Navigating conflict and peace: women's political participation in conflict-affected Pacific states

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i. Abstract

The low rates of women's political participation in Pacific countries has long been the focus of academic scholarship. In recent years, peace and security scholarship has increasingly started to consider women's presence in peace processes and the lasting impact this may have on peace and gender equality in the post conflict state. However, there has been little work to connect these two areas to look at women's participation in political decision-making in conflict-affected states, particularly those in the Pacific.

Societies often go through huge transitions after conflict, yet there is no consensus in the literature on the impact of conflict on gender equality or on rates of women's participation in formal politics. This thesis explores the conditions for women's participation in formal political structures in two conflict-affected case studies in the Pacific – Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. In doing so, it seeks to examine the post-conflict dynamics and how they have enabled or prevented women's rights advocates from advancing reforms to parliamentary and political structures to increase the participation of women in formal political structures.

This thesis has found that different opportunities for women's advocates to make reforms to the post conflict political structures developed in each case study, with more scope for change emerging from the conflict in Bougainville than in Solomon Islands. Subsequently women's advocates in Bougainville have had more success in reforming governance structures to ensure their increased participation, which resulted in three reserved seats in the Autonomous Bougainville Government and legislation providing for gender parity in local government. The failure to achieve similar reforms in Solomon Islands is due to a series of interlinking issues, but can be most significantly attributed to two factors: the lack of an effective internal peace process emerging from the conflict – without which opportunities for an inclusive political settlement didn't arise, as well as the mandate of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to restore the pre-conflict political environment, rather than reform the ex ante status quo. Together these two factors afforded few openings for women's advocates to push for new governance arrangements that could enable the increased participation of women.

Conversely, the conflict in Bougainville was largely resolved internally, and resulted in the development of a new constitution and governance structures. This provided opportunities for women's advocates to ensure their inclusion in these new structures. However, despite the success of women's advocates in Bougainville, the numbers of women MPs in the Autonomous Bougainville Government have not increased to the extent many had hoped for.

The post conflict political environment for women in both case studies is defined by an intensely local political culture with weak party politics, and the failure of service delivery on behalf of the government. These characteristics create a challenging campaign environment for women candidates, which in Solomon Islands is being exacerbated by the increasing use of the constituency development funds.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

There is limited research in the literature on the relationship between the involvement of women in peacekeeping and their ongoing participation in formal political decision-making during and after conflicts. Similarly, there is not much research documenting the impact that peace agreements and post-conflict governance arrangements have on women's participation in formal politics and broader gender equality in the years after a conflict.

Women have played a vital role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution around the Pacific, yet the rates of women's participation in formal politics post-conflict remains low. The rationale for this thesis is to explore the conditions created by two Pacific conflicts to better understand the dynamics around women's participation in formal politics in the years after conflict in the Pacific.

Of the 12 independent states in the Pacific, four have experienced periods of violent conflict (Fiji, Bougainville/Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and East Timor) as has Western Papua. Three have seen periods of political unsettlement, which have not turned into full-fledged conflicts (Vanuatu, Tonga and New Caledonia) (Boge, 2001; George, 2011). For the purposes of this thesis I have chosen to focus on two case studies; the conflicts in Bougainville and Solomon Islands. In both case studies, the political organising of women's groups has been celebrated for their role in resolving the conflicts, yet the rates of women's participation in formal politics remains low; only one woman[1] has ever won an open seat in Bougainville (Baker, 2019a), and in the Solomon Islands

[1] The results of the 2020 ABG elections were released after the completion of this thesis, which saw another woman candidate win an open seat, making the 2020 election the second time a women has won an open seat in Bougainville (Radio New Zealand, 2020).

women were completely excluded from the formal peace negotiations and resulting agreements (George, 2018c).

1.2 Background

Societies often go through huge political and social transformations after conflict. In some cases, this post-conflict transformation gives rise to changes in gender relations, including significant increases to the number of women representatives in elected political institutions, and legal and policy reforms towards gender equality, but this isn't always the case. Tripp's case studies of post-conflict African countries (2015) have found that three conditions were present in the countries where these gender transformations have occurred:

1. The conflict was a protracted civil war conflict,
2. Women's movements and civil society were increasingly politically active and involved in peace building and
3. The time period – these conflicts occurred at a time when there was significant international pressure and support for the advancement of women's rights.

Tripp's findings hold that protracted civil conflicts created disruptions in gender norms, which provided opportunities for women's groups to transform gender relations and gain political representation. She refers to these transformations in gender relations as "gender regime change" (Tripp, 2015, p. 4). Tripp noted that increases in women's leadership occurred across different sectors of society during this time, with women taking on positions in the private and public spheres that were previously most often held by men (Hughes, 2015; Tripp, 2015). The opening of political space, even when limited, saw a rise in the number of women's organisations. This occurred at the same time as changes in international gender norms, meaning increased support was available from international women's groups and donors. This last point on the timing of conflict transition is important, with Tripp noting that the same pattern is not observed before 1995. Tripp attributes this largely to the momentum and international support gained from

United Nations agencies and INGOs for the advancement of women's rights, on the back of the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing and Platform for Action.

Other studies (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018) have demonstrated that the involvement of women in the peace process, the number of women in parliament at the time of peace negotiations, the text of peace agreements and the involvement of civil society in formal peace processes are all relevant to how gender equality develops in a post-conflict context.

The Pacific has the lowest rates of women's political representation in the world, just 6.1 percent of parliamentarians in Pacific Island states are women. This compares to 23.6 percent in Africa, 18.6 percent in Asia and 28 percent in the Americas (Baker, 2018b; IPU, 2018). In many instances in the Pacific, the numbers of women MPs are declining,[2] while at the same time the numbers of women in senior leadership positions in the public sector and other areas are increasing (Corbett & Liki, 2015).

Statistics on the rates of women's participation in peace processes and negotiations are very low. Of all major peace processes between 1990 and 2017, eight percent of mediators, eight percent of negotiators, and just five percent of witnesses and signatories were women (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019).

Evidence has shown that where women participate in the peace process, resulting agreements are 20 percent more likely to last at least two years and 35 percent more likely to last for at least 15 years or more (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). It is notable that 90 percent of the civil wars that have occurred in the last decade were in countries that had also experienced a civil war within the previous 30 years (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018).

[2] For instance, Papua New Guinea lost all of its women MPs in the 2017 elections, despite a record number running, which is the first time in 25 years that no women MPs have been sitting.

Higher rates of women in national parliaments, and the involvement of civil society, were found to be the most important factors in whether peace agreements would contain gender sensitive provisions (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). It has been found that there is a relationship between whether a peace agreement has gender sensitive provisions and whether or not the post-conflict society will move towards policy and legislative reform that advances gender equality (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018).

Women have played a vital role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution around the Pacific. The conflicts in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands occurred during the international women's movement in the late 1990's – a similar time period to the conflicts analysed in Tripp's theory. Women's organisations in both Pacific case studies have a long history of political organising. However, it seems that similar gains for women's participation in parliament were not achieved to the same degree as some of those explored in Tripp's analysis. This thesis seeks to explore the conditions created by each conflict to understand whether or not they provided the same opportunities for women's advocates as those in Tripp's case studies.

1.2.1 Background to each case study

This thesis considers two case studies of civil conflict in the Pacific: Bougainville and Solomon Islands. A brief description of each is provided below.

1.2.1.1 Bougainville

In 1988, a violent conflict emerged in response to activity at the Panguna gold and copper mine in Bougainville. Locally, it was referred to as 'the crisis'. The mine was one of the largest in the world at the time and contributed significantly to Papua New Guinea's economy. Until its closure in 1989, it generated 36 percent of gross export earnings and 17 percent of all government revenues (Regan, 2010, p. 26). Customary owners of the land leased to the mining company and young Bougainvillean mine workers both had

grievances with various aspects of the mine's operation[3], some stemming back to the landownership arrangements made by the colonial government in the 1960s (Regan, 2010, p. 18). There were also concerns about the social and environmental impacts of the mine on the local communities and an influx of non-Bougainvillean workers. The conflict developed into a separatist movement involving numerous Bougainvillean militia factions, as well as the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) and Police Force –it engulfed Bougainville until a ceasefire was reached in 1998 (Regan, 2010).

Regan notes that the violence might never have evolved into the wider separatist movement if it wasn't for the heavy-handed response of Papua New Guinean police squads deployed against villagers in the mining area in response to destruction of mine property in the late 1980s (2010, p. 14). The Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) was established under the leadership of Francis Ona from 1989. With support from villages near the mine, Bougainville's succession from PNG was adopted as a key goal of the movement. The BRA established factions across the island, although support for succession in Papua New Guinea was not uniform throughout Bougainville. As the fighting continued, many Bougainvilleans who had been members of the PNGDF defected and joined the BRA. During 1992 and 1993, various armed Bougainvillean groups united in opposition of the BRA and became known as the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF), establishing links with the PNGDF. From the early 1990s until the beginning of the peace process in 1997, Regan describes the conflict as having two distinct dimensions: one, the secessionist struggle between the BRA and the PNG forces, and the other comprised of internal conflicts between the Bougainvillean groups (Regan, 2010).

[3] See Regan for a detailed description of these issues (2010, p. 18).

The crisis displaced an estimated 60,000 Bougainvilleans out of a population of 160,000. Estimates of those killed as a result of armed conflict are between 1,000-2,000. Many more (estimates suggesting between 15,000-20,000) died on all sides as a result of extrajudicial killings and the impact of the PNG imposed blockade of BRA-controlled areas. The blockade prevented many from accessing essential supplies and medicine (Braithwaite, Charlesworth, Reddy, & Dunn, 2010b; Regan, 2010; Ruth Saovana-Spriggs, 2000). Children of the conflict era suffered the consequences of a lack of basic healthcare and schooling, while rates of gender based violence increased during the crisis and remain high today (Kirkham, Close, & Yousuf, 2018). The conflict severely damaged the governing capacity of the local state, caused deep divisions and mistrust between Bougainvilleans, and devastated much of the island's public infrastructure and private property and assets (Regan, 2010).

1.2.1.2 Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands experienced a civil conflict between 1998 and 2003, primarily between groups from Guadalcanal and Malaita. Total fatalities are estimated to be around 200-400, with some 20,000 displaced. Despite this relatively low number of casualties, the conflict caused significant instability and triggered the massive[4] Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), which ran for 14 years from 2003 and undoubtedly prevented many more deaths occurring (Braithwaite, Dinnen, Allen, Braithwaite, & Charlesworth, 2010a).

Locally referred to as the 'tensions', the conflict had two major stages. The first involved an uprising of young men from the impoverished Weather Coast area of Guadalcanal, who became known as the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM). Their objective was to

[4] RAMSI is estimated to have cost in excess of $2.6 billion AUD and involved the peacekeeping forces of 15 countries

drive settlers from Malaita off the island of Guadalcanal. Following the Second World War, many Malaitans migrated to Guadalcanal in search of work. While Malaita had become overpopulated and subjected to compounding underinvestment (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 18), Guadalcanal was an export investment hub that offered a range of job opportunities. However, as a result of cultural differences relating to matrilineal versus patrilineal customs and attitudes to land ownership, many people of Guadalcanal came to regard Malaitans as disrespectful guests on their land and various conflicts broke out between the two groups across Guadalcanal.

The second stage saw the establishment of the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) to protect Malaitan interests against the IFM. Conflicts escalated and the government was unable to address the disputes or to remedy the damage caused by the resulting violence. These events culminated in the raiding of the police armoury in Honiara by Malaitan militants and the country's prime minister and governor general were placed under house arrest by rebel groups. Together with the paramilitary wing of the Royal Solomon Islands Police (made up largely of Malaitans), the MEF staged a coup that saw the forced resignation of the incumbent prime minister in 2000. A peace agreement was signed in 2000 but almost immediately collapsed with neither side giving up their weapons. The situation then disintegrated further with both militias splintering into numerous armed groups who carried out banditry and intimidation, financially crippling the state (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a).

1.3 Methodology and research questions

Aim: To examine the dynamics affecting women's participation in elected political institutions in two conflict-affected environments in the Pacific – Bougainville and Solomon Islands.

This aim is the background to two specific research questions:

1. In what ways did each conflict create opportunities for women's groups to expand roles in conflict resolution and peacekeeping and push for reforms to increase the participation of women in political institutions?
2. What enabling and constraining factors have influenced women's participation in formal political institutions in conflict-affected Bougainville and the Solomon Islands?

1.3.1 Methods

Through desk-based research of primary documents and interviews with key informants, I have created an overview of the political landscape for women in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. This overview considers the impact of each conflict on women's participation in formal political institutions.

Based on the scholarship discussed in the next chapter, particularly of Tripp (2015), Tripp and Hughes (2015) and True and Riveros-Morales (2018), I have considered factors identified from the literature as critical to the transformation of gender norms and political environments in post-conflict contexts. This includes the structures, beliefs and practices that work to facilitate or hinder women's involvement in political decision-making in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. I have considered the impact of these features at three stages in time: during the conflict, during the peace processes and in the post conflict

period[5]. The matrix below shows examples of the factors I have assessed in each chapter of my research.

Each chapter presents findings for both case studies on the characteristics shown in this matrix. A compare and contrast analysis is undertaken in the chapter conclusion. These conclusions are then tied together in my final chapter to answer my two research questions.

Table 1 Chapter overview – research matrix

	Conflict	Peace Processes	Post-Conflict
Chapter 3 The role of women's and civil society groups and women MPs	• Existing women's civil society organisations • Dialogue and peacebuilding activities undertaken • Presence of women parliamentarians	• Participation of women's representatives • Women negotiators or delegates • Opportunities for civil society and minority groups to participate in	• Involvement in post-conflict governance arrangements • Transition into formal political positions • Impact on political environment for women candidates

[5] Chronological distinctions between different periods of conflict are arbitrary definitions necessary for the purposes of this research. However, in reality conflict is not linear. These three periods overlap and conflict to some degree or another is likely to be present at all stages. Violence in fragile contexts is cyclical and protracted, for more information see: OECD (2020), *States of Fragility 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ba7c22e7-en.

	• Political alliances • New roles for women's groups	and influence the peace process	• Narratives emerging from conflict period
Chapter 4 Institutional and legal features which may create opportunities or barriers for women's political participation	• Women's participation in political institutions in the conflict era • Gender equality provisions in pre-conflict or conflict era constitutional arrangements	• Gender Sensitive Provisions included in peace agreements • Formal consultation processes • Role of customs and traditions in the reconciliation process	• Gender provisions included in post-conflict governance arrangements • New constitutional or legislative arrangements • Adoption of Temporary Special Measures at the parliamentary or political party level • Structural features of political environment
Chapter 5 Approaches to peacekeeping and support from the	• Resources and support mobilised for domestic	• Approach to peacekeeping (i.e: liberal, local, hybrid, security	• Resources and support for newly elected women leaders

international community	women's civil society ● Explicit support for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality	focused approaches) ● Inclusion of civil society groups ● Consideration of cultural concepts of reconciliation	● Advocacy and support for the redistribution of power and adoption of gender transformative governance measures

1.3.2 Document analysis

The decision to rely heavily on desk-based research was related to numerous factors. One of which was the unexpected Covid-19 outbreak last year. While desk-based research was always going to form a foundation for my research, I had planned to supplement this with interviews with women involved in local and national level politics and women's groups from the region. I was scheduled to be working at a regional women's political leadership conference in Fiji in late March 2020, the conference was organised by my employer (the Westminster Foundation for Democracy and local partner the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Fiji). However, due to the Covid outbreak, this conference was cancelled and I had to make other plans for my interviews.

