an excellent example of this as they received funding and other help from a variety of external sources, including the British government, Oxfam, World Vision, and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) which provided funding via the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). This has allowed the LNWDA to build its capacity and consequently provide more and better services for the people of Bougainville.[145]

Among the international agencies which have played a prominent role in the post-conflict redevelopment and reconstruction is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).[146] As a UN agency, the UNDP adopts the "gender mainstreaming" approach used by all UN bodies. Gender mainstreaming "involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects."[147] While this is an admirable goal it presents some problems when it is applied to Bougainville because of the specific gender relations there. Attempts to promote gender equity may in fact serve to undermine the existing position which women occupy in Bougainvillean culture. One author who has highlighted this is Eleanor Rimoldi, an anthropologist who has

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145   Makuwira "Aid partnership in the Bougainville conflict" 326.
146   http://www.unddr.org/video.php?id=19 Accessed on December 20 2011.
147   http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm Accessed on December 20 2011.

considerable experience working with women in Bougainville. She is particularly critical of gender-mainstreaming and the influence of UNSC Resolution 1325 in the Bougainville peace process because of its implicit bias towards Western-style patriarchal social structures:

> Inspired by feminist discourse, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have reconfigured Bougainvillean women into newly organised spheres of influence (as moral agents, peacemakers or victims) that potentially distort the matrilineal structure of their society, the true source of the women's power and authority in many communities in Bougainville.

> The feminist analysis of male-female relationships reflected in development discourse is at odds with the way in which these relationships are traditionally negotiated in Bougainville society and expressed in their central significance in the mutual construction of kinship, clans and authority on the island. Political and economic advisers frequently show no understanding of the customary power of women, and so policies and interventions fall far short of acknowledging women's position at the heart of Bougainvillean culture.[148]

She goes on to say that in some cases the involvement of outside agencies, who often had little knowledge or regard for the cultural context in which they were operating, led Bougainvilleans to adopt new views on gender that were at odds with their traditional ones. An increase in domestic violence and women begging on the streets are two of the indirect results of what she describes as a breakdown of traditional social structures and support networks caused in part by the goals and methods of Western agencies who seek to implement gender-mainstreaming initiatives at the expense of acknowledging the wider community.[149]

In another article Rimoldi extends this critique of the imposition of Western values from international aid agencies to Bougainvillean culture as a whole, claiming that the development of a peace process which co-opts indigenous methods distorts and disrupts existing power structures rather than strengthening them.[150] Being an anthropologist, Rimoldi may be more aware of the impact of cultural shifts on social structures than political scientists and development studies experts, but it is nonetheless difficult to imagine how a peace process could have been managed to

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148   Eleanor Rimoldi, "Force of Circumstance: Feminist Discourse in a Matrilineal Society" *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* Vol. 12, No. 2, April 2011. 181.
149   Ibid. 189-190.
150   Eleanor Rimoldi "Human Sacrifice and the Loss of Transformative Power" *Social Analysis,* Volume 49 issue 1 Spring 2005. 97.

be more sensitive to the cultural environment at hand. Furthermore, the fact that there has been a distortion of existing cultural power structures does not mean that it was solely the result of the impact of the action of international NGOs and IGOs. It seems unlikely that a people who have experienced a decade of violent conflict and the breakdown of all state control would not undergo a distortion and disruption of their existing cultural norms and values. This is not to say that the policies of international actors in post-conflict situations cannot or do not have very real and lasting effects on the indigenous culture, but simply that isolating these effects from those of the conflict itself is a difficult task. In the case of Bougainville the adoption of indigenous peace processes was also mostly the result of grassroots actions by Bougainvilleans themselves, and although once international aid started to arrive the way in which these indigenous processes were integrated into that process may have transformed the nature of these processes it must still be considered preferable to the alternative of an entirely externally created development and rebuilding process.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in the time since the end of the formal peace negotiations and the withdrawal of foreign troops Bougainville has received a lot less attention from international organisations and scholars than it did in the immediate aftermath. The UNDP, Australian, New Zealand, and Japanese government aid agencies as well as numerous international NGOs still operate there but at reduced levels compared to their previous programmes. In part this is due to the fact that after the resumption of government control there was not the same need for external agencies to provide social services anymore, but it also stems from the competitive nature of the international aid "marketplace" where high profile cases are much more likely to receive funding and attention. In some ways this change is a double-edged sword for the people of Bougainville. On the one hand, they are now able to develop their country using indigenously created programmes and initiatives and thus retaining a sense of ownership and control, while on the other hand they now must try to do this with less access to external resources.

Changes to women's cultural role as a result of the conflict and peace process

Although Bougainvilleans as a whole are very aware and proud of their culture, the question of whether women's place in this culture has changed as a result of the conflict and peace process is not one which the people of Bougainville seem to be able to come to an agreement on. The lack of consensus may be because individual women and men have experienced the conflict and post-

conflict environment differently and thus for some it appears as if things have changed while for others it appears as if they have not. Alternatively, some people may be unwilling to acknowledge changes that have occurred, or claiming that there has been significant change when there has not, in order to reinforce their own ideas and prejudices in regards to the relative merits of current or potential roles of women in Bougainvillean culture. On the balance of the evidence I have collected I would say that there has been a significant change in the role women play in society in Bougainville, with a greater engagement in politics and more willingness to speak up and engage with male leaders, the government, and international IGOs. Women have also taken on greater economic responsibility within their families in the conflict and post-conflict years and this has begun to challenge masculine identities at this level, although at a community level the roles often remain much more traditional.[151]

It is important to note that the change towards greater involvement in political decision making has only occurred for those women who have sought it out and the majority of women in Bougainville are not amongst their number. Most continue to live more or less as they have previously, performing the traditional duties of wife and mother without engaging in the broader political and social discourse.[152] Of course this state of affairs is perhaps unavoidable, as with any group of people anywhere there are bound to be those who have more inclination, interest, and ability to enter into the political landscape than their peers. Regardless of this, the significant aspect of this change is that there is now the potential for the women of Bougainville to become more involved in politics than they could have ever before.

Many Bougainvilleans who are still involved in the peace and development process are fiercely proud and protective of their culture, but do not necessarily want it to remain static and unchanging. As one woman said to me: "our culture needs to be broken if there is to be peace and justice. Our good culture needs to be kept and our bad culture needs to be left behind."[153] Arriving at a consensus as to what is "good" culture and what is "bad" culture will never be easy, nor will changing the entrenched attitudes and behaviours which create and reinforce culture. Nonetheless the willingness to admit that not all that is traditional is positive reflects the pragmatism of many Bougainvilleans in the face of the challenges arising from the years of conflict and the resulting damage this has done to their land, culture and society.