Desk-based research allowed me to explore the relationship between women's role in peace processes and subsequent access to formal political structures across two case studies from a macro level, while including rich qualitative data from my key informants.

Where primary data was not available i.e. campaign spending or accurate electoral records, this was supplemented with secondary data, i.e. research from local or international NGOs or experts on the same issues.

The primary sources in my document analysis have included: the textual analysis of peace agreements, multilateral agreements and international legal conventions, constitutional documents, national legislation, reports of parliament and parliamentary committees, Hansard records, reports of government bodies, reports and research carried out by the peacekeeping missions and associated bodies, policy documents, electoral and voting records and relevant data. 'Grey literature' in the form of research conducted by NGOs, international bodies (i.e. IPU and UN departments) and first-person accounts of those involved in the conflicts and peace process has been valuable to provide extra context and detail, as have news reports and newspaper articles.

1.3.3 Key informants

In addition to document analysis, I interviewed a number of key informants who are experts on aspects of women's political participation in the Pacific or have first hand experience of the conflict-affected political environment. The advantage of this method is that it provides qualitative context to data gathered through document analysis. As I mentioned above, due to the Covid-19 outbreak I was unable to interview many of the women I had originally planned to approach, which has resulted in a heavier reliance on academics. I conducted the interviews I did have via Skype.

According to O'Leary (2010), working with key informants "means attempting to gather some insider or expert knowledge that goes beyond the private experiences, beliefs and knowledge base of the individual you are talking to" (p. 171). The insights from my key informants have been used to 'triangulate' or provide a context to data collected from my document review as well as a source of qualitative data in themselves (O'Leary, 2010, p. 171).

I first selected three key informants I had identified as experts based on my literature review. After reaching out to them I provided a background summary to my research and a set of interview questions. These questions were tailored to each informant, as they all had different areas of expertise and experience. After the interview I asked each of them

to recommend another key informant, this way I built up a network of experts through the snowball method.

The experts I interviewed brought considerable knowledge to my research, and provided valuable insights and added depth to my understanding of key issues. After I interviewed each expert at least once (sometimes twice), I prepared a selective transcript of the material I planned to use and sent it back to them to edit or approve, this often prompted further conversations on the issues discussed. As such, this research was co-created with their collective expertise. In the spirit of collective knowledge creation, I felt that they should not be anonymised, and everyone who was happy to be named and have their contributions attributed to them has been.

1. Kerryn Baker – Kerryn is a Research Fellow in Pacific Politics at the Australian National University. Her research has a focus on women's political representation in the Pacific Islands.

2. Terence Wood – Terence is a Research Fellow at the Australian National University, his PhD research focused on studying voter behaviour in the Solomon Islands. He also undertakes research on Melanesian politics.

3. James Batley – James is a Distinguished Policy Fellow in the Department of Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University. He served as Australia's High Commissioner to Solomon Islands in the late 1990s. He also served two terms as the senior Australian civilian member of the Bougainville Truce Monitoring Group and the Bougainville Peace Monitoring Group. From 2004-2006 he served as the leader of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

4. Antje Busch – Antje is a PhD candidate from Germany looking at women's participation in community government in Bougainville. Her fieldwork involved

interviewing 25 women involved in community governance in Bougainville in 2018. She is completing her studies at RWTH Aachen University.

5. Theresa Meki – Theresa is a PhD candidate from Papua New Guinea, she is completing her research at the Australian National University on women candidates in elections in Papua New Guinea.

6. Karlyn Tekulu – Karlyn was involved in the Women for Peace movement in the Solomon Islands. She is currently completing a PhD at Canterbury University looking at perceptions of conflict from an indigenous standpoint.

7. Julien Barbara – Julien is a Senior Policy Fellow at the Department of Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University. From 2010-2012 he served as the director of the Machinery of Government Programme for the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

8. Almah Tararia – Almah is a PhD candidate from Papua New Guinea. She is undertaking her research at the Australian National University on women's political participation at the local level in Papua New Guinea. Almah has also worked on a number of women in politics programmes in the Pacific.

9. Anita Togolo – Anita is completing her PhD from the Australian National University on indigenous entrepreneurship, she is looking at the Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea. Anita is from Bougainville and Australia and completed her honours research on matrilineal land tenure in Bougainville and Papua New Guinea.

10. Sue Ingram – Sue served as the director of the Machinery of Government programme for the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)

from 2003-2007. Sue also completed her PhD from the Australian National University in 2017 on the political settlements in Bougainville and Timor-Leste.

I also interviewed a number of government officials who have not contributed primary qualitative data in the form of quotes but did provide useful background context and secondary source documentary information.

A set of interview questions is included in Annex 1. The rest can be provided on request.

1.3.4 Ethical considerations

The fact that I am relying on largely desk-based research does remove many of the ethical concerns that can arise. However, I have considered the ethical implications of interviewing experts and complied with Massey University's in-house ethics process. Ethical considerations are still a key aspect of ensuring desk-based research is carried out responsibly and with integrity (O'Leary, 2010, p. 30). Ensuring the work is beneficial to the wider community it discusses is a crucial ethical consideration that must be considered at all stages of my research.

In July 2019, I achieved a low risk notification for the Massey development studies after completing the in-house ethics process.

Chapter two: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this literature review, I have defined the Pacific Islands as the 24 member, associate member and observer countries and territories belonging to the Pacific Islands Forum6. I have expanded on this definition to include Bougainville separately from Papua New Guinea, as an autonomous region with its own legislature and unique political status. This definition therefore totals 25 countries, territories and one autonomous region.

The Pacific Island region is often cited as having the lowest levels of women's representation in the world, this is combined with a slow rate of growth (IPU, 2018). From 1995 to 2015, women's representation in legislatures rose only marginally from two to five percent, now women make up just 6.1 percent of Pacific parliamentarians (Baker, 2018b, p. 542). In many instances, the numbers of women MPs are declining, while at the same time the numbers of women in senior leadership positions in the public sector and other areas are increasing (Corbett & Liki, 2015).

[6] Members of the Pacific Islands Forum: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Tokelau is an associate member. Observer members include: American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Timor-Leste and Wallis and Futuna. https://www.forumsec.org/who-we-arepacific-islands-forum/

Table 2 Women MPs in Pacific parliaments

Women MPs in Pacific parliaments

(Adapted from IPU, 2018, 2019).

COUNTRY	WOMEN MPS	TOTAL MPS	PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MPS
Fiji	10	51	19.6
Palau (Upper and Lower Houses)	4	29	13.8
Samoa	5	50	10.0
Marshall Islands	3	33	9.1
Tuvalu	1	15	6.7
Kiribati	3	46	6.5
Nauru	1	19	5.3
Tonga	2	26	7.7
Papua New Guinea	0	106	0.0
Bougainville (Papua New Guinea)	4	39	10.3
Solomon Islands*	3	50	6.0
Federated States of Micronesia	0	14	0.0
Vanuatu	0	52	0.0

* Solomon Islands updated for 2019 results (Wood, 2019c)

Women's political representation fluctuates significantly across the region; Samoa has five women MPs including the deputy prime minister, after introducing reforms to the 2016 election. Tuvalu, Nauru and the Solomon Islands have only one woman MP each, while Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and FSM have none (Firth, 2018, p. 10). Fiji's first woman speaker was appointed in its 2014 elections following the lead of the Cook Islands in the 1960s. The same elections saw 18 out of 50 seats filled by women (Chattier, 2015, p. 178). Fiji's most recent elections have increased that number to 19 out of 51 seats held by women (IPU, 2019). The 2017 elections saw Papua New Guinea's greatest setback in 25 years when no women were elected despite a record number of women running (167 out of 3,332), and three women already incumbent who failed to keep their seats (IPU, 2018). These results are disappointing, especially given the defeat in 2012 of amendments to the Organic Law, which would have enacted 22 reserved seats for women (IPU, 2018). Bougainville has three reserved seats for women and to date only one woman has ever won an open seat (Baker & Oppermann, 2015a)[7]. The 2017 elections also saw disappointing set-backs in Timor-Leste, who lost its position as an Asia-Pacific country with one of the highest number of women's representatives, falling from 38.5 to 32 percent (IPU, 2018). This has been achieved with a quota system, however, the country's closed political representation system has meant that political decision making power is concentrated among male leaders who determine the placement of candidates on party lists (IPU, 2018). In 2017, Tonga saw two women elected, increasing the percentage of women MPs by almost eight points. The French territories tend to boast higher rates of representation overall (IPU, 2018).

[7] Since this thesis was completed another woman won an open seat in the 2020 elections.

This literature review is broadly split into two main sections; the first half will go on to consider the different explanations given for women's low levels of formal political participation across the Pacific. The second half provides a context for these explanations by considering the participation of women in conflict-transition and post-conflict politics across the region. It does this by looking at the history of women's peacekeeping in the Pacific before assessing the approaches to peacekeeping and the international legal mechanisms employed. Lastly, it considers the extent to which women's involvement in peace processes and peace agreements impacts the opportunities for them to participate in formal politics in the years after a conflict.

2.2 Why women's political participation and representation matters

Acknowledging the need for a 'critical mass' in the numbers of women in parliament to enable substantive representation for women, the UN Economic and Social Council recommended a target of 30 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by 2000 (McLeod, 2015, p. 10). Various arguments are typically used to make the case for greater parliamentary representation for women: rights based perspectives that value the importance of equal opportunity; instrumentalist arguments that see political advantages to women's representation; and claims that women MPs debate and legislate differently from men and are therefore in a better position to substantively represent women (Baker, 2018b, p. 544). In her recent piece, Baker (2018b) talks about the gender double-bind women politicians in the Pacific often find themselves in: as there are so few women MPs, when women are elected they may be expected to not only represent their constituencies but become burdened with representing all women, making them vulnerable to backlash at the next election if they are perceived to have failed. In this sense, the prioritisation of gender by both candidates and voters over other politically relevant factors may be harming rather than helping rates of women's representation in the region (Baker, 2018b, p. 543). Baker makes the case for focusing on increasing descriptive rather than focusing on substantive representation (which is normally the case). However, critics of this argument note that

the mere presence of women legislators does not guarantee adequate representation of interests relevant for women (Baker, 2018b).

Other recent works on women's political participation and representation in the Pacific have focused on the overlapping of multiple identities – race, age, class, religion, kinship and family ties, party affiliation, geography etc – all of which may be expected to influence voter behaviour as much as gender (Chattier, 2015; Corbett & Liki, 2015). Yet women are often still seen as politically homogenous in the region by donors, women's groups and political campaigns (Baker, 2018b). International organisations and donor governments, in particular, pursue interventions that increase representation based on gender at the exclusion of other factors (Corbett & Liki, 2015). Intersectional criticisms of gender rights based approaches to representation are in line with critiques of western feminism from global scholars such as Mohanty (1991), and more relevant to the Pacific, Marsh (1998) and Underhill-Sem (2011). Many studies of women leaders and political candidates in the Pacific (Baker, 2018b; Chattier, 2015; Corbett & Liki, 2015; Spark & Corbett, 2018) have found that gender was not the platform they felt most relevant, or at least more relevant than other identities. In her 2003 piece, Mohanty reminds us that: "cross-cultural feminist work must be attentive to the micro-politics of context subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macro-politics of global economic and political systems and processes." (Mohanty, 2003, p. 501).

2.2.1 Barriers and enabling factors towards women's political participation

This section will explore the barriers and enabling factors to women's participation in elected political institutions as assessed in the literature. There is a significant selection of recent literature exploring the challenges to women's political participation, representation and leadership in the region and in individual countries. Both Franenkel and Huffer's reviews of the electoral systems and factors impacting women's participation in Pacific parliaments are extensive (2006; 2006), and McLeod provides a more recent update considering women's leadership in the region more generally (2015).

True et al. provide a comparative analysis across Asia and the Pacific (2014). In 2015, Corbett and Liki undertook a survey of women parliamentarians, asking them how gender affects their role as MPs (2015). Corbett has also authored pieces collating interviews of the political elite in the Pacific (2015). Wood has produced numerous works on voter behaviour in the Solomon Islands and analysis of the factors impacting women candidates (2013; 2014, 2015). Baker has a large amount of detailed recent work on women's political participation and representation in Melanesia particularly (2014b, 2015, 2018d, 2019a, 2019b; 2015a), and comparisons across the Pacific including Samoa (2014a, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2019a). Chattier and Wallace provide thoughtful analysis of women's political participation and representation in Fiji and Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, respectively (2015; 2011). Recent studies of women leaders in Melanesia that survey those outside of the political sphere, offer rich qualitative information on dynamics in the region (Spark & Corbett, 2018; Teaheniu, 2016). Of particular note is Spark's (2018) piece on young women leaders who have chosen not to go into politics but to influence gender equality and their communities through other means.

The processes by which women gain political power are influenced by a number of different factors with a huge variation across the Pacific. Uncovering and understanding these features is made difficult by the diversity of the region and the complexity of encounters with the West and Western scholarship (Zetlin, 2014). In her 2006 desk review of the literature on the Pacific, Huffer summarised four key challenges to effectively understanding what prevents women from having greater political presence in the region, these are: 1. The cultural and socio-economic diversity of women's status; 2. The rapid transformations that Pacific societies have undergone in the last 150 years and the effects of this on the role of women; 3. A lack of reliable and collated information on women's roles in local-level and traditional decision-making and 4. The apparent inconsistency between the absence of women in public decision-making and the strong role they play in society (Huffer, 2006, p. 44). Although not focused exclusively on the Pacific,

Beckfield, Viterna and Fallon (2008) found that the common explanations of factors[8] contributing to women's representation are highly accurate when applied to developed countries, but far less so when applied to political contexts in developing countries. They suggest that many of these factors do a poor job of promoting women's representation in developing countries and that new theoretical models are needed to uncover and analyse factors at play in other contexts (Viterna et al., 2008). Historically, the literature on the topic in the Pacific starts from one of the following three frameworks for analysis:[9]

1. Culture or *Kastom* and gender norms that privilege men's public leadership;
2. The socio-economic disadvantages experienced by women, which mean either women lack the individual aptitudes and resolve to stand, and/or voters are unwilling to vote for them, and
3. Institutional or structural arrangements, electoral or political party systems that act as barriers to women's participation (Zetlin, 2014).

Recent academic work tends to focus more on the nuance and complexity of explanations for women's low political participation in different contexts. However, development interventions tend to still be based around one of the above three explanations and correlating theory of change (Zetlin, 2014).

1. Culture or gender norms

Patriarchal gender norms are among the most commonly cited cause of low rates of women's political representation in the region (Corbett & Liki, 2015; Huffer, 2006; McLeod, 2015). The degree to which such norms predated or are the result of colonialism,

[8] These factors are: political, ideological or cultural, and socioeconomic. Beckfield, Viterna and Fallon make a case for the importance of democratisation as an influencing factor in women's political representation in developing countries (Viterna et al., 2008, p. 457).