Unfortunately women's place in Bougainvillean culture may not have changed solely for the better.

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151   Interview with Francis Semoso, October 13 2011.
152   Ibid.
153   Interview with Marcelline Maliku, October 12 2011.

As was mentioned briefly in the section on post-conflict social problems, one of the notable trends in the post-conflict social landscape of Bougainville has been an increase in sexual violence and domestic violence against women in a culture where it was previously almost unheard of. The lack of reporting of such crimes coupled with the ABG's inability to gather statistics due to its own lack of funds and infrastructure make it impossible to know exactly how widespread this problem is but the anecdotal evidence is not encouraging. In particular this problem seems to have occurred with the younger generation who grew up during the conflict and thus have been normalised to violence from a young age. The causes of this phenomenon are not only the traumatic experiences of the conflict but challenge to masculine identities brought about by women's changing economic roles discussed above. If young men develop emotionally in an environment where masculine traits such as violence and aggression are prominently valued they will oppress their own feminine traits, and view women as the "other" to be dominated and repressed.[154] This was not the case in pre-conflict Bougainville, where women were respected and feminine traits valued, and thus it is not the case with the older generations today, but for the younger ones it is. Young women also help perpetuate this situation, seeking violent and dominant partners because they think that is what a man should be like.[155]

Future goals and challenges

Despite the many notable successes of the peace process to this date and the gains experienced by women through this, there is still a range of imposing challenges and barriers to the ongoing recovery and development of Bougainville. While reconciliation ceremonies are still being arranged and taking place, there also continue to be ongoing hostilities in Buin in the south of the island, and around the Panguna area in the central region. Women in Bougainville are generally optimistic about their prospects for development, but are also aware of the difficulties they face.

These difficulties include a lack of resources and infrastructure, the ongoing psychological and social trauma of the conflict, preconceptions about the involvement of women in politics, and family obligations. Not all of these barriers present equal difficulties to all women in Bougainville. For instance, the problem of damaged infrastructure, specifically roads, power and phone lines,

154   Anu Pillay "Violence against Women in the Aftermath" in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-conflict Transformation.* (London: Zed Books, 2001) 43.
155   Interview with Marilyn Taleo Havini, October 13 2011.

and community buildings, is much more acute in the central and Southern regions. This makes it harder for women in these areas to mobilise and organise, and to gain access to outside resources such as the internet or international agencies. Similarly, the cultural barriers to women becoming more involved in politics and development are much greater around the southern town of Buin where matriliny is not practised and women have traditionally had much less voice on political issues. While it is important to remember that the rest of Bougainville is matrilineal but still patriarchal, that is to say inheritance passes down the female line but men occupy the positions of political power, having control of the land (which is the primary resource in any economic system but particularly important in a subsistence agriculture based economy) gives women considerable influence over the decision making process. The lack of this heritage and the ongoing lawlessness and violence around Buin make it a special case, and much of what can be said about the role of women in the peace process in Bougainville is not applicable there. Nonetheless, it stands as an interesting counterexample, and the challenges facing women there are no less relevant.

Perhaps the most significant barrier is the lack of resources with which to operate. A number of factors together combine to make the acquisition of resources difficult for women working to provide social services or promoting community and/or economic development. Firstly there is the fact that the conflict now officially ended over a decade ago and Bougainville is now therefore a low profile case when competing for international aid money. This problem is also exacerbated by the relative isolation of Bougainville. There is also a lack of funds available internally as both the ABG and the private sector struggle to raise money to fund their own projects, let alone donate to local NGOs. Even if international aid funding can be appropriated, the way in which it has been administered is not viewed positively by all on Bougainville, as the power in the relationships between locals and external agencies is disproportionately in favour of the external agencies. This means that the donating agencies often try to dictate where funds will be spent, without asking the local groups where funding could be best directed. Furthermore, external agencies often want to focus on activities and programmes with quantifiable results, which means that more inherently qualitative processes such as reconciliation and trauma counselling often fail to get addressed as comprehensively as areas such as education, economic development, or healthcare services which can be numerically measured.[156]

Another significant barrier is the ongoing effects of the trauma from the conflict, particularly amongst younger generations. As mentioned earlier, this can be linked to an increase in sexual and

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156   Makuwira "Aid partnership in the Bougainville conflict" 329-330.

domestic violence, but it has also led to many young people abusing alcohol and marijuana. Some older Bougainvilleans speak of a "lost generation," the young people who experienced great trauma, missed out on an education, and consequently today have no hope for their own futures and engage in substance abuse and violence at alarming rates.[157] Addressing this issue is necessary if Bougainville is to have long-term stability and prosperity, but the resources required to do so are not currently available. Trauma is also a particularly problematic issue for women as what limited trauma counselling that has been provided has been solely for ex-combatants, all of whom are male.[158] Women and children, as well as men who did not participate in the fighting, have not been offered the chance to receive help for their ongoing trauma and women especially feel responsible for helping traumatised young people because of their roles as mothers and grandmothers.[159]

One interesting theme which emerged from my interviews was that some women feel that although they were initially well represented in the peace process in recent years they have become increasingly marginalised, although this is now changing again. The reasons offered by women for their marginalisation are varied but include the ABG's focus on ex-combatants as a group, which because all ex-combatants are men means women are excluded.[160] Another factor mentioned was a lack of confidence on the part of many women themselves. This did not seem to be an issue with the women I interviewed, all of whom were confident and committed to building peace and developing their country socially and economically. However as my participants were all involved in the peace process and/or post-conflict reconciliation and development in some way this is not surprising. For the purposes of balance it would have been good to include some participants, both men and women, who were not a part of this process but unfortunately this was not possible due logistical and time constraints. Because of this the reasons I can propose for a lack of confidence among women about engaging in politics and the peace process in general come from women who have not experienced this themselves. It seems that the resumption of government control and the resulting formalisation of the leadership structures and the providing of social services by the ABG has meant that women's place is not as vital to the social structure as it was during and immediately after the conflict. The grassroots nature of women's activities, which was a key factor in much of their success, has meant that as centralised, top-down power has been

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157   Interview with Marcelline Maliku, October 12 2011.
158   Anonymous interview.
159   Anonymous interview.
160   Anonymous interview.

exerted by the ABG the social space available for women to work in has comparatively shrunk.[161] This reflects a common theme in post-conflict environments which was mentioned in the introductory chapter, where women have mobilised for peace at a grassroots level during the conflict itself but then found themselves excluded from the post-conflict political landscape.[162] In Bougainville this has been far less extreme than in some other cases but the fact that it has happened at all is worth noting.

Another factor in the relative decline in women's involvement in the reconciliation and development of post-conflict Bougainville may be their role as mothers and grandmothers, which otherwise has been a driving factor in their success in this process. This has affected women's involvement in the recent aspects of the peace process because they have had to be fulfilling their duties instead. The reason this has become more of an issue in recent years is related to the long-term effects of the conflict. The generation who were children during the conflict were also the ones who suffered most from the trauma of it because they had never known a safe and secure environment. This generation are now young adults and are having children of their own, but because of their own traumatic childhoods are not always able to cope with the demands of parenthood. The grandmothers therefore often have to take a more significant role in helping raise their grandchildren, which leaves them with less time to engage in the peacebuilding activities which they were involved with previously.[163]

Conclusion

The post-conflict goals and challenges for women in Bougainville are many and varied. The breakdown of social structures as a result of the conflict led to many social problems including trauma, lack of access to health care, and illiteracy and lack of educational opportunities. Because of their self-identification as mothers, grandmothers, and guardians and bearers of future generations many women feel a personal obligation to address these problems. As well as this there is the closely related issue of political representation and the protection of the rights of women within the post-conflict social environment. Finally, there is the problem of the lack of economic development which in itself makes it hard for the government to generate taxes to pay

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161   Interview with Magdalene Toroansi, October 12 2011.
162   Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen "There Is No Aftermath for Women" 12-13.
163   Interview with Marilyn Taleo Havini, October 13 2011.

for healthcare and education, for the population. Unfortunately this problem is at least partly self-perpetuating, as the government's lack of funds also mean that infrastructure such as roads, power and water, sanitation, and telecommunications cannot be developed, but the lack of such infrastructure means that developing industries and profitable businesses is exceedingly difficult. Within this environment women find themselves struggling to achieve their goals despite the time and effort they put in. However it is important to note not only their optimism and enthusiasm but also the successes they have enjoyed.

Women have helped provide social services, such as education, health care, and economic development projects. They have created formal organisations to represent their interests and continue to strive to develop Bougainville socially and economically and to address the ongoing effects of the trauma and suffering of the conflict. Although the challenges they face are imposing, the majority of the women of Bougainville who spoke to while I was there seem confident that there country can overcome them and that the future generations will live in a safe and just society which provides them with ample opportunities for financial independence, education, and health care while fostering and maintaining the culture of which they are so proud. A variety of factors have played a part in this process, including the grassroots nature of women's involvement, Bougainvillean cultural roles and practices, and the emphasis on women as mothers and grandmothers. The final chapter of this thesis will consider how these factors can be applied to other conflict and post-conflict zones to allow greater involvement of women and contribute to the overall success of peace processes.

CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis will consist of an analysis of the data gathered and a conclusion. While I have analysed some key points as I have described and explained women's involvement in the peace process, including post-conflict reconciliation and development programmes, this chapter will draw out major themes to analyse and consider them in regards to how they might reflect theoretical notions about women in peace processes and post-conflict environments, as well as how the lessons learnt from the Bougainville case can be applied to other conflict and post-conflict environments around the globe. It will then conclude with an overall conclusion to the thesis as a whole, reiterating key points and restating the findings and arguments made.

It will be argued that there are four key reasons for the involvement of women in the peace process: the history of Bougainville up to and including the conflict, the grassroots level of mobilisation and organisation of women's groups; women's traditional roles in Bougainvillean culture; and women's role as mothers. All four of these factors were important for the way in which women engaged with the peace process and the results they have obtained. However, part of the goal of this thesis was to demonstrate how the involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville, particularly in the post-conflict phase, can inform attempts to engage women in other conflict and post-conflict zones around the world. In this analysis it will be argued that the unique cultural and historical context of the Bougainville conflict and peace process make it a significant test case for these attempts.

Although this chapter is split into thematic sections this is inevitably a slightly arbitrary division. Certain elements which appear in one section are related to discussions in other sections, which reflects the complex and interrelated nature of these themes. For instance, I have separated the importance of culture and motherhood into two sections for reasons which will become clear, but this is not to try and make the argument that much of the role of a mother is not at least partially culturally defined. Rather, it is simply that for the purposes of this thesis it is easy to consider them as separate. Similarly, the history of Bougainville including the conflict itself was a significant reason behind the grassroots mobilisation of women, but both these factors by themselves are important enough to warrant individual analysis.

Potential difficulties in analysing women's involvement in the Bougainville peace process

Before analysing the data gathered in this thesis a few potential difficulties must be acknowledged. Of these potential problems, some relate to understanding women's place in conflict and post-conflict environments in general, while some are specific to the Bougainville case. These difficulties do not prevent an analysis of the involvement of women in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and development phase, but they do place a limit on the extent of what conclusions can be drawn. However, any case study would experience similar difficulties so they must simply be acknowledged and mitigated as much as possible.

One of the general problems in the social sciences is trying to avoid the pitfall of essentialism. This can be difficult when discussing concepts such as gender. As Smith puts it:

> An encounter with essentialism is unavoidable in any discussion of the impact of gender difference in political decision making and in conflict resolution. The reason is that discussing gender in politics means thinking about a fundamental component of our individual and social identities. The way that most of us, most of the time, approach such discussions is strongly shaped by essentialist ways of thinking. They are a common means of cognition, of organizing and rationalizing our experience of our social worlds. They are not the result of scholarly research; rather they both form and draw on part of what people call 'common sense'.[164]

However, as a scholar one must be aware of these tendencies and avoid falling into the trap of considering gender roles as fundamentally unchanging and/or universal. This is particularly important in my analysis of the Bougainville case as I am attempting to apply the experiences of people in Bougainville to those of others in significantly different contexts.

Another potential difficulty in studying all subjects in the social sciences but which is particularly relevant to questions of conflict and peace is that of isolating factors and conditions in order to make causal statements. In the case of Bougainville and the involvement of women in the peace process there the number of different factors involved is very large, ranging from the history of Bougainville to the personalities of the individual women who were most prominent in the peace process. While in the hard sciences an experiment can be run with a control group to test the influence of one particular factor this is obviously an impossibility when the subject matter is conflicts and peace processes. Instead a more comparative and analytical approach is needed

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164   Dan Smith, "The Problem of Essentialism" in Inger Skjelsbaek and Dan Smith (eds) *Gender, Peace and Conflict* (London: Sage 2001) 33.

where each potential factor is acknowledged and considered in the context of other factors. Once this has been done the relative importance of different factors should become clearer.