[9] There is some overlap in the definitions of all three of these factors and they are all connected to some degree, however, there seems to be general consensus in the literature on the three frameworks described above.

Christianity and globalisation is difficult to quantify. However, matrilineal political and economic structures were present in many parts of Melanesia, which prioritised women's land and decision-making rights, these structures were undermined by subsequent systems implemented by colonial governments (True et al., 2014, p. 37). While culture and gender norms are undoubtedly fluid and changing, they are highly influential in all levels of political participation (McLeod, 2015). For those who seek to frustrate women from taking a more active role in public political life, tradition can become a convenient tool. However, explanations viewing culture as a weapon wielded against women to oppress them fail to capture the dynamism between cultures, gender relations and systems of governance (True et al., 2014; Zetlin, 2014). There are many beliefs and traditions in Pacific cultures which can be (and are) drawn upon to strengthen women's leadership[10]. Analysis focusing on how these operate is likely to provide more successful avenues for change than blaming indigenous or modernising cultures for oppressing women generally (Zetlin, 2014). As with elsewhere in the world, women candidates in the pacific are frequently held to different standards of conduct, while campaigning and during their time in office, women MPs are frequently criticised for working against each other and report having to work harder to gain the same status (Corbett & Liki, 2015). Similarly, women MPs in the Pacific complain of the double burden of managing their professional and family lives (Corbett & Liki, 2015, p. 336; McLeod, 2015, p. 10). However, some of the candidates interviewed by Corbett and Liki in their 2015 study argued that traditional family structures in the Pacific made it easier for women to run for office, as strong family networks exist to take over their family duties (Corbett & Liki, 2015, p. 335). Violence against women, especially during political campaigns, is an unfortunate reality in the Pacific, particularly in Melanesia, and may act as a deterrent to many women considering

[10] For example matrilineal traditions in Melanesia, particularly Bougainville see (R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007). For a discussion of how aspects of Fa'asamoa can be used to support women's political participation and leadership see (Motusaga, 2017).

perusing a seat in office (Huffer, 2006; McLeod, 2015). For example, in Fiji, women MPs were detained and threatened with violence when the parliament was invaded in 2000 (True 2014, 41. McLeod 2015 p.10).

2. Socio-economic status

The economic status of women is commonly identified as an obstacle to women's political participation (Fraenkel, 2006; Huffer, 2006; McLeod, 2015; True et al., 2014) True suggests a lack of economic resources as an explanation for why women MPs often come from high ranking or political families (True et al., 2014, p. 38). Zetlin criticises these arguments as too reductive to properly account for the influence of social capital (networks, relationships and recognition) in women's campaigns, as well as criticising the resulting intervention logic that leads to 'supply and demand' style initiatives to improve women's representation rates (Zetlin, 2014, p. 249). Supply side interventions tend to focus on candidate training and mock parliaments, while the demand side sees initiatives to educate voters. Zetlin cautions reading a shortage of adequate women candidates as a significant factor in poor representation rates and criticises voter preference for men as largely anecdotal, and when true it is localised to specific areas (Zetlin, 2014, p. 259). Indeed, in his study on voter preference in the Solomon Islands, Wood found a general willingness among men and women to vote for women, and reported that women candidates were viewed as capable and influential (Wood, 2014, p. 1). Studies of Western countries do find a connection between high economic status and high levels of political participation, however both Zetlin and Viterna note that this can be linked to the pool of recruits rather than wider socio-economic development for women, and when applied to African countries this nexus doesn't hold up (Zetlin, 2014, p. 259). While market-style explanations may risk being too reductive in some cases, there is a widely documented phenomenon of transactional or 'Big Man' politics, especially in Melanesia, with a high cost of politics (Baker, 2014b, 2015) this is discussed further in the next section on structural arrangements. While socio-economic disadvantage may factor into individual women's ability to access the same level of campaign funds as men and possibly into the initial decisions to stand (if it is seen as a

large financial risk) or be nominated by a party, these questions are likely more pertinent than the broader socio-economic status of the population of women in the Pacific (Zetlin, 2014, p. 260).

3. Institutional or structural arrangements

Globally, nations that elect legislative candidates using some form of proportional representation tend to elect more women than nations with first past the post or majoritarian systems (Viterna et al., 2008, p. 457). In his studies on women's participation in the Solomon Islands, Wood concludes that the structural features of political systems, including access to finance and gatekeepers, act as significant barriers to higher participation rates for women (Wood, 2015, p. 532). Institutional explanations point to various structural arrangements and understandings making up "rules of the game", which often work to disadvantage women (Zetlin, 2014, p. 260). These include systemic factors such as electoral and party selection systems, as well as normative understandings around concepts of representation, equality and fairness (Zetlin, 2014, p. 262).

In many places in the Pacific, political parties are loosely formed or non-existent and party selection doesn't act as the same filter that it does in most Western democracies (Wood, 2015; Zetlin, 2014). However, local interlocutors or gatekeepers wield significant power in communities and gaining their support can be crucial to winning the support of communities (Wood, 2015, p. 536). The distribution of cash and other resources is commonplace and political prominence is gained through personal achievement, clan-based exchange and material wealth accumulation (McLeod, 2015, p. 11). "Money politics" or vote buying and gift giving is an accepted and influential practice in Bougainville's politics (Baker, 2015). This disadvantages women twofold, as they may find it more difficult to access campaign funds to engage in such behaviour and also because they are perceived to be less corrupt – vote buying is seen as a men's way of doing politics (Baker, 2015). This is a perception that may have been reinforced by many women who run on a platform of anticorruption and ethical behaviour. For example, in

Josephine Getsi's case[11] it helped to distinguish her from male candidates (Baker & Oppermann, 2015a). However, in a region where many people experience significant material hardship, the idea that a woman candidate may not deliver material assistance to her constituents if elected may work against her (Baker, 2015, p. 12).

Familiar and clan influence is often more relevant than ideology or policy, and despite legislation preventing chiefs from determining how communities vote in Vanuatu, there is a tendency for extended families to vote at the direction of the head of the household (Zetlin, 2014, p. 259). A few Pacific countries have legislative restrictions on who can stand as a candidate, for instance in Tonga nine members are hereditary nobles elected by their peers, one or two are appointed and the remaining 17 are directly elected. In Samoa, the fulfilment of *matai* (chiefly) duties plays a significant role in candidacy and only *matai* holders are eligible to stand for office, women only account for about five percent of *matai* titles. (Zetlin, 2014, p. 262).

The majority of the literature focuses on the barriers to women's political participation and representation rather than the factors underpinning success. However, Corbett and Liki's 2015 study interviewing successful women candidates and Corbett's 2015 compilation of interviews with Pacific MPs are notable contributions. As is consistent with global trends, many successful women candidates enter politics later in life and come from political families (Corbett & Liki, 2015; True et al., 2014). In the Pacific, many women come from public sector backgrounds, have above average education and a successful and high profile professional career. Apart from women candidates being less common, there doesn't seem to be a huge difference between the backgrounds of men and women candidates (Corbett & Liki, 2015; McLeod, 2015; Spark & Corbett, 2018). Some of the women interviewed by Corbett and Liki indicated that holding a rank or title

[11] This is discussed in more detail in chapters three and four.

may reduce gender discrimination, however Corbett and Liki exercise caution in making broad connections with rank and women's access to formal political space: "while we can infer that heredity rank may have some influence on the pathways women take into politics, variations exist across the region and the assumption that it automatically correlates with higher female representation is challenged by both individual cases and general trends, with the number of women elected to parliament in PNG, a country usually associated with the absence of rank, rising from one to three at the 2012 election, compared with the 2011 Samoan election where the number dropped from four to two despite rank remaining a persistent feature of political life." (Corbett & Liki, 2015, p. 14).

Also of note in Corbett and Liki's interviews is the acknowledgment – on behalf of many women candidates – that women's rights are not something that their constituents, men or women prioritise, such issues make way for concerns about infrastructure, basic goods and services, healthcare and education (Corbett & Liki, 2015, p. 15). Strong community or grassroots connections and utilising available "social capital" are two reoccurring factors in the success stories of women candidates (Corbett & Liki, 2015; Wood, 2015; Zetlin, 2014). For example, Maere Tekanene, an I-Kiribati parliamentarian described increasing the women attendees at her campaign meetings by more than 50 percent by moving them from indoor halls to outside events (Zetlin, 2014, p. 260). The francophone territories of French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna have gender parity provisions that require political parties to alternate the names of men and women candidates the whole way down the party list. This has seen increases from 17 to 46 percent in New Caledonia and 12 to 48 percent in French Polynesia (True et al., 2014, p. 33). Much of the literature suggests that by initiating structural changes such as gender quotas, many of the barriers outlined above may be overcome. However, some challenges to this logic are also noted in the literature: firstly, political parties only play a small role and therefore parliamentary gender quotas would be required (Baker, 2014a; Huffer, 2006; Spark & Corbett, 2018). Furthermore, Wood argues that in the Solomon Islands, at least, parliamentary gender quotas are unlikely to be voted in by existing MPs and suggests that work to strengthen ties between communities and women candidates is likely to be the best strategy (Wood, 2015, p. 532).

In her study on emerging women leaders in Melanesia who fit the profile of the "archetypal candidate" but choose to run "from" rather than "for" parliament, Spark critiques mainstream explanations of structural barriers and patriarchal norms as failing to account for the agency of the women involved and why they choose not to run for office (Spark & Corbett, 2018). Incidences of qualified potential women candidates choosing not to run for office is also mentioned in Corbett and Liki's research (Corbett & Liki, 2015). Spark notes that these women "want to represent issues, rather than electorates" and that in the Melanesian context, parliament may not be seen as the best arena for this. By influencing communities rather than entering formal politics – an environment that can be hostile to women – these leaders take a pragmatic anti-politics approach to making change (Spark & Corbett, 2018, p. 11). Many of the women interviewed identify more closely with post-colonial perspectives or indigenous movements rather than an explicitly feminist view, which is often portrayed as Western and imported. In contrast with the previous generation of women leaders, these emerging leaders further their cause by cooperating with male leaders rather than challenging them directly: "we are trying to get everyone to work together instead of against each other" (Spark & Corbett, 2018, p. 20). Forming strategic alliances with political leaders to make change where they can seems to be a new approach in response to the backlash and combative political environments of the past, where men and women leaders were locked into conflicts on temporary special measures and parliamentary quotas. Spark notes that these activities "can be interpreted as a strategic shift away from the Big Man politics to small 'p' politics focused on social change" (Spark & Corbett, 2018, p. 21).

While the presence of women in parliament and their participation in civil society are considered significant factors by feminist political scientists in the degree to which national policy making becomes gender-responsive, to date there is little research available on the actual impact of women's participation and representation in parliament across the Pacific (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). In New Caledonia, resources have been directed to initiatives focused on women's well-being since representation rates increased. In Papua New Guinea, Dame Carol Kidu was instrumental in legislating on issues of child sexual abuse and sexual violence, as well as achieving amendments

requiring each village court to include at least one woman magistrate (Corbett & Liki, 2015; True et al., 2014).

2.3 Women and peacekeeping in the Pacific

There is a significant amount of literature on the different approaches to peacekeeping in the Pacific, and the role of women in both formal and informal peacekeeping and conflict resolution activities (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2006; Braithwaite, Charlesworth, Reddy, & Dunn, 2010c; Charlesworth, 2008; George, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016a, 2016b, 2018b; Greener, Fish, & Tekulu, 2011; Miller, Pournik, & Swaine, 2014; R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2003; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007; Sirivi & Havini, 2004; True & Riveros-Morales, 2018; Westendorf, 2013). However, there is limited research in the literature on the relationship between the involvement of women in peacekeeping and their ongoing participation in formal political decision-making during and after conflicts. Similarly, there is not much research documenting the impact that peace agreements and post-conflict governance arrangements have on women's participation in formal politics and broader gender equality in the years after a conflict. The latter is the subject of some ongoing research from Monash university in Australia, and one focus of the political settlements research programme in the United Kingdom (Bell, 2015; Bell & O'Rourke, 2010; Bell & Pospisil, 2017; George, 2018a, 2018c; O'Rourke, 2017; True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). In their recent work mapping the impact of gender provisions in peace agreements, True and Riveros-Morales note that there is little research on women's engagement in democratic decision-making in conflict-affected states and that "there is a need to connect research on women's political representation, with peace and security scholarship on women's presence and gender equality agendas in peace processes" (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 28).

The literature on peace and security in the Pacific has often overlooked the regional activities of Pacific women's groups, such activities date back to the 1970s, some with their roots in the community development programmes of the 1940s (George, 2011, p. 41). Women's regional networking has been crucial in achieving political action and

resolving conflict; from the campaigns against nuclear testing in the 1960s to campaigns criticising foreign economic activities in the 1970s, as well as various forms of peacekeeping and conflict resolution activities across the region (George, 2011, pp. 46-48). Women's contributions to creating peace in Bougainville have been universally praised by academics, policy makers and local audiences (George, 2016b, p. 178). Women played key roles in reconciling communities and orchestrating ceasefires, calling upon Bougainville's matrilineal customs to centralise and legitimise their involvement. (Braithwaite, Charlesworth, et al., 2010d, p. 59; George, 2016b; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007). Similarly, in the Solomon Islands traditional conflict resolution techniques, which involved women pushing themselves between combatants and persuading them to put down their weapons, were used by women's organisations (Boge, 2001, p. 44; Braithwaite, Dinnen, Allen, Braithwaite, & Charlesworth, 2010a; George, 2018b, 2018c). In 2000, the Solomon Islands Women For Peace Group succeeded in arranging talks with members of the police, the government, the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) and the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), as well as advocating for the reorganisation of the police force and demanding the child soldiers be returned to their villages (Boge, 2001, p. 44). In Fiji, the National Council of Women organised a series of peace vigils denouncing the coup and calling for the release of hostages between May and July 2000 (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2006, p. 30). These vigils played an important role in reconciling communities and led to discussions with the Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, Ratu Voreqe Bainimarama, military council members and the National Council of Women (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2006, p. 30).

It is important to note that women's responses to conflict have not been singular and there has been large variation in the political actions taken by women's groups across the region over time. From organising prayer vigils and the provision of daily staples across

borders[12] to demands for representation in post-conflict governance arrangements[13] (Baker, 2014b; Bhagwan-Rolls, 2006; Boge, 2001). In the 2000s, campaigns by Pacific women's groups called for greater attention to international instruments in peacekeeping initiatives such as United Nations Security Resolution 1325 and related protocol. This was in contrast to campaigning in earlier periods, which took a more critical approach of global influences (George, 2011, pp. 46-48). For example, the Pacific PeaceWomen Project, consisting of organisations from Bougainville, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Fiji sought to promote regional awareness and incorporation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and women's involvement in formal peace processes in the Pacific (George, 2011, p. 47). In contrast, the Tongan government's announcement in 2015 that it would finally ratify the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)[14] was met with vocal public protests and opposition, including from various women's groups in the country (Lee, 2017). Despite this variation, George (2011) argues that overall, women's regional organising and peacebuilding has had a significant impact on their communities. These activities have been able to positively complement existing approaches to regional security in the region, which at times have relied too heavily on top down formal political and economic processes (2011, p. 59).