It must also be acknowledged that in order to fully understand how and why women's involvement in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment on Bougainville took the form it did is the impact of the nature of the conflict itself. The collapse of state control as a result of the conflict and the lack of an effective parallel government on much of Bougainville meant that there was a need to provide social services in the areas that were rebel-controlled, and women organised and filled this role. This process also meant that traditional cultural practices were also reinforced as they were required to fill the gap left by the removal of the state. This helped to promote the use of Bougainvillean cultural practices in the peace process, and the impact of this will be discussed in a later section of this chapter. For now it is important to note that the trajectory of the conflict itself can have a significant impact on how women can engage with the peace process, and this is can potentially make isolating other factors and applying them to other conflicts a difficult proposition.

Care must be taken when making statements about a peace process being a success or failure. Success in peace processes and post-conflict environments is not something that lends itself to be easily measured. Instead, a range of factors must be taken into consideration when gauging how successful such a process has been. Ongoing violence and social problems, political stability, economic growth, and the reintegration of combatants into everyday society, among others, need to be judged in order to judge the overall success. Furthermore, a long-term view of these factors is necessary, but often it is only considered by scholars in a relatively short time frame. Value-laden terms such as "successful," "good" or "bad" are not inherently problematic but they must be qualified and defended against possible criticisms.

Finally, there is the potential problem of incomplete information available to draw conclusions from. For this thesis the research drawn upon was a combination of the work of other academics and personally conducted semi-structured interviews with Bougainvillean men and women who had been actively involved in the peace process, as described in the methods section of the introductory chapter. Even putting aside the possible selection bias which has been discussed, there is still the issue that participants may not have answered the questions as accurately or truthfully as they could have, which could be due to a variety of factors including the traumatic nature of their experiences during the conflict, a desire to present a positive image of Bougainville to the outside world, and imperfect recollection of past events. All these factors are significantly

mitigated by the use of multiple participants and secondary sources but truly complete information about such a complex social interaction will never be possible.

Bearing these limitations in mind, I will now present an analysis of the four most important factors in the contribution of women to the peace process and post-conflict environment of Bougainville I have identified from my research. Obviously these are not the sole factors in this process but they are the ones which I argue were most vital.

The historical context

The historical context of any conflict plays a significant factor in shaping its course from the causes and nature of the conflict, to the end of hostilities and the nature of the post-conflict social and political environment. Women's involvement in the peace process in Bougainville can therefore not be understood without reference to its historical context. However, much of the influence that could be attributed to historical forces could also be attributed to the cultural context as well. Culture and history inform and shape each other, and thus disentangling them is not easy. In this section I will address the historical influence on women's involvement, including how it relates to the culture today. In a later section I will address the specific influence of cultural roles on the involvement of women in the peace process separately.

Perhaps the key aspect of the historical context is in fact geography. Bougainville's location as part of the Solomon Islands chain was to have three important influences on the course of the conflict and thus on the way women were involved in the peace process. Firstly, there are the cultural differences to mainland Papua New Guinea, which helped create a sense of pan-Bougainvillean identity and in turn may have had the effect of Bougainvilleans focusing on their cultural differences to other Papua New Guineans, such as the practice of matriliny, rather than their similarities. Secondly, the differing colonial histories and experiences of World War II between Bougainville and mainland Papua New Guinea allowed another way in which pan-Bougainvillean identity could be constructed when people felt the need for it. Finally, because being surrounded by sea made it easier for the PNGDF to cut off Bougainville from the outside world, the people there had to adapt to the conflict environment without any outside help, and this again reinforced a sense of pan-Bougainvilleanism, coupled with the need to provide social services from the grassroots up, which led to the formation of groups to do just that. However it is important to note

that the sense of pan-Bougainvillean identity is only one aspect of how people view themselves in Bougainville, as the descent into civil war and inter-clan violence during the PNGDF blockade shows. Even today while there are many Bougainvilleans who identify strongly with the pan-Bougainvillean ideas, there are many other levels of identity which affect them, from clan to district to regional level. One woman in the Arawa, Central Bougainville, told me that "The South still blames us (Central Bougainvilleans) for the war."[165] This type of statement shows a sense of regional identity, separate from either clan or culture, which increases the complexity of the social and cultural dynamics of Bougainville. Nonetheless, I encountered enough of a sense of pan-Bougainvilleanism while conducting my research that it is clearly widespread and important to many people.

The small-scale nature of the conflict, which became increasingly anarchic as it wore on, also meant that there was greater scope for small groups or even individual women to get involved and make a positive impact for peace, because they could act as intermediaries between groups of belligerents whom they knew personally. This was one of the key kinds of actions in the initial involvement of women in seeking to build peace and was only possible because the conflict itself was being fought at a small-scale, local level. Had the warring parties been larger and more conventionally organised it seems doubtful that such intervention by women would have been possible. This is in fact an example of an historical influence which could be applicable to other conflicts as long as they are comparatively small-scale enough.

Grassroots engagement and the establishment of women's groups

One of the most significant aspects of women's roles in the Bougainville peace process and post-conflict environment is that their involvement arose at a grassroots level and has continued to be developed and nurtured from the bottom up. This has even continued to occur in the post-conflict environment despite the fact that IGOs and NGOs, which are relied upon as a source of funds, often try to impose top-down conditions in return for funding. This bottom-up approach has been a hallmark not just of women's involvement but in all aspects of the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment programmes, and has created a sense of ownership among Bougainvilleans. Another important theme in the involvement of women which has

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165   Interview with Pauline Korokoro* (spelling may be wrong), October 11 2011.

developed out of the grassroots approach is the organisation into formal groups, such as the LNWDA and BWPF. While at first this would appear to be a contrary phenomenon to women's involvement developing from the bottom up, it is in fact a continuation of the process as the initially informal actions of individual women and groups of women became formalised by the establishment of organisations. Crucially, the impetus to start these organisations came from the women themselves and not from an external source. This has not only increased the effectiveness of women's activities by pooling their knowledge and experience, but also allowed those activities to continue into the future indefinitely by creating a formal framework in which to operate. Formal organisations also create greater opportunities to receive funding from governments, IGOs and NGOs because they offer accountability and continuity.

Both its grassroots nature and the establishment of formal organisations were factors in the relative success of women's involvement in the peace process in Bougainville, in complimentary ways. By developing their involvement from the bottom-up women retained a sense of ownership over their own activities, while the establishment of formal organisations ensured that although they had worked from the bottom-up, Bougainvillean women were still in a position to interact with the government, IGOs, and NGOs and receive funding from them.

The grassroots beginnings of women's involvement in the peace process are not a phenomenon that is in any way unique to Bougainville. In fact, in many conflict zones around the world women have been significantly involved and highly vocal for peace at a grassroots level, but have found themselves marginalised in the formal aspects of the peace negotiations and in the post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment processes. For instance, in Somalia women played a similar role to their counterparts in Bougainville during the conflict by trying to establish a dialogue between belligerent groups at a grassroots level. However Somali women were later excluded from the peace process .[166] Such grassroots movements also occur in rich, developed nations as well. An example of this is the "Code Pink" movement which was a women-initiated and led movement formed in 2002 dedicated to stopping the United States of America and its allies going to war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq.[167] These two examples show that women's grassroots peace movements can occur in a wide range of cultural, historical, and economic settings and thus the case of Bougainville is just another example of this phenomenon.

This precedent for the grassroots involvement of women in other conflicts suggests that in itself

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166   Rehn and Sirleaf *Women, War, Peace.* 80.
167   Anderlini *Women building peace.* 20.

this is not a sufficient condition for the greater engagement of women in the post -conflict reconciliation and development phase of the peace process, as this has not occurred in other cases. However it may still be a necessary condition and the case of Bougainville would seem to support this assertion. It is difficult to imagine how women could have came to play the prominent role they have in the post-conflict environment if they had not mobilised at a grassroots level and formed their own organisations during the conflict.

The importance of traditional cultural roles for women in the conflict and post-conflict environment

It is undeniable that the culture of Bougainville was a vital factor in women becoming involved with the peace process. The fact that women played a traditional role in peacemaking and reconciliation ceremonies meant that they were already accepted by male leaders as having a right to speak up for peace, while the cultural practice of matriliny undoubtedly meant that women were widely respected as guardians of land, clans, and future generations. "That's our way of stopping fighting: women stop fighting. I stand up for this because that is what my clan's mother(s) did"[168] one female participant said to me. Of course, the nature of traditional conflicts was considerably different to that of the conflict in question here and so the traditional peacebuilding methods could well have failed to help end the conflict and reconcile the belligerent parties. The fact they did manage to do so reflects the desire bring peace on the part of many Bougainvilleans, both men and women.

This traditional role for women in peacebuilding was coupled with an overall respect and pride in their culture by both men and women from Bougainville, and perhaps reinforced by the development of a pan-Bougainvillean identity helped by the influx of outsiders to work on the Panguna mine and the nature of the ensuing conflict. As one women said to me in an interview "without my culture I am nothing".[169] Together these factors meant that the women of Bougainville were culturally positioned to take on a peace making role in a way that would not be possible in many conflicts around the world.

However, it would be easy to overstate both the uniqueness of women's role in Bougainvillean culture, and the role of that culture in leading Bougainvillean women to become so actively

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168   Interview with Pauline Korokoro* (spelling may be wrong), October 11 2011.
169   Anonymous interview.

involved in seeking peace during the conflict and reconciliation and redevelopment after the conflict. While Bougainvillean cultures are predominantly matrilineal, they are also all patriarchal with leadership being exercised by male chiefs. Many women feel it is not their place to speak up about social and political problems and instead follow the lead of their husbands, fathers and brothers.[170] Furthermore, while there was an increase in pride in Bougainvillean culture and a rise in a sense of pan-Bougainvillean identity among much of the population, the conflict also meant that there was a corresponding rise in a sense of masculinity amongst many of the male combatants. This meant that they were more likely to act aggressively and less willing to listen to women who were asking them to lay down their arms. Even Josephine Sirivi of the BWPF said that she would not have been able to have done the work seeking peace that she did without the support and protection of her husband, BRA General Sam Kauona.[171]

Similarly, although women played a role in traditional reconciliation ceremonies this did not mean that their position in peace negotiations and post-conflict redevelopment was a given. These traditional roles were limited in scope, and there was no guarantee that they would be carried into the peace process of a modern conflict. It is a testament to the importance that many Bougainvilleans place on their culture, the desire to end the conflict, and the willingness to listen and compromise with each other, that the adoption to a modern conflict was successful.

On balance, the culture of Bougainville facilitated the involvement of women in the peace process but only to a certain point, beyond which women's involvement had to be developed and nurtured on its own. An over-emphasis on traditional cultural practices and roles would have seen women's activities during the conflict and in the post-conflict environment limited to much less than what it was in reality. Culture can therefore be considered to be a useful starting point in explaining how women came to be involved in the peace process but it does not tell the whole story. As well as the specific role in peacemaking and reconciliation ceremonies, women's traditional place in Bougainville's culture in general also may have helped them gain the respect of the combatants and male political leaders, but again this does not explain the full scope of their involvement.

The importance of motherhood and its associated traits

As was discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the role of women as mothers and associated

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170   Interview with Hona Holan, October 12 2011.
171   Interview with Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, October 8 2011.

"feminine" traits such as nurturing, caring, and long-term planning have been suggested as reasons why women are particularly suited to roles as peace-builders. Bougainvilleans as a whole would seem to agree with this, as the desire to ensure a better future was provided for their children, grandchildren, and other future generations was perhaps the most common motive for women engaging with the peace which I heard during my interviews. Statements such as: "women want total peace, we want our children and grandchildren to grow up with it"[172] and "what I did, I did for my grandchildren"[173] were typical of those made by women involved in the peace process. Men also see women's concern for future generations as valuable for the peace process and post-conflict redevelopment. David Dapoung, Chairman of the Isina Village Council of Chiefs, said that women were vital for the peace negotiations because they see the future and see the need for peace for future generations, whereas men were more often focussed on the here and now.[174] This broad acknowledgement of the importance of mothers is no doubt partly related to the matrilineal aspect of Bougainvillean culture, and the title of Marilyn Havini and Josephine Sirivi's book, ... *As Mothers of the Land,* stands as an example of the significance of motherhood to two women who were heavily involved with the peace building process personally. As well as the matrilineal influence, a case could also be made that the prevalence of Catholicism as a religion in Bougainville was also a factor, with its particular reverence for the Virgin Mary. This is purely conjecture on my part, but given the importance of the Catholic faith to many Bougainvilleans it cannot be easily dismissed.