> "The history of women's regional collaboration around peacebuilding in the Pacific indicates that their responses to conflict have not simply

[12] Catholic nuns in the Women for Peace Group organised 'basket exchanges' between Honiara and the rural areas of Guadalcanal to ensure families had access to the daily staples that were no longer available in Guadalcanal and Honoria (Boge, 2001, p. 44).
[13] In Bougainville women campaigned for 12 seats in the autonomous government; one for each region of the island. They were later awarded three seats (Baker, 2014b).
[14] Tonga is one of only six countries in the world that have not ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Lee, 2017).

> been pushed to the margins but have at various points been engaged with and factored into mainstream policy-making" (George, 2011, p. 59).

George goes on to argue that the gains these organisations have made and their future potential is often overlooked because the political impact of these activities has not been fully recognised (George, 2011).

Despite the role women's organisations have played in peacekeeping and conflict resolution, women have been and continue to be marginalised from the formal decision-making structures that emerge post-conflict to determine the future of their nations (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2006, p. 30; Charlesworth, 2008; George, 2011, 2016b). For example, the Solomon Islands Townsville Peace Agreement 2000 failed to include any gender provisions or consult with any civil society or women's organisations, and no women were involved in its negotiation (George, 2018b, 2018c). This is a problem that is not confined to the Pacific: in conducting a textual analysis of all fifty-four negotiated peace processes between 1991 and 2014, Ellerby (2016) noted that resistance to women's participation occurred in every situation considered in her study, with women involved having to disrupt and insist on their role as stakeholders in formal negotiations, despite their roles as activists and negotiators in ending conflicts (Ellerby, 2016, p. 138). Such resistance highlights the gendered conceptions around war and peace, where dichotomous notions of women as ethical peacemakers and men as violent combatants prevails (H. Hudson, 2009; Puechguirbal, 2010; Sjoberg, 2009). Such a framing constructs conflict as masculine thereby excluding women from formal resolution processes. In this narrative, men are seen as the central participants in the conflict because of their role as perpetrators and combatants, and therefore the appropriate stakeholders in the conflict's resolution (Ellerby, 2016, p. 140; Moser & Clark, 2001; Puechguirbal, 2010). This gendered framework persists in international mechanisms and rhetoric on peacebuilding and means that women's involvement in formal peacekeeping processes is often contingent on their role as ethical peacemakers, rather than on their right to be an equal part of the decision-

making process (Charlesworth, 2008; Gentry & Sjoberg, 2015; Puechguirbal, 2010; Sjoberg, 2009).

2.3.1 Women peace and security (WPS) mechanisms

Regional cooperation as a strategy for conflict prevention has been prioritised by experts and leaders in the Pacific for some time now (George, 2011). The Solomon Islands are the only Forum Island member that has ratified the optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), but 11 Forum Island members are party to CEDAW (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2016, p. 38). All Forum Island members have committed to the Pacific Platforms for Action for the Advancement for Women (1994) the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and the 11 commonwealth members have committed to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2004) (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2016, p. 39). The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration (the Pacific Plan) was endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2005. The Pacific Plan contains a strategic objective to improve gender equality, meaning that all initiatives should give gender equality due consideration and that gender should be included as a cross-cutting issue in all regional security initiatives (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2016, p. 39). The Biketawa Declaration (2000) calls for equal rights despite gender, race or political belief and stresses the need for leaders to address the underlying causes of conflicts, i.e.: intolerance for ethnic differences, socio-economic disparities and lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2016, p. 39). However, despite these regional commitments to gender peace and security, their implementation remains relatively limited (Bhagwan-Rolls, 2016). The Pacific Regional Action Plan was developed in 2012, supported by the UN and includes all members of the Pacific Islands Forum, “the plan ensures that Women, Peace and Security activities

are seen as an integral part of regional peace and security discussions, in-line with regional efforts of promoting gender equality" (Miller et al., 2014, p. 21)[15].

The Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda began in 2000 with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Resolution 1325) on Women Peace and Security and now consists of eight UN security council resolutions and related policies[16]. The goals of this agenda include: addressing the gendered impacts of conflict, promoting equal participation in peacekeeping and negotiations, upholding women's rights during and after conflict, and integrating gender perspectives in peace and security (United, Nations, Security, & Council, 2013, 2015). Half of all the states with National Action Plans (NAPs) implementing the goals of the WPS agenda are conflict-affected. There is also significant variation in the commitments and resources committed to these NAPs (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 26). Resolution 1325 (2000) asks member states to ensure the consideration of gender in peace processes and calls for higher representation of women in all aspects of decision-making, peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction ("Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) [on women and peace and security]," 2000). First adopted in October 2000, UN 1325 has four areas of consideration: the participation of women in peace processes and decision-making; the incorporation of gender perspectives and involvement in peacekeeping; the protection of women; and mainstreaming gender in reporting and implementation mechanisms ("Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) [on women and peace and security],"2000). Although binding on member states, UNR 1325 isn't accompanied by any monitoring or

[15] However, the plan expired in 2015 and a new plan has not been developed.

[16] The eight UN resolutions can be divided into two groups. The first group is concerned with ensuring women's participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding and contains SCR 1325 adopted in 2000, followed by SCR 1889 (2009), SCR 2122 (2013) and SCR 2242 (2015). The second group acknowledges the systemic utilisation of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war and denounces them as crimes against humanity. SCR 1820 on Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) was adopted in 2008 and followed by SCR 1888 (2009), SCR 1960 (2010), SCR 2106 (2013).

enforcement mechanisms, meaning that responsibility for the implementation of the resolution lies with states. Furthermore, there are challenges to making operational a resolution with such a wide reach, as such there is significant variation in its uptake and application (Westendorf, 2013).

The language in UN documents on peace and conflict has been criticised for the narrow definition often prescribed for women as victims and as mothers, or the "women and children syndrome" as described by Hudson (2010) and Puechguribal (2010); where in war women are so primarily understood as caretakers of children there is little room for active participation in conflict resolution (p. 176). Resolution 1325 saw a notable shift in the depiction of women, from the usual portrayal as victims of conflict to recognition of their roles as agents and political actors (H. Hudson, 2009; Sow, 2015, p. 12). Despite Resolution 1325 and efforts over the last two decades to further the recognition of women's agency and their important role in post-conflict and peacekeeping activities, their substantive involvement in formal processes is still not an operational reality (Sjoberg, 2009; Sow, 2015). UN Women estimates that "fewer than three percent of signatories to peace agreements have been women and that women's participation in peace negotiations still averages less than eight percent" (Report of the Secretary-General on women peace and security. S/2017/861, 2017). The United States Council on Foreign Relations (2019) when looking at all major peace processes between 1990 and 2017 found that eight percent of mediators and negotiators, as well as just five percent of witnesses and signatories to peace agreements were women (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). An earlier period assessed by Bell (2015) reported that of the 31 peace agreements between 1990 and 2011 that the UN was involved in, only two percent of chief mediators, nine percent of negotiators and four percent of witnesses and signatories were women (Christine Bell, 2015). As True (2018) notes, these statistics show that "until recently, peace processes have been almost wholly the preserve of security providers understood to be men and armed groups as opposed to security stakeholders understood to be civilian women, girls, boys and men" (p. 25).

2.4 Why peace agreements matter

Evidence shows a direct relationship between gender equality and the prevention of further conflict, with levels of gender equality and women's security being some of the most reliable indicators of peace (*Report of the Secretary-General on women peace and security. S/2017/861*, 2017; True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 25). Conversely, high levels of gender inequality and gender based violence have been associated with increased vulnerability to conflict (Report of the Secretary-General on women peace and security. S/2017/861, 2017, p. 14). Similarly, gender inequalities within states are known to affect the behaviour of armed groups including in the escalation of conflict and the prevalence of conflict related sexual and gender based violence (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 37). Where women participate in the peace process, resulting agreements are 20 percent more likely to last at least two years and 35 percent more likely to last for at least 15 years or more (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019; True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 25). Women's exclusion from the design of peace and governance frameworks creates a cycle where gender inequality and women's insecurity are perpetuated (H. Hudson, 2009; *Report of the Secretary-General on women's participation in peacebuilding. A/65/354–S/2010/466*, 2010, p. 4). When considering these statistics, it is worth keeping in mind that 90 percent of the civil wars occurring in the last decade were in countries that had also experienced a civil war within the previous 30 years (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 24).

The 'Towards Inclusive Peace: Mapping Gender Provisions in Peace Agreements' project currently ongoing at Monash University, Victoria, Australia has assessed 98 peace agreements between 2000 and 2016, across 55 countries including the Solomon Islands

and Bougainville[17]. The project seeks to analyse the impact that the implementation (or lack of) of gender provisions has upon women's political participation and gender equality in post-conflict societies. It also seeks to understand the circumstances in which these gender provisions are included and to explore the extent to which these provisions are then implemented (Lee-Koo & True, 2018). The study found that the likelihood of achieving a peace agreement with gender provisions increases when: 1. The participation of civil society is significant and, 2. When women's participation in national parliaments increases; these two factors mattered the most in achieving gender sensitive peace agreements, in what the authors called the "democratisation of a peace process" (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 36). As noted above, the inclusion or absence of gender sensitive provisions in peace agreements was found to be a major factor in whether a post conflict society will move towards gender equality (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 37).

There is no consensus in the literature on the impact of conflict on the opportunities for women's participation in formal politics. Tripp (2015) argues that conflict often disrupts the status quo of gender relations and that this can provide opportunities for women to become political actors. This, in turn, may lead to an increase of women in legislative positions, which is a precondition for gender sensitive peace processes. She refers to these transformations in gender relations as "gender regime change" (Tripp, 2015, p. 4). Tripp found that three conditions were present in the countries where these gender transformations occurred: 1. The conflict was a protracted civil war conflict, 2. Women's movements and civil society were increasingly politically active and involved in peace

[17] This timeframe coincides with the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and the adoption of UN security council resolution 1325 in 2000 (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018).

building, and; 3. The time period – these conflicts occurred at a time when there was significant international pressure and support for the advancement of women's rights. In Tripp's case studies, increases in women's leadership occurred right across society, not just in the political sphere, as women increasingly took up positions previously held by men. She found that the end of the conflict has powerful independent effects in explaining the likelihood of subsequent gender reforms. However, both of her studies on this relationship have been confined to conflicts in Africa (Hughes, 2015; Tripp, 2015). True and Riveros-Morales note that there is little research on women's engagement in democratic decision-making in conflict-affected states and that "there is a need to connect research on women's political representation, with peace and security scholarship on women's presence and gender equality agendas in peace processes" (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 28).

How can peace agreements cater for the inclusion of women and diverse groups while also preventing immediate violence? This question has underlined much of the recent research on political settlements (Barbara & Connell, 2014; Christine Bell, 2015; Bell & Pospisil, 2017; O'Rourke, 2017). Uncovering the ways in which peace settlements maintain and propagate exclusion against different groups, particularly women through violence and the maintenance of gendered norms and identities, may provide opportunities for those groups (Bell & Pospisil, 2017). Although yet to be applied heavily in the Pacific context, the work on 'political settlements' provides a relevant framework for analysis when considering transitions from conflict and possible entry points to contribute to gender transformative peace processes. 'Political settlement' refers to the way power dynamics influence political and institutional relationships in conflict-transition and peace negotiations (Christine Bell, 2015).

In their 2017 piece, Bell and Pospisil argue that the process of conflict transition regularly results in what can be called 'formalised political unsettlement', where the causes of original conflict are not resolved but 'contained' in legal instruments that form the basis for further negotiation (Bell & Pospisil, 2017). This foundation can explain why efforts to support inclusive governance arrangements often fail, as the 'political unsettlement'

prioritises elite inclusion over broader social and societal inclusion. 'The formalised political unsettlement is perhaps best known for creating an unsatisfactory 'no-war-no-peace' phenomenon, in which women and minorities find themselves excluded from a new inter-elite deal that sustains precariously and problematically if at all" (Bell & Pospisil, 2017, p. 590).

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the rates of women's participation in formal politics in the Pacific are low. Understanding the reasons for this is challenging due to the large variation and huge cultural and socio-economic diversity across the region, as well as the differing impacts of colonisation and the introduction of Christianity on different Pacific societies. Explanations from the literature traditionally relied on one of the following three broad categories: culture and custom, economic disparities and institutional structures. More recent explanations tend to highlight intersectionality and the nuance in the operation of these categories, while also recognising the wide range of experiences – women are not a single social group and gender may not be the defining social category for many constituents in Pacific Island countries.

Despite their absence from formal politics, the actions of various women's groups have been central to conflict resolution and in calls for peace in the Pacific. At times, their arguments and approaches have been adopted into mainstream policy-making, and in some contexts, their actions have been widely celebrated, particularly in Bougainville. However, they were still consistently excluded from formal peacekeeping processes, and individual women's involvement in these peacekeeping activities hasn't made women as a social group any more electable in the post-conflict environments. A highly gendered discourse is applied to war and peace in the Pacific, with women's inclusion in peacekeeping heavily connected to their roles as mothers and carers.

Evidence shows a direct relationship between increases in women's formal political participation and the influence of civil society in peace processes, and the likelihood that a peace agreement will be gender sensitive. Evidence also shows a direct correlation

between the longevity of post-conflict peace and peace agreements and the 'democratisation of the peace process'. Alternative explanations are offered by political settlements theory, which holds that political settlements often don't resolve conflicts, they just institutionalise them into an acceptable state for parties to consolidate power. These arguments have not been widely applied to the Pacific but may provide a helpful frame for future analysis.

Chapter three: The role of women's civil society groups and women in parliament

3.1 Introduction

Evidence from across the globe has shown that where women participate in the peace processes, resulting agreements are 20 percent more likely to last at least two years and 35 percent more likely to last for at least 15 years or more (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). In her studies of post conflict African countries, Tripp found that the involvement of women's civil society groups in conflict transition was a key factor in whether or not the country moved towards 'gender regime change' and saw increases in women's participation in formal political institutions (2015).

This chapter considers the role women's groups played in two case studies of civil conflict in the Pacific, that of Solomon Islands and Bougainville. The involvement of women's civil society groups at different points of the conflict and the extent to which women's advocates were able to influence and participate in the peace processes are assessed. The chapter then goes on to look at the rates of women in parliament at different stages of each conflict and the factors found to be influential in their success at being elected. The chapter concludes with an analysis of women's campaigns in both case studies and a focus on the narratives around matriliny and women's customary roles that emerged from the conflicts.

True and Riveros-Morales found that higher rates of women in national parliaments and the involvement of civil society were the most important factors in whether peace agreements would contain gender sensitive provisions, which in turn was found to influence indicators of gender equality in the post conflict period (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018). The assessment of each peace agreement is conducted in the next chapter.