Motherhood as a concept and its related character traits were therefore undoubtedly vital in getting women involved in the peace process, both as a motivating factor for women themselves and as a reason for men to accept them in. Obviously much of the cultural role of women as mothers is nearly universal, but it is the emphasis placed on motherhood in the Bougainville case which is important. This emphasis came not just from the women themselves but also from the men of Bougainville, who respected this position and acknowledged the importance of women as the mothers and grandmothers of their children and grandchildren.[175] Given that this opinion and understanding of the importance of motherhood has been developed in the context of Bougainville's matrilineal and predominantly Catholic culture, the potential to utilise an appeal to motherhood as a reason for men in other conflicts to involve women in peace processes may not be as great as the Bougainville case would suggest, despite the near-universality of women's roles

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172   Interview with Hona Holan, October 12 2011.
173   Interview with Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, October 8 2011.
174   Interview with David Dapoung, October 10 2011.
175   Interview with Josephine Tankunani Sirivi, October 8 2011.

as mothers.

Potential application to other conflicts

This thesis has shown that women's actions undoubtedly had a positive impact on the outcome of the peace process in Bougainville. As discussed in the introductory chapter, it has been suggested that "women are more likely to put gender issues on the agenda, introduce other conflict experiences, and set different priorities for peace-building and rehabilitation, and they may bridge political divides better."[176] The assertion was also made that "women's increased participation may also generate wider public support for the peace accords."[177] The evidence from the Bougainville case broadly supports these statements. Most obviously, Bougainvillean women were able to bridge political divides better than their male counterparts both during the conflict and at the official negotiations. This had a positive impact on the peace process as a whole, for if women had not been able to bridge these divides then an acceptable compromise between the different factions would have been harder to reach. Women also put gender issues on the agenda, particularly in the post-conflict recovery stage, although this process was also combined with the actions of external actors such as the UNDP undertaking gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the importance of gender issues became more apparent in the aftermath of the conflict than it had been previously due to the disruption in gender roles and increase in domestic and sexual violence which arose from the conflict itself. As women's NGOs were best placed to see the impact of these issues they were the ones who brought them to the attention of others. The perceived benefits of including women in peace process can thus be seen to be accurate in regards to Bougainville, and this reinforces the need to develop a method to facilitate greater involvement by women in other peace processes.

Obviously the historical context of any conflict is unique and thus how it influenced the case of women's involvement with the peace process in Bougainville will not be applicable to other conflicts. The bottom-up approach and appropriation of traditional cultural practices were both significant factors in the involvement of women in the peace process and the relative success of the peace process in general, but they present a challenge when trying to understand how the lessons of Bougainville can be applied to other conflicts around the globe. Namely, the bottom-up

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176   Bouta, Frerks and Bannon *Gender, Conflict, and Development.* 49.
177   Ibid. 49.

approach relies on there being a significant will amongst the people at a grassroots level to involve women in the peace process. This applies equally to male political and military leaders and to the women themselves. Even in other conflicts where women have been prominent in calling for peace from a grassroots level, they have not become actively involved either in the official peace process or in the post-conflict reconciliation and development programmes.

Grassroots involvement in attempting to build peace by women during a conflict is therefore not in itself a sufficient condition for their subsequent involvement in the official aspects of a peace process, and in the post-conflict aspects such as reconciliation and redevelopment. It is a useful starting point to consider how women can be involved in these areas but it still does not address how they can make the transition to involvement in the official aspects of the peace process.

The grassroots nature of women's involvement in peacebuilding is not unique to the Bougainville case, although the specific causes and consequences may be. Because the phenomenon of women mobilising for peace at a grassroots level has occurred previously in a wide range of cultural settings there are not a large number of potential lessons to be learnt from its occurrence in Bougainville, although the fact that the grassroots organisations women established have continued to play a prominent role in post-conflict development is unusual. Again, isolating the factors which caused this in Bougainville is difficult but I would say that the cultural context was crucial to the continued involvement of these organisations I nthe wider peacebuilding process. Furthermore, the grassroots nature of involvement in peacebuilding during a conflict does not guarantee inclusion in the post-conflict reconciliation and development phase and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, may even work against this.

In the same way, the appropriation and adaptation of existing cultural roles or practices for women into ones suited for the peace process and beyond is only an option where there are appropriate roles to be appropriated and adapted. The amount of adaptation needed in order to make a women's cultural role both well-suited to peace-building in a modern conflict or post-conflict environment and palatable to IGOs and NGOs operating according to contemporary Western-derived notions of human rights and gender equality will also affect how accepted such a role or practice is by locals and the sense of ownership they feel towards it. Beyond a certain point the original meaning of the role or practice becomes lost, and a previously tried and tested external equivalent may as well have been used instead. The issues this raises reflect the debate around indigenous peacekeeping mentioned in the literature review in the introduction, as well as Eleanor Rimoldi's critique of gender mainstreaming in the previous chapter. Indigenous and traditional do

not always mean positive and/or effective, and attempts to adapt them or appropriate them to other ends risks depriving them of their original meaning and power. On the other hand, a purely externally imposed process raises obvious issues about the appropriateness of its application, as well as the implications of paternalism and colonialism which this naturally brings with it.

This is not to say that cultures other than Bougainville will not have traditional roles and/or practices for women which can be appropriated and adapted to a modern peacebuilding environment, as there will no doubt be other conflicts where this the case. However, care must be taken that in doing so the underlying meaning of the original role or practice is not corrupted to the point where it is actually detrimental to the culture in question. On the other hand, it is a fallacy to consider culture as unchanging, or traditional indigenous culture as inherently superior to modern Western culture, or vice versa. The struggle to establish a universally recognised human rights framework demonstrates how difficult it can be to arrive at a cross-culturally acceptable moral compass.

Their role as mothers has been appealed to many times by the women of Bougainville throughout their involvement in seeking to build peace both during and after the conflict. Motherhood is a universal concept but the specific emphasis placed on it in the Bougainville case stems at least in part from the matrilineal nature of the majority of cultures there. This is also reflected in men's responses to women's appeals to motherhood. The appeal to motherhood and maternal values may have some potential in other conflicts and peace processes but it will be limited by the culture in which these values are situated. Once again, the specific complexities of the Bougainville case place limits on the potential to draw lessons from it which can be applied to other conflicts.

Although the specific factors that led to the significant level of involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville may not be applicable elsewhere, the overall lesson that peace-building is a highly contextual experience can be, especially when considering how women can be more engaged with and involved in ending conflict and reconciling, re-building and developing after the end of a conflict. As alluded to earlier this position is compatible with notions of the value of indigenous peacebuilding and it may be that these theories can also be applied to the problem of the under-representation of women in peace processes.

One of the problems with trying to generate a theory of conflict resolution which incorporates culture as a significant aspect is in addressing the question of exactly how compatible different cultures are, both with each other and with Western notions of "universality". This is particularly important in situations of ethnic conflict where identities are firmly entrenched and form the basis

of perceptions of the conflict not only for the protagonists but also for external parties who may be seeking to bring about peace. Marc Howard Ross addresses this issue by trying to forge a path between the extremes of total cultural relativity at one end and total universality at the other. His work is grounded in cross-cultural political psychology but also draws heavily on social anthropology, and offers a robust analysis of the role of culture in ethnic conflict. He suggests that:

> A cultural approach offers a bridge between the very specific and the too general, putting each conflict in a context which highlights what the parties believe is at stake; identifying both the concrete interests and threats to identity crucial to the disputants; linking interests and identities to psychocultural interpretations and the motives underlying them; and proposing that successful settlement of ethnic conflicts means that parties themselves must actively work towards proposals which address both their competing interests and core identity needs.[178]

Volker Boege considers there to be five strengths to conflict resolution based on traditional cultural approaches, balanced by five weaknesses. The strengths of traditional approaches are that they are: inclusive; suited to fragile or failed states; legitimated due to not being state-centric; process orientated and therefore suited to longer time-frames; and focussed on psychological, social and spiritual aspects of conflict transformation. The weaknesses he identifies are that such approaches: do not bring a long-term end to violence; often violate modern human rights standards; are limited in their applicability; reinforce old political structures; and are open to exploitation.[179] While these lists are obviously and understandably based on broad generalisations it is important to note that some of these are mutually exclusive. For instance, the premise that a traditional approach to conflict transformation is better suited to longer time-frames than a liberal western approach, but that it does not bring a long-term end to violence seems to defy logic. Indeed, one must ask what the goals of conflict transformation are, for if one is to bring a long term end to violence than surely if you accept Boege's list then traditional approaches are not effective at all. Another underlying point is the question of whether traditional approaches violate modern human rights standards.

These dichotomies in Boege's study reflect several fundamental problems with integrating traditional approaches with Western liberal ones, and Roger MacGinty has explored this area

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178   Marc Howard Ross, "The Relevance of Culture for the Study of Political Psychology and Ethnic Conflict," *Political Psychology* 18, no. 2 (1997). 300.
179   Volker Boege, *Traditional Approaches to Conflict Transformation: Strengths and Weaknesses.* Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, (2006). 11-15.

further. However MacGinty is at pains to distinguish between the terms traditional and indigenous with indigenous referring to any practice that is locally inspired, while traditional is reserved for indigenous practices with a historical basis. Both traditional and indigenous approaches stand opposed to what MacGinty broadly defines as the liberal peace, which in this case is taken to mean the Western state-centric approach which is still the predominant method of peace-building seen today.[180] Recent examples in Timor Leste, Kenya and Afghanistan, among others, have shown that there is some willingness to incorporate indigenous peace-building methods into Western models. However this has only occurred to a very limited extent and liberal peace methods still dominate even where lip service is paid to indigenous approaches.[181] An optimistic view of this may be to say that the idea of incorporating indigenous approaches is slowly gaining ground against the dominant Western view of what is required to build peace. On the other hand, it could be said that calling a peace process indigenous is simply a way of validating it to a liberal Western audience of NGO donors and there is no actual desire to fully utilise this approach. Regardless of the extent of its application, there is a growing understanding that indigenous peace-building methods can offer advantages not found with the standard process.

While not all cultures will have structures evolved to deal with ending conflict, it is likely that they will have structures and/or institutions which can be adapted to perform this function. The primary goal of third parties, after creating the space where transformation can take place, is to identify these institutions and structures and suggest their use to the protagonists. The protagonists will then adapt the institutions and structures so that the transformation process can incorporate them. This has the benefits of creating a sense of ownership of the conflict transformation process for the people involved, but even more importantly, it should lead to a more robust peace as the processes which have led to the peace are a product of the very cultural environment in question. Of course, it is important to note that indigenous peace-building methods are not traditionally any more successful in achieving their goals and have in many cases failed to prevent violence. Furthermore, the naming of a practice as "traditional" or "indigenous" can be seen to morally legitimate it and thus the indigenous approach is open to exploitation by groups involved in the conflict.[182] Nonetheless, I feel that there is much to be gained by the inclusion of indigenous cultural practices and roles into formal (and informal) peace processes and post-conflict development programmes. In order to do this in an effective way local culture, as well as the

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180   Roger MacGinty "Indigenous Peace-making versus the Liberal Peace" *Cooperation and Conflict* 43:139
       (2008) 140-145.
181   Ibid. 156.
182   Ibid. 150.

historical, economic and political context of the conflict, must be acknowledged and understood by outside agencies so that a path to a lasting, just and sustainable peace can be developed which is accepted by all parties involved. This is equally applicable to the problem of getting women involved, although it obviously relies on there being some indigenous peace-building role for women to be developed. It is here that the distinction between "indigenous" and "traditional" peace-building needs to be recognised, as traditional gender roles will tend towards reinforcing existing gender biases and inequalities. Indigenous approaches may draw upon cultural traditions but are not necessarily bound by them, while also being able to address context specific issues which externally developed approaches may fail to recognise or address.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to trace the process by which women came to be involved in the peace process and identify the key factors in this process, with a view to looking at what lessons could be learnt from this experience for other attempts to engage women with official peace processes and post-conflict reconciliation and development in other current and future conflicts. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, a peace process or post-conflict reconciliation and development programme which excludes half the population cannot by any logic be considered fair or just.[183] For this reason, involving women in the peace process and post-conflict reconciliation and redevelopment not only increases the chance of success in these processes but also ensures that women's rights and interests are represented and protected. However far too often governments, IGOs and NGOs interact exclusively, or at least preferentially, with the political and military leaders in conflict and post-conflict situations and these leaders are almost always exclusively male. The case of Bougainville stands as an exception to this trend and therefore offers a potential case study of how women can be included in an official peace process and post-conflict environment and the ways in which this might be beneficial both for women themselves and for the wider community as a whole. In order to do this the factors which are unique to Bougainville must be acknowledged, so that those which are cross-culturally applicable can also be acknowledged.