3.2 The role of women's civil society groups and women's advocates

3.2.1 Before and during the conflict – Solomon Islands

90 percent of Solomon Islanders identify with a Christian denomination (United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy Human Rights and Labor, 2018). Solomon Islands is home to a great number of women's civil society groups at local and community levels (estimated 3,000), and many are aligned with Christian churches or operate with an explicitly Christian ideology (Mulder, 2019). In 1962, the colonial government established the Women's Development Division (WDD), which assisted in forming numerous women's groups throughout the 60s and 70s. The activities run by these groups tended to focus on women's roles in the private sphere, providing sewing, cooking and family health classes, which were not threatening to public leadership structures. However, they did lay the foundations and networks for women leaders to develop a more radical agenda and start to address issues concerning women's role in political decision-making (Alice Aruhe'eta Pollard, 2006).

From some perspectives, many of the opportunities for women's leadership achieved by a strong women's civil society movement before the conflict were effectively 'wiped out' by the lawlessness and violence experienced during the tensions and many women's organisations were forced to close (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012b). However, women's organisations played an important leadership and advocacy role in initiating dialogue and building peace during the conflict, drawing on *Kastom* through raising traditional restrictions known as *Tambu,* and Christian ideology through the activities undertaken by women's groups included pressuring militants to disarm, forming coalitions across ethnic divides and protesting against violence (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017, p. 13). These peacebuilding activities have been attributed to creating the necessary atmosphere from which the Townsville Peace agreement could be negotiated (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, Murdock, et al., 2015, p. 13; Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017, p. 13). The new activities

undertaken by women's groups during this period also enabled many women to assume leadership and advocacy positions previously reserved for men:

> "Before the tension, the women in our community did not come out in the open. During those times, only men have the power to speak out in the public, women could not do that due to culture reasons. This time during meetings or public talks, women can contribute and men give their support to whatever they said in terms of planning for the work of the community. After the tension we also formed a women's group to assist in community activities or church activities. We have a few women elected as members of our parish. Now whatever the same responsibilities held by men in the past can be shared by women." (Marasa, Focus Group participant, in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012b, p. 622).

Women for Peace (WFP) formed in 2000 as an independent women's organisation, neutral of ties to specific ethnic or language groups. They regularly held prayer meetings with combatants, facilitated the movement of food and medical supplies across blockades, encouraged the safe return of child soldiers to their families and tried to promote national unity over ethnic or community divides, as did groups such as Mothers Union and Westside Women for Peace (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, Murdock, et al., 2015, p. 7; Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017, p. 13). During the conflict, their networking enabled the establishment of markets allowing rural and urban women to trade essential goods such as fuel and fresh food across roadblocks maintained by different factions of combatants (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, Murdock, et al., 2015). These activities meant they emerged as a key vehicle for women's peace-making efforts, as their national profile grew they were able to obtain meetings with combatants, government officials and police to advocate for negotiation and dialogue processes (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012a, p. 88). In 2002, a women's media organisation 'Vois Blong Mere Solomon' (VBMS), *The Solomon Women's Voice*, was established. VBMS focused on amplifying the stories of women from different parts of the country

and broadcasting peace narratives and grassroots peace initiatives (Vois Blong Mere Solomon, 2020).

3.2.2 Before and during the conflict – Bougainville

The overwhelming majority of Bougainvilleans are Christian (97 percent) with the Catholic Church being the most prevalent nomination, and the first women's organisations in Bougainville were associated with the Church (Baker, 2019a, p. 99). Before the conflict years, the two major women's organisations were the North Solomons Provincial Council of Women (Bougainville was known as North Solomons Province before independence), which came about in the 1970s, and the Churches' Women's organisation, established in the 1960s, with a long history of working with women at the village level (Garasu, 2002).

A new generation of women's groups emerged in the 90s, during the conflict, including the Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNDWA), which operated in the north and worked to distribute necessities to those across the blockade and assist victims of gender based violence; The Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum (BICWF) led by Sister Lorrine Garasu, the Bougainville Community Integrated Development Agency and the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom (BWPF). The BWPF was formed as a political organisation and its founders at times clashed with the Provincial Council of Women, while the BICWF aimed to support women's peacekeeping actions across political divides while providing food, clothing and medicine to civilians (Baker, 2019a, p. 102; Garasu, 2002, p. 26). The activities of these groups included prayer meetings, reconciliation ceremonies, peace marches and petitions, as well as raising awareness and mobilising resources and support from overseas, particularly with New Zealand and Australian women's networks (Garasu, 2002).

In September 1990, women's groups led protests against the BRA blockade in Buka that was preventing emergency supplies being distributed, further marches and vigils followed in other areas of Bougainville with the aim of encouraging the BRA and Papua New Guinea forces to begin negotiations. In 1994, a national peace conference was called in

Arawa, although the BRA and BIG both boycotted the event, it proved influential for women's groups from different areas of Bougainville. In 1995, women from both BRA and government controlled areas of Bougainville travelled to Beijing to attend the United Nations Fourth Global Conference on Women, where Daphne Zale from West Buka delivered a statement calling for a peaceful intervention in Bougainville (Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 121). Other women's marches, conferences and forums occurred all throughout the 90s. including meetings with women's groups and BRA factions, women's groups developed strong networks and strategies for advocacy (Garasu, 2002, p. 28). Individual women also played an influential and well-documented informal role in establishing dialogue and reconciliation at local levels (Regan, 2010). Sister Lorraine Garasu reported that women used their customary status in families to negotiate within communities and between conflicted parties, including mothers persuading their sons to put down arms and come home; women were seen as uniquely placed to be able to go into conflict zones and conduct these negotiations (Baker, 2019a, p. 104; Garasu, 2002, p. 26).

3.2.3 During the formal peace processes – Solomon Islands

Women's groups and representatives (as well as other civil society organisations and church groups) were excluded from the formal peace processes. None of the parties to negotiations, including the Solomon Islands government or the neutral country mediators included women members. Substantive input from any women at all, let alone those with a representative mandate was missing from all major negotiations and agreements for peace and disarmament as well as the discussions and agreements for reparations and recovery programmes for the post conflict phase (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017, p. 14). The Townsville Peace Agreement failed to establish any form of lasting peace and disintegrated very quickly (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a)

> "The Townsville agreement was not a robust agreement and in any event, I just don't think people were committed to it. So you know, there

> wasn't a [peace] process as such really, certainly nothing that resembled Bougainville." – James Batley, Interview, 2020.

The lack of an inclusive peace process meant significant omissions for women, in particular the Townsville Peace Agreement failed to exclude gender based violence from its amnesty provisions, which held that 'all parties to the conflict would be granted amnesty or immunity in respect of criminal and civil acts done in connection or association with the armed conflict' upon the surrender of weapons (Solomon Islands Government, 2000). This provision was widely criticised by human rights and civil society groups in Solomon Islands, as was the decision to appoint thousands of former militants from the Solomon Islands Police Force as 'Special Constables' despite the role of the police as perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses (Radio New Zealand, 2005, 2016; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012a). Allowances for Special Constables were paid in place of providing many government services including salaries for nurses and teachers (Amnesty International, 2004; Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012a, p. 292). The omission of gender considerations in the peace process has been widely condemned for perpetuating a culture of impunity around the continued violence against women, as well as excluding them from reconciliation processes and failing to protect their rights (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017). The following table shows the major agreements in the formal peace process that were completed without the participation or involvement of any women.

Table 3 Peace agreements in Solomon Islands without women's participation

(Adapted from Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017, p. 15).

PEACE RELATED AGREEMENTS WITHOUT WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION		
DATE	AGREEMENT	WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION?

28 June 1999	Honiara peace accord	No
12 August 1999	Panatina agreement	No
15 July 1999	Marau communiqué	No
13 June 1999	Mou: SIG and Guadalcanal provincial government	No
5 May 2000	Buaia peace communiqué	No
12 May 2000	Auki communiqué	No
15 October 2000	Townsville peace agreement	No

3.2.4 During the formal peace processes – Bougainville

Despite the lobbying and organising of women's organisations and the matrilineal aspect of Bougainville culture, women had to fight to be included in the formal peace processes (Garasu, 2002). Much of the involvement of women's groups and advocates was from the side-lines or through "discrete lobbying" with an aim to keep pressure on the men negotiating for a peace agreement (Garasu, 2002). In some discussions around weapons disposal and disarmament women were completely excluded (Baker, 2019a, p. 105).

> "In Bougainville, the peace process was progressively formalised through the succession of negotiations and as that happened the role of women and civil society became less prominent. The various combatant elements became significant interlocutors in the peace process and of course the first two big fora for negotiating the truce were held at a military base in New Zealand. So it became a very militarised environment. Although the women of Bougainville were there and very importantly, it was the women that insisted that that there would be no

> caveats, that the terms of the truce were to be agreed by all. Their insistence was on a clear, definite truce so the women were always very important in Bougainville but they were progressively pushed to the margins." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

At the first round of Burnham peace talks in July 1997, the official delegation included 13 women leaders representing both sides; the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) / Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) and the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) / Resistance forces among the 75 attendees (including Sister Loraine Garasu, Daphne Zale, Marilyn Havini and Scholastica Raren Miriori) (Garasu, 2002; Sirivi & Havini, 2004). However, no women delegates were invited to the second round of Burnham talks in October, which included combatants and technical advisors from PNG Government the BIG and the BTG (Baker, 2019a; Garasu, 2002; Sirivi & Havini, 2004, pp. 129, 139). A permanent ceasefire was achieved after further negotiations in April 1998. Josephine Sirivi representing the BWPF in the BIG/BRA delegation was the only woman delegate in attendance at the ceasefire negotiations held in April (Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 159). Marilyn Taleo Havini, who attended the Burnham 1 negotiations recounts:

> "One fear the men had expressed to us about having women present was that our politics might be uninformed or 'wishy-washy' and therefore counter-productive. On this count, they were very surprised to find that women were as passionate as men about redressing the horrors of war. In fact, the men who had not heard women speak politically before were amazed to find them as vehement as the men on issues of politics and human rights. On our return to barracks each evening, men would come to congratulate the women for their contributions during the sessions and express surprise at their politics" (Marilyn Taleo Havini, in Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 135).

However, in January 1998, around 50 women were included in the different delegations for the BIG/BRA and the BTG attending the Lincoln Summit in New Zealand that led to the Lincoln agreement being signed (Sirivi & Havini, 2004). The women delegates held

their own meetings at Lincoln, coming together from different sides of the negotiations to prepare an adjoining statement on peace concerning the future of the women's participation in political institutions in Bougainville. It contained the following statements:

> "We look forward to being included in the new Bougainville government structure so that our rediscovery of women's participation will continue to shape and build Bougainville's development and government" […] We women are co-partners with our men and as such we are not daunted by the enormous task that lies before us to bring about a new Bougainville. In holding to the peace message that has spread in Bougainville from Burnham, we, the Women's Delegation at Lincoln University Leaders' Meeting, affirm with all our sisters and fellow Bougainvilleans our determination to make this peace process work until we reach our common goal of freedom" (Bougainville Peace Talks Women's Statement, in Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 150).

This statement was almost overlooked by the organisers and the Summit pronounced closed, however Agnes Titus from the Bougainville Transitional Government stood to present the statement and the meeting was recalled (Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 145). In her account of the Lincoln negotiations, Marilyn Taleo Havini recalls that one woman delegate tried her best to block the statement from being read:

> "One woman dissented and tried her best to block the statement going anywhere at all. We took the statement to our Bougainville leaders from each camp. Gerard Sinato of the BTG/Resistance and Joseph Kabui of the BIG/BRA fully endorsed the statement along with their secretariats. We held a final planning meeting and agreed carefully on the document word by word, then waited for some direction as to how we would present it." (Marilyn Taleo Havini, in Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 145).

The quest for women to be included in political decision-making in the wake of the Bougainville conflict was not always a unified movement; Western narratives around

women's rights were utilised more by some groups than others and importantly different women's groups were aligned with different sides of the conflict – the Provincial Council of Women with the transitional government and BWPF with the pro-independence movement (Baker, 2019a, p. 105; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007). A women's summit in 2001, organised by local women's groups and funded by the New Zealand Government, bought together many different women's groups to find a shared vision for women's participation in governance for Bougainville (Garasu, 2002). The signing of the 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement occurred shortly after in Arawa. A women's statement had been prepared for the signing ceremony but was left off the programme due to disagreements between the different women's groups (Baker, 2019a, p. 105; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, p. 182).

Table 4 Women's participation in Bougainville's peace related negotiations

(Adapted from Regan, 2010; Baker, 2019a).

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE RELATED NEGOTIATIONS		
DATE	NEGOTIATION OR AGREEMENT	WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION?
October 1994	Arawa peace conference	Yes
September 1995 & December 1995	Cairns peace talks	Yes (one women's representative)
July 1997	Burnham I	Yes
October 1997	Burnham II	No
January 1998	Lincoln summit	Yes

March – November 2000	Negotiations on political future of Bougainville	No
February 2001 & May 2001	Townsville weapons disposal discussions	No
June 2001 & August 2001	Negotiations resulting in signing of Bougainville peace agreement	No

3.2.5 During the post-conflict period – Solomon Islands

In the immediate post-conflict period, Solomon Islands was one of the most aid dependent countries in the world (Hayward-Jones, 2014, p. 1). The large foreign aid presence combined with a long-term lack of service delivery for the public on behalf of the government meant that many civil society organisations emerged to provide support and local development in the wake of the conflict. These included health and education services, particularly for rural and displaced communities (Asian Development Bank, 2017, p. 507; Wallace, 2011, p. 507). The majority of the organisations providing these services were still church affiliated, and it has been claimed that the only "modern bureaucratic organisations in Solomon Islands that have deep and broad roots in rural areas" are Christian church groups (McDougall in Rowland, 2016, p. 30).

This period has seen women's groups advocate on issues around gender based violence and women's political leadership (Batalibasi et al., 2019; Mulder, 2019). With women's church groups increasingly performing advocacy roles on issues such as domestic violence, healthcare and education (McLeod, 2015, p. 17). The push for women's reserved seats at both the provincial and national levels has been ongoing with some

recent progress[18]. Women's civil society groups have played a significant lobby function in the development of policy and legislation on gender issues; the *Family Protection Act (2014)* and the *Child and Family Welfare Act (2017)* were introduced due to the persistence of a coalition of women's advocates (Mulder, 2019, p. 7). Despite its recent enactment, there has been concern about the lack of implementation of the *Child and Family Welfare Act (2017)* (George, 2018c).

However, despite their contributions, local women's organisations remain largely underfunded and poorly resourced, often relying on support from the international community (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, Murdock, et al., 2015). Interviewees for this thesis also noted the challenging political context for policy advocacy in Solomon Islands. These factors combined mean that women's groups have struggled to pass policy reforms aim at increasing the political participation of women in the country:

> "I think policymaking and advocacy are really challenging in a place like Solomon Islands, and it's hard for civil society groups in general to cut through and to shape policy. Formal politics is challenging, the weakness of political parties means that reforms or advocacy that require political leadership are going to be problematic. But also, particularly reforms that seek to engineer politics and to create different political pathways for women or underrepresented groups are challenging because the systems themselves are very weak." – Julien Barbara, Interview, 2020.

[18] See Chapter 4, Temporary Special Measures and Local Government sections for more in depth discussion on this.