Women's involvement is one of several factors in the relative success of the peace process in Bougainville and this can be seen as vindication for the line of reasoning which led to the adoption

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183 Hunt "Moving beyond silence" 252.

of UNSCR 1325. However while UNSCR 1325 may have laid down a commitment to trying to engage women in peacebuilding roles from the world's highest diplomatic body it did not provide a way in which this might happen or the mechanisms which might be used to ensure that it occurs. Bougainvillean women's involvement in the peace process can therefore be seen to represent a test case on how such an engagement can be encouraged and fostered. As has been shown, the process which led to the women of Bougainville taking on the roles they did was complex one and isolating the individual factors is a difficult task. Culture and history both played vital parts in motivating women to become involved, and the men of Bougainville also helped to facilitate this process too. Interestingly there was very little external help or influence on women's involvement or on the peace process in general in its initial stages, other than the New Zealand government providing a safe and neutral venue for negotiations. The post-negotiation phase of the peace process has been markedly different, largely due to the PNGDF blockade on the island during the conflict which prevented any international NGOs or IGOs operating there. This no doubt had the effect of amplifying the importance of the grassroots women's organisations which were formed during the conflict.

The case of Bougainville taken by itself is interesting but alone does not answer the questions around how to get women involved more in peace processes or the successes this might bring. In order to do that, the themes which have emerged and the lessons I believe can be learnt from this case need to be applied to other conflict and post-conflict environments, and the Bougainville case needs to be compared and contrasted to other cases around the world. This includes not only cases where women have been excluded or played little part in the peace process and/or post-conflict reconciliation and development, such as the Cote d'Ivoire,[184] but other cases where they have had greater involvement, such as El Salvador.[185] By doing so a set of conditions which are common to all cases where women have enjoyed a relatively high level of involvement can be arrived at, as can a set of conditions which hinder women's involvement, and these can be used to create programmes and approaches to be used in future peace processes. The idea that the notion of indigenous peacebuilding can be adapted to facilitate women's involvement in peace processes is one which has some potential. It avoids the pitfalls of essentialism and at least partly mitigates the problems that arise from external actors imposing one-size-fits-all approaches on conflicts which have vastly different cultural and historical contexts, and thus should increase the chances of a positive

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184   Nadine Puechguirbal "Gender and Peace Building in Africa: Analysis of some Structural Obstacles" in Dina Rodriguez Montero and Edith Natukunda-Togboa (eds) *Gender and Peace Building in Africa*. Costa Rica: University for Peace 2005 3.
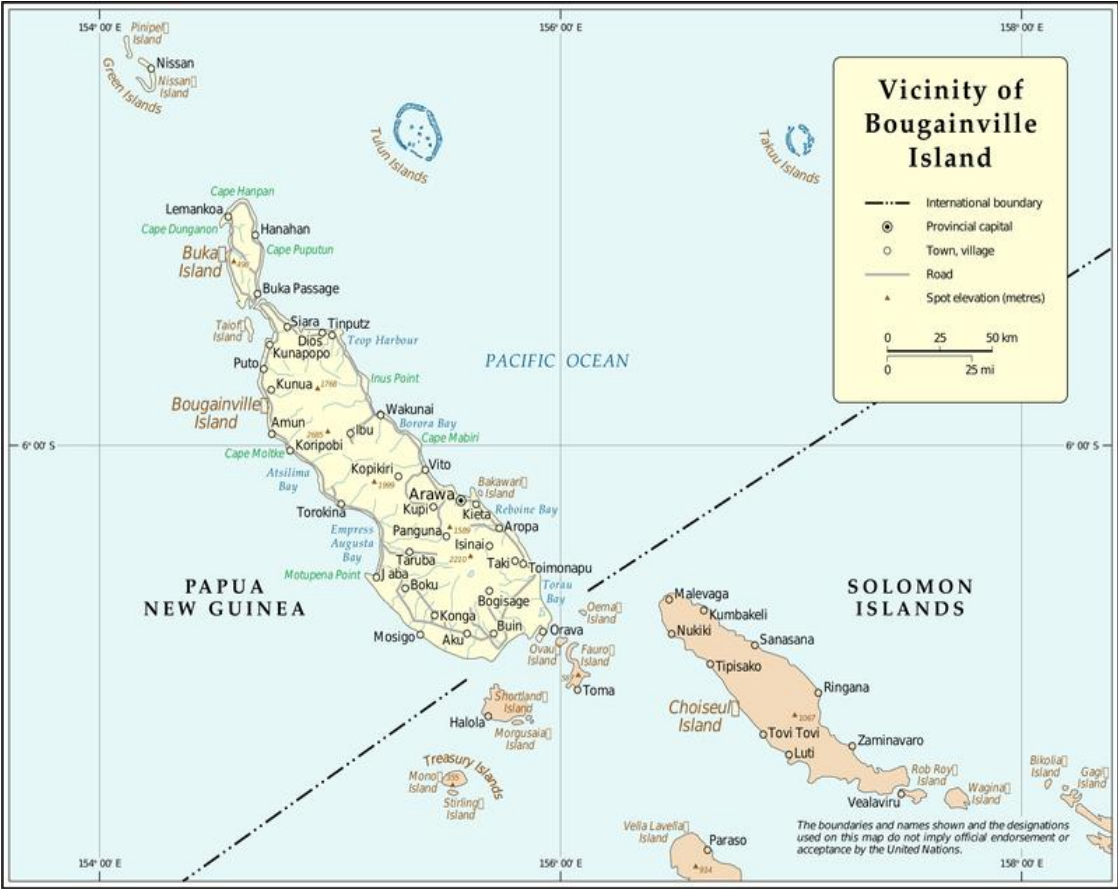
185   Hunt "Moving beyond silence" 257.

outcome.

Appendix I: Interview questions

- Do you feel that the role of women in the peace process was vital in ending the conflict on Bougainville?

- Was there an official policy to get women involved in the peace process or was it their involvement the result of grassroots action?

- Do you feel that the level of involvement granted to women in the official peace process was adequate or do you think they should have played a greater or lesser role? Why?

- Do you feel that the conflict itself changed the role of women in Bougainville society and if so, in what way?

- As far as you are aware, were there any significant differences in the experience of women in the peace process in different regions or clans?

- What was the response of male ex-combatants to the involvement of women in the peace process in your experience?

- What was the response of the wider community on Bougainville to the involvement of women in the peace process in your experience?

- Do you think that any significant lessons were learnt in regards to the involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville?

- Did you encounter any barriers to the involvement of women in the peace process in Bougainville?

- Are there any other points you would like to discuss in regards to gender and the peace process in Bougainville?

Appendix II: Map of Bougainville

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/07/Un-bougainville.png/800px-Un-bougainville.png

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