3.2.6 During the post-conflict period – Bougainville

Women's groups continued to use matrilineal and traditional narratives to push for a role for women in formal political decision-making, utilising customary peace-making traditions to legitimise their presence in otherwise patriarchal structures. Women's groups in Bougainville focused their efforts on ensuring women's participation in the new post conflict governance structures: appointing women's advocates to the constitutional committee was seen as key to ensuring women would not be left out of future institutions in the newly formed autonomous government (Baker, 2019a; Garasu, 2002). Although the resulting seats were less than they had argued for, the women's advocates were largely successful; their campaigning resulted in three reserved seats for women and one executive position in the Autonomous Bougainville Government, all entrenched in the Constitution in 2004 ((ABG). 2004). Kerryn Baker has described the more recent changes to the Community Governance Act that mandate gender parity at the local level, a continuation of the original campaign for reserved seats in Bougainville, one that will likely continue as Bougainville negotiates its independence in the wake of the 2019 referendum (Baker, 2020). The expiry of the reserved seats for ex-combatants is another issue women's groups are advocating for, with the hope to turn them into more reserved seats for women:

> "Combatant seats are meant to expire – some women's groups want to turn them into women's seats – but they voted to keep them at least for the next term. We will see what happens next given the referendum outcome." – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020.

3.3 Women in parliament

3.3.1 Women in parliament in the pre conflict and conflict periods – Solomon Islands

Women's political participation in Solomon Islands has always been low as is typical of the Pacific (IPU, 2018). Only five women have been elected to parliament since

independence (Wood, 2019c). Prior to independence, Lilly Ogantina Poznanski was elected to the Isabel Province seat for one term in 1965 (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 11). Hilda Kari was elected in Guadalcanal (North East and then East Central) in 1989, 1993 and 1997 (Wood, 2019c).

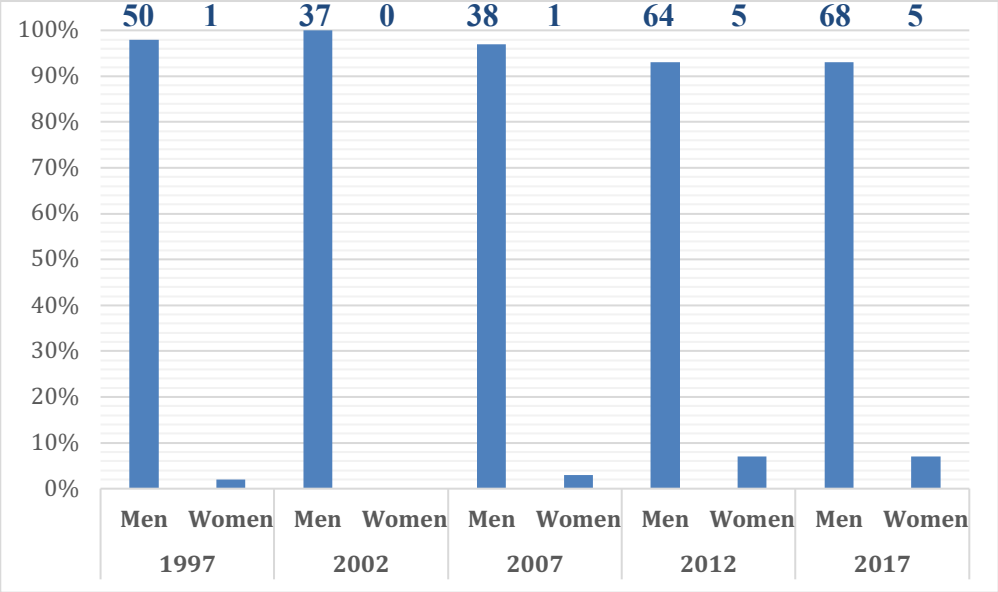
3.3.2 Women in parliament in the pre conflict and conflict periods – Bougainville

When Papua New Guinea gained independence in 1975, one woman was appointed to the provincial assembly for Bougainville (then known as North Solomons province) in a nominated (rather than elected) women's seat from 1976-1979 (Baker, 2019a, p. 99). In 1980, a member of the assembly resigned and Pauline Onsa joined. The third provincial election saw Agnes Titus become the first woman to stand as a candidate in a general election, although unsuccessful she was then appointed as a woman's representative based on her role as President of the North Solomons Women's Council (Baker, 2019a, p. 99). Women in Bougainville were becoming increasingly active in politics throughout the 1980s and were encouraged to enter the public sector workforce by groups such as the North Solomons Women's Council and the Provincial Parliament. However, women's church organisations, particularly the Seventh Day Adventist and Methodist Churches, were not supportive of women participating in politics at that time (Baker, 2019a, p. 99).

From 1988-2007, only one woman candidate ran for election to the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea in one of the Bougainville provincial seats. This was Elizabeth Burain, who stood for the Bougainville Provincial Seat in 1997 but was unsuccessful (Wood, 2019b). No woman has ever won one of the four seats representing Bougainville in the Papua New Guinea national parliament (representing Provincial, North, Central and South Bougainville) (Wood, 2019b). Although women have run in four different elections (1997, 2007, 2012 and 2017).

Table 4 Graph of women candidates as percentage of total candidates in the Bougainville electorate for the Papua New Guinea national elections

(Adapted from, Wood, 2019b).



At the Bougainville regional level there was slightly more women's participation; The Bougainville Transitional Government, recognised by the Papua New Guinea Government, was established in 1995 and politician Agnes Titus was elected and held the local government ministerial portfolio (Baker, 2019a; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018). In 1999, elections were held for the Bougainville Reconciliation Government, which later became the Bougainville People's Congress. There were six women members of the Bougainville People's Congress out of a total of 106, making up less than six percent of seats, four of whom become members of the executive (Garasu, 2002, p. 29). The Bougainville Interim Government, which had been set up as a civilian government in the earlier stages of the conflict by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) reached an agreement in 1999 that it would govern under John Momis in

consultation with the Bougainville People's Congress. The Interim Government had four appointed women representatives[19] (Baker, 2019a, p. 102).

3.3.3 Women in parliament during the post conflict period – Solomon Islands

Hilda Kari contested but lost her seat in 2001 and again in 2006, this meant there were no women in parliament again until 2012 when Vika Lusibea won the North Malaita seat formerly held by her husband in a by-election, taking almost 50 percent of the vote (Kelly, 2010, p. 3; Wood, 2019c). Although, during this time Afu Billy was only two votes from winning the East Malatia seat in 2001 and again came second in 2006 (Batalibasi et al., 2019; Billy, 2002). Sarah Dryer placed second in 2006, as did Rhoda Sikilabu in 2010 – in total 11 women have placed second since independence (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 11).

Freda Tuki Soriacomua was the only woman to be elected in the 2014 general election taking 25 percent of the vote (Wood, 2019c). Women generally performed poorly in this election with forty percent of them placing in the bottom two (Baker, 2015, p. 2). A by-election in 2018 saw Lanelle Tanangada take over from her husband in the Gizo/Kolambangara seat after he was found guilty of bribing voters (Sei, 2018; Wood, 2019c). In the 2019 general elections, both Soriacomua and Tanangada were elected, making it the first election where two women MPs were elected at the same time, both also gained ministerial portfolios; Tanangada as Minister for Police, National Security and Correctional Services, and Soriacomua as Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 11; Wood, 2019c). In December 2019, Lilian Maefai won a by-election for East Makira seat, which was formerly held by her late

[19] Despite extensive searching, I have not been able to find complete data on the total number of representatives of the Bougainville Interim Government.

husband; there are now three sitting women MPs in the national parliament for the first time ("History in East Makira," 2019).

Table 5 Women elected to Solomon Islands Parliament since independence

(Adapted from Wood, 2019).

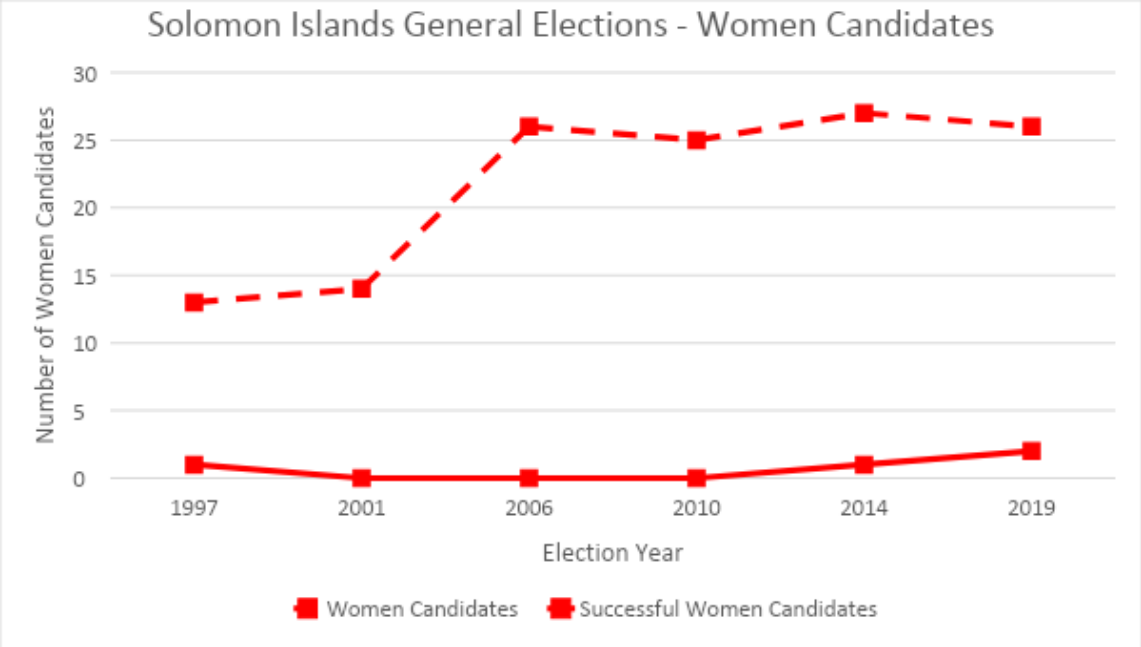
#	Year	Election type	Candidate name	Conditions of appointment
1	1989	By	Hilda Thugea Kari	Successfully contested this se after the sitting MP vacated it become speaker
1	1993	General	Hilda Thugea Kari	Re-elected at a general election
1	1997	General	Hilda Thugea Kari	Re-elected at a general election
2	2012	By	Vika Lusibaea	Took over the seat held by her husband after he was convicted of various assaults
3	2014	General	Freda Ab Tuki Soria Comua	The only women MP who was firs elected at a general election, rathe than a by election
4	2018	By	Lanelle Tanangada	Took over her husband's seat after he was found guilty of bribing voters
3	2019	General	Freda Ab Tuki Soria Comua	Re-elected at a general election
4	2019	General	Lanelle Olandrea Tanangada	Re-elected at a general election

5	2019	By	Lillian Maefai	Won the seat held by her former husband after he died

The table above shows that all women candidates, with the exception of Freda Tuki were first elected in a by election rather than a general election. Three of those women have then gone on to be re-elected at a general elections. Three of those candidates; Lusibea, Tanangada and Maefai took over their husbands seats. Freda Tuki is the only candidate who has successfully run for her first term in a general election, she is also different from the other candidates in that she has considerable personal wealth due to her ownership of a logging company. The dynamics of these candidacies are discussed further in the next section, 3.4. Women's Campaigns.

Table 5 Graph of women candidates in the Solomon Islands national elections since 1997

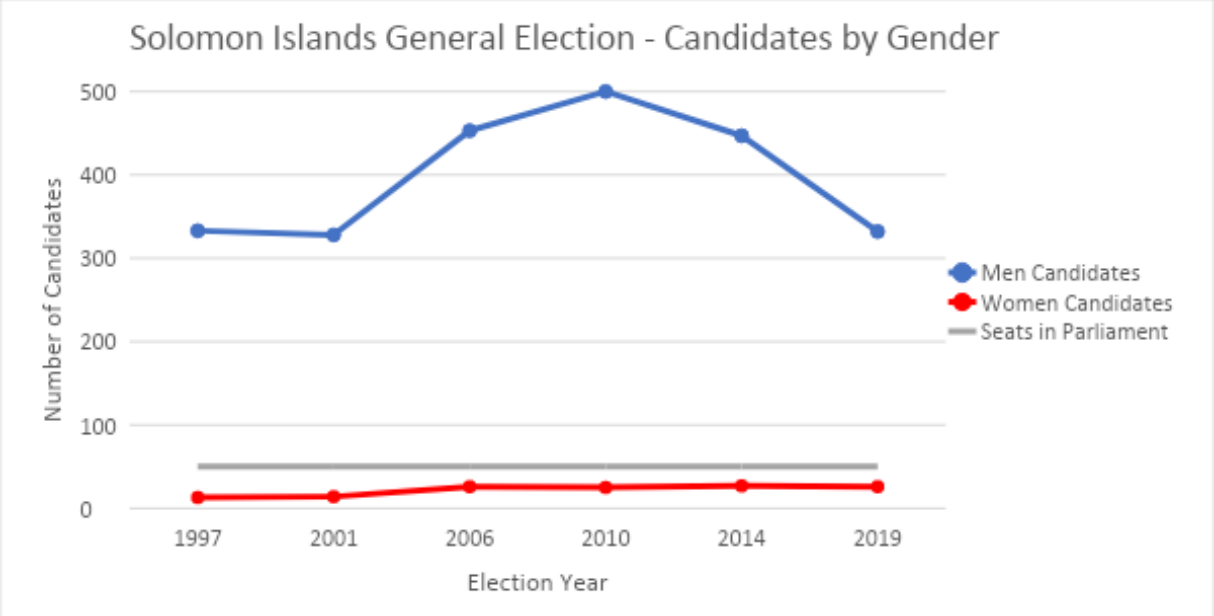
(Adapted from Wood, 2019).



Note: A by-election held in December 2019 saw the election of Lillian Maefai, bringing the total number of women in parliament up to three. The table above only shows general election data.

Table 6 Graph of candidates by gender in Solomon Islands national elections since 1997

(Adapted from Wood, 2019).



The number of women candidates as a percentage of total candidates in Solomon Islands is increasing overall, however, progress is slow. The reasons for this are discussed in more detail in the next section 3.4. When interviewed, Wood didn't think this reflected an overall trend towards more women in parliament.

> "In 2019 the median female candidate actually performed a little better than was the case in 2014. 2014, on the other hand, was not an improvement on 2010. So things are perhaps improving, but if there's an improvement there, it's very minor. I think it's going to take a long

time before it will bear fruition in the form of a lot of women elected to Parliament" – Terence Wood, Interview 2020.

3.3.4 Women in parliament in the post conflict period – Bougainville

The Autonomous Bougainville Government held its first elections in 2005. No women candidates ran in the open seats but three women were elected to the newly established women's reserved seats. In total, 25 women ran for the reserved seats[20], comprised of six candidates for North, eight for Central and 11 for South (Baker, 2014b).

In the 2010 elections, five women contested the open seats, although none were successful. In the same year one woman, Magdalene Toroansi, contested the presidency but was also unsuccessful (Baker, 2014b). Francesca Semoso in Tsitalato constituency ranked second with 21 percent of the vote and in Eivo/Torau Marcelline Kikiai placed third with 14 percent of the vote (Baker, 2014b; Kelly, 2010). Seventeen women ran for the three reserved seats; seven in the North and five in both Central and South Bougainville (Baker, 2014b, p. 1).

In the 2015 elections, Josephine Getsi won the open seat in Peit constituency, becoming the first woman elected in an open seat. This brought the number of women in the ABG up to four; women made up 10 percent of the ABG. 2015 also saw the most women candidates stand for election in the ABG at 35, a large increase from previous years, although still only totalling 10 percent of total candidates, with the majority of women candidates still contesting the three women's seats (Baker, 2015).

[20] For a more detailed discussion about the three women's reserved seats see chapter four.

While Josephine Getsi was the only candidate to win an open seat, several other women candidates polled impressively. Ismenia Ketsin in South Nasioi came second; Hona Holan outranked 19 other male candidates to come in fifth place in Haku; Rita Pearson ranked in the middle at fifth out of 11 in Taonita Teop constituency. However, the majority of candidates running in the open seats placed last or second last (Baker, 2015).

During the same period, there have been no women candidates elected to the Bougainville seats in the Papua New Guinea parliament despite several running in the last three elections. In 2007, there was one woman candidate; in 2012, there were five; and in the 2017 elections, five women candidates made up seven percent of total candidates for the Bougainville seats (Wood, 2019b).

Table 7 Graph of women candidates in the Autonomous Bougainville Government elections

(Adapted from Baker, 2015).

Note: the first election of the ABG was held in 2005

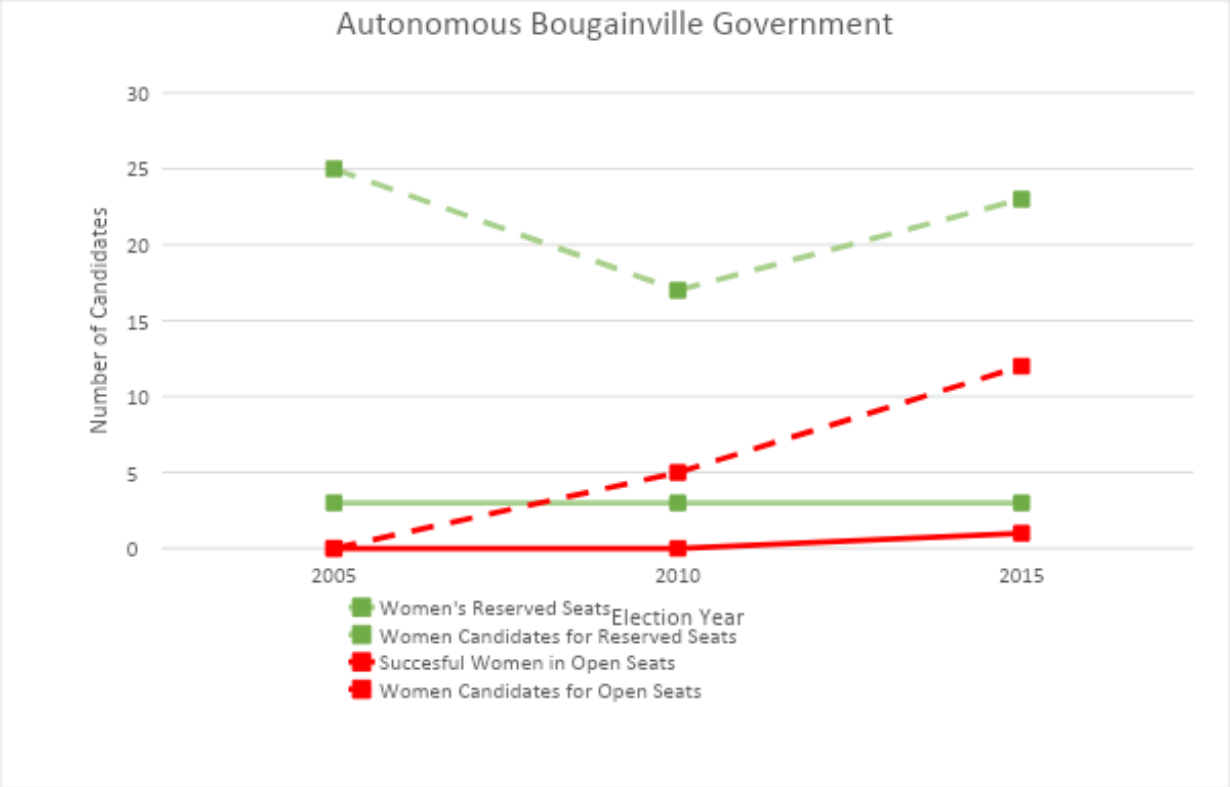


Table 8 Women as a percentage of total candidates in the Autonomous Bougainville Government elections

(Adapted from Baker, 2015).

Year	Women as a % of total candidates	Total number of women candidates	Women candidates for non-reserved seats*	Total number of candidates
2005	8.5	25	0	294
2010	7.8	23	6	295
2015	10	35	12	350

*Open seats and presidency

As shown in the tables above, the number of women candidates as a percentage of total candidates has increased since 2005, although dipping slightly in the 2010 election. The reserved seats have ensured that Bougainville has not had an extended period with no women MPs, as was experienced in the Solomon Islands between 2001 and 2012. However, the majority of women candidates still contest the three women's seats.

The number of women campaigning for the non-reserved seats remains limited and while the number of women candidates for these seats has increased in each election to date, as shown in Table 8, women's success in those seats is also very low. In chapter four, this thesis will examine whether the introduction of reserved seats has provided a ceiling effect to women's participation in the non-reserved seats.

3.4 Women's campaigns in Bougainville and Solomon islands

Politics in Melanesia is intensely local, and Solomon Islands and Bougainville are no different. The importance of having a strong individual profile along with deep relationships with constituents at the grassroots level was a recurring theme from those interviewed and the literature on the topic.

Having influential male community connections and a strong campaign manager are crucial for aspiring women candidates. Theresa Meki emphasised the importance of this when choosing campaign staff:

> "While others have written about the importance of candidates residing locally so that voters can know them well, it is also important for candidates (men and women) to reside for a long period of time or maintain significant connections with the electorate in which they intend to contest, in order for them to know who the power brokers and gatekeepers are. The election period has created an informal sector in which significant people in society become campaign managers, coordinators and committee members during the election period (which can be as early as two years leading up to the actual election); while there are genuine local leaders (chiefs, pastors, etc), there are also opportunistic individuals, known as con-man or moles, who will go from candidate to candidate and lie to them about working for them or garnering votes for them. Hence, it is important for candidates to be locals enough to know 'who is who' in their electorate and recruit campaign workers accordingly." – Theresa Meki, Interview, 2020.

The avenues to office for the current women MPs in the open seats, in both case studies have sometimes benefited from having access to significant resources, which was the case for Freda Tuki of Solomon Islands:

> "She owns a logging company or is a part owner with her husband. That clearly provides you with the sort of campaigning resources you

> normally only see associated with men and it helped her a lot. She's also a very savvy and interesting person and she campaigned smart. So she did other things too; it wasn't just money. But she did have the resources to stage a successful electoral campaign. And, unfortunately, that's not the sort of thing that the average woman candidate cannot change or adopt as a strategy." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020.

Three other women in Solomon Islands have recently been elected to the seats their husbands used to hold: Vika Lusibaea, Lanelle Tanangada and Lillian Maefai:

> "Similarly, the other approach that has succeeded for women has been to come in on the coattails of their husbands either when their husbands have lost court challenges or electoral petitions –so that's Vika Lusibaea and Lanelle Tanangada – or when their husbands have died, which is how Lilly Maefai got into power. In some cases, particularly Tanangada, she's completely gone on to be her own Member of Parliament. Even though her husband could have competed and had more recent elections, he hasn't and she has stayed the MP. So you can transform out of that state of affairs. But at least in terms of the initial victory, it was strongly associated with public sentiment regarding their partner. Once again, that's not really a strategy that you can offer as general advice." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020.

However, as neither of these options are available to the average candidate, cultivating strong grassroots support is the conventional option:

> "The other option is simply to adopt the classic technique of an aspiring candidate […] to work quietly at the grassroots for a long time before you're ever formally announced your candidacy and simply help people out. It strengthens views about you within your constituency and counts as the sort of thing people are looking for when they are deciding who to vote for at elections in Solomon Islands." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020.

This is generally considered the best strategy for aspiring women MPs. An emerging theme from the interviews and the recent literature is that the presence of constituency development funds (CDF) in the Solomon Islands and their impact on the political climate:

> "You make yourself available to your community, you gain a record as a sort of person who's available and helpful and, absent marriage or a lot of money, that would seem like the most feasible approach to try and to win an election. Some MPs have done that very successfully. Certainly, this was more prevalent in the past, when there was just less money sloshing around [in Solomon Islands]. It's basically what Hilda Kari did, and also what Alice Pollard did. […] Pollard spent a lot of time working at the grassroots in West 'Are'are, which is where she's from. The only problem is she didn't win. That said, she was up against a very popular incumbent who was both cashed up and had the support of influential chiefs in the south of the electorate. So, she probably did about as well as she could have, given the circumstances in a very tough electorate to win. She did certainly improve her electoral chances with the strategy, and I think it's probably the best type of strategy available to the average woman who might be aspiring to be an MP in Solomons."
> – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020.

This would appear to be the strategy employed by Josephine Getsi, the only woman in Bougainville to win an open seat. Strong networks with community and women's groups, as well as her long-term career as a teacher supported her campaign, which emphasised messages of good governance in a "corrupt constituency" (Baker & Oppermann, 2015b). Her campaign criticised the performance and records of previous members. However, her victory was narrow. Getsi placed third in the primary vote but received more second and third preference votes resulting in her victory (Baker & Oppermann, 2015b, p. 2).

A common barrier to success reported by women candidates in Bougainville and Solomons, and the wider Pacific region, but particularly Melanesia is the expectation for

financial and material support from constituents, which usually outweighed the campaign resources the candidate had at her disposal (Islands, 2015; Maka'a, 2010; National Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2015; Roughan & Lysa Wini, 2015; Wood, 2015).

> "PNG is a very gendered society; people perceive men as the provider. That is a distinct marker of masculinity. Especially for voters in rural areas (the majority of voters are in rural locations), they do not view a woman as someone who would readily provide for them in their hard times, she is not someone, they could readily go to ask for help. That is a big stereotype that a woman candidate must offset and address these cultural obligations. Also, money politics is pervasive in PNG's political culture, it is an aspect that will continue to thwart women's campaign efforts and because the precedent has already been established by previous male candidates, many voters are accustomed to this way and will not take a woman's campaign seriously." – Theresa Meki, Interview 2020.

Women candidates who have access to less financial resources may need more time and different strategies to build up and nurture relationships:

> "Generally, men and women must campaign the same way, that is, establish support networks and rally for votes. However, in a predominantly patriarchal culture in which money politics, late-night socialising in campaign houses, beer or kava drinking are part of the campaign and political culture, women must work extra hard to navigate and work with or around the established political culture and voter expectations." – Theresa Meki, Interview, 2020.

Many women candidates also reported negative publicity about them from the media as well as negative attitudes towards women in parliament or public leadership roles. The most widespread complaint from women candidates related to their lack of funding and the perception that they, as women, would not have the resources to provide for their constituents (Maka'a, 2010, p. 17; National Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2015;

Roughan & Lysa Wini, 2015). Afu Billy, who ran for the East Malaita seat in 2001, reported many ways custom was interpreted to discredit her profile and her campaign (Billy, 2002). Running against a male relative was a difficult decision reported by many women candidates including Afu Billy. In Bougainville some candidates cited this as a reason to contest a women's reserved seat rather than an open seat (Baker, 2015; Billy, 2002).

A point where there does seem to be a significant difference in campaigning between Bougainville and Solomon Islands is the role of the conflict in the narrative of political leadership:

> "In Bougainville, the conflict is just a bigger part of politics, everyone talks about the conflict, and especially because the last election was 2015 and the independence [referendum] was right there. So it was all anyone was talking about, you can't separate independence from the conflict in Bougainville. It's like one long line from today. So even if you weren't involved, you still talk about it in your campaign, because it's such a pervasive part of politics. Whereas in Solomon Islands, it's not really the same." – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020.

3.5 Matriliny narratives in women's peacebuilding and political organising in Bougainville and Solomon Islands

Another significant difference in the case studies concerns the narratives around matriliny and political decision-making. While parts of Solomon Islands are matrilineal and parts of Bougainville are not, the role of matriliny and how it impacts political culture has played out distinctly in each territory:

> "It [matriliny] wasn't able to be politicised to the same degree [in Solomons]. Lots of Solomon Islands are matrilineal but in Bougainville they can say 'Bougainville is matrilineal' and that's not technically true, but it's true enough that everyone can believe it. I think the other thing

> is that Solomon Islands was this internal conflict. Whereas Bougainville, it was Bougainville against Papua New Guinea. That's simplifying. Obviously, it was an internal conflict as well, but for Bougainvilleans who wanted independence, matriliny was a way to distinguish themselves from Papua New Guinea to be like, 'well, we respect women here, so that's another reason why we should be separate.' So that was really a window of opportunity that women's groups could use to say, 'Well, if you really want to prove how different, then you can do all these things to include women.'" – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020.

'Mothers of the land' is a phrase commonly used in Bougainville. It refers to the central role of women as custodians of the land in the matrilineal structures in place in parts of Bougainville. The phrase was regularly invoked by women's groups and women's advocates to justify their rights to participate in formal peace processes and post conflict governance structures.

> "The popular political world-view informs us that the world of politics is the male's domain. This is the view that Bougainville women have had to correct and replace with the idea that, according to traditional Bougainville political culture, men and women share political responsibilities" (Ruth Saovana Spriggs, in Sirivi & Havini, 2004, p. 121).

Bougainville's matrilineal traditions formed an important part of women's peacebuilding activities and the narratives they employed when seeking to unite different factions to the conflict (R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2003). Women's roles as mothers and wives, the strong influence of Christianity and the organising power of the Church were also sources of strength and influence for the women peace activists seeking to end the fighting in Bougainville. These factors provided women with space to exercise power and leadership and saw their bottom-up organising accepted by the wider community (George, 2016b; R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2003; Sirivi & Havini, 2004).

Traditional matrilineal systems are present in most but not all of the language groups across Bougainville (R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007).

> "Not all language groups in Bougainville are matrilineal, some in the south are patrilineal like the Siwai and Buin. Most of Bougainville mainland is matrilineal as is Buka but some of the Polynesian atolls are patrilineal. For each language group, depending on how their own system of matriliny operates, there's different levels of authority that women have. Within each of the language groups, there's variations on how the land tenure system operates in practice and the same for the social organisation aspect. So, for example, in some groups the women may have quite a big role in ceremonies, like marriages and funerals as well as holding knowledge about their clan lineage – some people hold this knowledge maybe for five or six generations. Women are also usually responsible for passing on the shell money and any other material things of importance." – Anita Togolo, Interview, 2020.

Matrilineal rights do not equate to ownership of the land, which is held collectively by the clan, however, women are conferred a special status as they are responsible for the continuation of the clan. This status limits male rights to land use and requires men to seek permission from the women of the clan (Cuddy, 2012; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007).

Although these customs were heavily drawn on to legitimise women's role in peace negotiations, matrilineal systems of power have been eroded by the imposition of Western forms of governance and Christianity, resulting in a weakened position of authority for women (George, 2016a; Kirkham et al., 2018; R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007). It has been argued that the conflict may have played a role in reigniting connections to traditional matrilineal culture that was devalued somewhat during colonialisation (R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, p. 4).

However, women candidates in Bougainville do not tend to poll better in the matrilineal areas of Bougainville or worse in the patriarchal areas (Baker, 2015, 2019a). While

Bougainville has matrilineal traditions, it is by no means a matriarchy and public decision-making is a space dominated by men. Matrilineal land rights were effectively stripped from women by the mine operators in Paguna when they only negotiated with male community leaders (Cuddy, 2012, p. 65). Ruth Savona-Spriggs cites the Bougainville Mining Act 2015 as an example of the continued dismantling of traditional processes and disempowerment of women (R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2018). The 2015 Act does not require consultation with women as traditional custodians of the land. There is much anecdotal evidence from both Bougainville and Solomons that male relatives acting as spokespersons will claim rights to negotiate without sharing profits with women and extended family members (Wale, in Rowland, 2016; R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2018, p. 21).

The place of traditional customs in modern day Solomon Islands has been recognised as an important element by women's peacekeeping groups and civil society:

> "It is also clear, in the work that Women for Peace has carried out, that people want to maintain their roots and cultural diversity while feeling socially integrated. One of the main reasons for the current conflict is that people feel that the political system is not responsive to their needs, and that the legal system has not afforded equal protection to all people in society. These are fundamental requirements for harmony and security and the means by which the social and cultural capital of a community of different ethnic groups can be enriched" (Alice A. Pollard, 2000, p. 44).

Narratives of motherhood and Christian doctrine have both been influential for women seeking to build dialogue and peace in Solomon Islands. The phrase 'mothers of the nation' was commonly used to refer to women peace advocates. Pollard from Women for Peace cites the biblical story of Abigail helping to bring peace to her nation with the sharing of food and face-to-face dialogue as an example of this (2000, p. 44).

While the importance of traditional customs and practices have been utilised by women's groups in Solomon Islands, they have not manifested in political discourse to enable

women's participation to the same degree as the matriliny narratives have in Bougainville.

Half of the 10 provinces in the Solomons use matrilineal land tenure systems[21]. In these communities, women engage in the leadership and decision-making processes related to land use more than in the patrilineal communities (Maetala, 2008, p. 45). Although women in these provinces have resource ownership over the land, this doesn't translate to political leadership in community or public decision-making (Batalibasi et al., 2019).

Kastom informs attitudes and ideas around what women can and can't do in public in Solomon Islands. *Kastom* refers to shared cultural traditions but also to contemporary systems rooted in traditional principles. They are often cited as the reasons behind the exclusion of women from public-decision making (Batalibasi et al., 2019). However, *Kastom* is regularly used in fluid or creative ways to adapt to modernisation and change. It is often called on selectively by Solomon Islanders. For example, women in different parts of the Solomon Islands have used *Kastom* and cultural laws to intervene in conflicts in various ways. In Areare culture, men are forbidden to make contact with or step over a woman's body and doing so would require compensation. So a woman might proclaim that further conflict would be akin to walking over her legs, fighting would have to stop immediately to start negotiations for compensation and reconciliation (Alice A. Pollard, 2000, p. 44).

In their 2019 study on the perceptions of women's leadership in Solomon Islands, Batalibasi et al recognise the opportunity that the concept of *Kastom* may empower women's leadership by tapping into women's traditional leadership roles, they also note that there is a lack of in-depth research on the ways that *Kastom* may be employed to

[21] Guadalcanal, Isabel, Makira, Central and Western.

facilitate this (2019, p. 35). Respondees to their study noted that the impact of culture or K*astom* as a barrier to women's inclusion in political decision-making was changing over time:

> "In Malaita, we base so much on culture but these days culture is not so strong now" (Focus group participant, in Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 34).

Similar sentiments about the role of culture in political were expressed by interviewees when discussing the rise of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) in Solomon Islands. This is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

3.6 Analysis and conclusions

In both case studies the conflicts have proved to be a seminal point for women's civil society organising and networking. A new generation of women's groups emerged and for many individual women the conflict was the catalyst for their ongoing activism. The advocacy of women's groups saw the development of strong networks both overseas and locally, relationships were formed across different language groups and different factions to the conflicts.

For some women, particularly in Bougainville, the conflict provided them with opportunities to move into traditionally masculine roles to participate in public decision-making and political forums. In both case studies, women found ways to continue economic activities when men were not able to, an example being the markets that women ran, which ensured the provision of essential goods and food to remote parts of the islands. This is similar to Tripp's findings in her case studies on African countries, where a key component of 'gender regime change' was the movement of women into roles previously held by men (2015).

The peacebuilding activities of women's groups have been credited with creating space and dialogue for the different factions to eventually come together and negotiate. In both case studies, these peacekeeping activities drew heavily on traditional customs, Christian doctrine, and motherhood idioms and narratives; 'mothers of the land' was a phrase used

commonly in Bougainville and 'mothers of the nation' in Solomon Islands. In both case studies, these narratives emphasised the neutrality of women peace activists and allowed them to differentiate their motivations from that of the men, enabling them to diffuse violence and conflict. These activities also gave them the freedom to physically move around the islands and on Bougainville pass through blockades set up by the various factions of the conflict, something men were unable to do.

These narratives of women as "inherently peaceable" feed heavily into women's roles as mothers and carers, and although this permitted women's involvement in peacebuilding activities it may have also worked to reinforce rather than reform unequal gender roles. As Charlesworth notes the "dark side of women in peace, is that it can be used to keep women in their place" (Charlesworth, 2008, p. 348). Although cultural traditions were drawn on by women's groups in both case studies to resolve conflict, these traditions provided women in Bougainville with more leverage to participate in the formal peacekeeping processes than in Solomon Islands. However, despite their participation in some of the formal peace talks there were few opportunities for them to substantially shape the formal negotiations and women's advocates in both case studies were progressively excluded from the more formalised and militarised the peace processes became.

The biggest difference between the case studies regarding the role of women's civil society organising have been the opportunities provided in the post conflict periods. Women's advocates in Bougainville were able to appoint advocates to the constitutional committee to ensure their inclusion in subsequent governance structures. In contrast women's groups in Solomon Islands have struggled to pass policy or legislative reforms to ensure their political participation, despite ongoing campaigns. These findings reflect consensus in the literature – where women's exclusion from the design of peace and governance frameworks creates a cycle where gender inequality and women's insecurity are perpetuated (Hudson, 2009).

Despite the openings that matrilineal narratives provided for women's rights activists in Bougainville, the practical effects are difficult to define at a micro level. They do not

seem to have had a big impact on the campaigns of individual women, with women candidates from matrilineal areas polling no better than candidates from patrilineal areas (Baker, 2015, 2019a).

Despite the increased exposure to political organising and leadership that the women's peace movements provided, women candidates in both case studies have continued to struggle politically. Neither case study had many women MPs before the conflict; Solomon Islands had one – Hilda Kari from 1989 until 2001 when she lost her seat. Provincial level politics saw three women hold seats in Bougainville in the 1980s but none at the national level in the Papua New Guinea parliament. In the post conflict period, Solomon Islands went 11 years without another woman in parliament, while the reserved seats have meant that there have always been at least three women in the ABG in Bougainville.

Campaigns for women in both case studies are similar, with access to resources and strong community connections key factors in campaigns of women who poll strongly. Although Solomon Islands currently has its highest number of sitting women MPs – at three, making up six percent of the total – the avenues to success for all three women are prohibitive for the average women candidate; one has access to vast amounts of financial resources through her ownership of a logging company, and the other two took over seats formerly held by their husbands. Bougainville still sees significantly more women candidates running for the three reserved seats than the open seats.

This chapter has established that the conflicts strengthened women's civil society networks and created opportunities for women's leadership and participation at the grassroots level. Openings for women's participation in the formal peace processes were more available in Bougainville than in Solomon Islands but these were still heavily constrained within feminised perimeters. Despite this increase of exposure to peacebuilding and political organising, women candidates in both case studies still struggle in elections to win seats.

It seems that the findings of this chapter do reflect similar trends to those observed by Tripp (2015), although the modest number of women MPs elected post conflict in both

case studies make it difficult to draw concrete conclusions on this. Tripp found that the involvement of women's civil society groups in conflict transition was a key factor in whether or not the country saw increases in women's participation in formal political institutions (2015). Both case studies fall short of what would be considered meaningful participation for women in conflict transition. However, women's advocates in Bougainville did participate in some of the formal peace negotiations and more space was afforded them to pursue reforms for women's participation post conflict. This is explored further in the next chapter on women's roles in the institutional and legal features The next section goes on to consider the institutional and legal framework women candidates must navigate in each case study.

Chapter four: Institutional and legal features that may create opportunities or barriers for women's political participation

4.1 Introduction

There is a global analysis emerging of the factors that influence women's roles in peace processes and the degree to which their involvement correlates with subsequent reforms towards gender equality (True & Riveros-Morales, 2018, p. 13). While the last chapter considered the role of women's groups in the peace processes, this chapter will go on to assess whether gender-sensitive provisions were included in the peace-agreements and the wider institutional and legal features women candidates have had to navigate when attempting to participate in formal political institutions. In doing so, it will consider the impacts of each feature on women's political participation at different points in the conflict and post conflict period. This includes an analysis of the text of peace agreements, constitutional governance arrangements, local government systems, electoral features and aspects of legislative reform that have shaped the political landscape in the conflict and post conflict periods.

This chapter is organised first by the institutional or legal feature being assessed (i.e: peace agreement or constitution) and within that considers the impact on women's political participation for each conflict. Further compare and contrast analysis of each case study is provided in the conclusion section.

4.2 Text of the peace agreements

4.2.1 Text of the Townsville Peace Agreement in the Solomon Islands

The Townsville Peace Agreement was signed on 15 October 2000. The negotiations included most but not all militant parties[22] and government delegates but no civil society organisations. The exclusion of civil society came at the request of the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) who were concerned at losing control of the agenda, Townsville has been described as the point in the peace processes that ended the engagement of civil society (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 37). The text of the Townsville Peace Agreement contains no gender provisions or recognition of the role of women's peacebuilding efforts or the gendered impacts of the conflict. (Solomon Islands Government, 2000).

Despite being the last peace agreement of the conflict, the Townsville Peace Agreement failed to create any lasting peace. Civil society groups referred to it as a 'Militants Charter' and many saw it as an agreement between Guadalcanal and Malaita at the expense of the rest of the country, described as: "rushed and ridden with loopholes and premised on unrealistic assumptions as to the integrity and capabilities of the Solomon Islands Government" (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 39). Militants didn't surrender their weapons and many returned home only briefly to collect the reparation payments organised under the agreement and then returned to their militia groups (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 39).

[22] Delegates from the Marau region of Guadalcanal did not attend.

4.2.2 Text of the Bougainville Peace Agreement

The Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) was signed on 30 August 2001. Despite their celebrated role in resolving the conflict, the country's women only got one specific mention in the text. Gender equality provisions, recognition of gender-based violence or the different gendered impacts of the conflict were not included (Autonomous Bougainville Government & the Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 2001, p. 13):

> "The Bougainville Constitution will provide that the institutions of the autonomous Bougainville Government will include a legislature which shall be a mainly elected body, but may also include members appointed or elected to represent special interests, such as women, youth, churches" (Autonomous Bougainville Government & the Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 2001).

Unlike the situation in Solomon Islands, the peace negotiated by the BPA did last. It has been described as containing "innovative solutions to difficult issues that initially divided the distrustful parties" (Regan, 2010, p. 88).

4.3 Constitutional and governance arrangements

4.3.1 Solomon Islands

4.3.1.1 The Constitution of the Solomon Islands

The Constitution of the Solomon Islands was formed when the nation gained independence from Britain in 1978 (National Parliament of Solomon Islands, 1978). The Constitution does not have explicit gender provisions but it does contain provisions guaranteeing fundamental rights and individual freedoms, including on the grounds of sex:

> "FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL […]
>
> 3. Whereas every person in Solomon Islands is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex…" (Chapter 2, section 3).

And prohibits discrimination:

> "PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RACE, ETC […]
>
> 15. (1) Subject to the provisions of subsections (5), (6) and (9) of this section, no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.
>
> (2) Subject to the provisions of subsections (7), (8) and (9) of this section, no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or performance of the function of any public office or any public authority.
>
> (4) In this section, the expression "discriminatory" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description." (Chapter 2, section 15) (National Parliament of Solomon Islands, 1978).

In contrast to Bougainville, the Solomon Islands did not form new constitutional governance arrangements after the conflict. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) sought to restore order and strengthen the existing governance

arrangements modelled on the Westminster Parliamentary System, a hangover from the British colonial period, as was the case in much of the Pacific. However, the 2000 Townsville Peace Agreement advocated for devolution and more power to state governments (Solomon Islands Government, 2000). A Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) was established in 2007, and by 2017 the provincial leaders agreed to adopt a new federal constitution. Passage was expected in 2018, but it has been postponed due to amendments. A final draft was completed in early 2019 ("Federal Constitution Final Draft Completed," 2019; Jon Fraenkel, 2019).

The Draft Federal Constitution 2018 contains provisions for the government to take "legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons who are disadvantaged or have special needs" to "promote the achievement of equality" (Constitutional Reform Unit, 2018, Chapter 3). This would allow for the provision of Temporary Special Measures for gender equality. However, when questioned on whether this reform process may provide an opportunity for women's advocates to push for the inclusion of Temporary Special Measures or other gender equality issues, the experts interviewed were not overly optimistic about the likelihood of the new constitution coming into fruition anytime soon:

> "It's kind of a zombie process, it just goes along, but it never actually gets anywhere […] I don't think that women's groups take it particularly seriously because it just doesn't seem realistic. And it's a shame the work that's gone into something that probably won't ever happen […] But I think the window of opportunity [for constitutional reform] was just after the crisis." –Anonymous, Interview, 2020

> "There is nominally a constitutional reform process. But what's your odds of actually changing something like this? I'd say that all of my previously expressed scepticism would hold true even if there's a nominal constitutional reform process in place. You still need politicians who are motivated either by the electorate or just by their

> personal convictions to want to change this. And I think that's pretty unlikely." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020

4.3.1.2 Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for gender equality

There have been multiple campaigns over the years to introduce parliamentary quotas, reserved seats or some form of Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for gender equality into the national parliament in Solomon Islands. To date, none of these have been successful. However, women's organisations are optimistic about current efforts and there has been significant progress made at the provincial level in late 2019 (Batalibasi et al., 2019). "Recently, there has been momentum building to introduce TSM at the provincial level. […] WRAM has been a key agent in spearheading this campaign, in close collaboration and consultation with the Women's Development Division (WDD) in the Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA)" (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 9)

Earlier efforts on behalf of the Women in Shared Decision-Making (WISDM) coalition, an association of local women's groups in Solomon Islands, reported the perception of TSM as a foreign or Western concept was damaging to their campaign. As was the perception of TSM as "free seats" for women, demonstrating the importance of local ownership of narratives and accountability of process when considering the use of special measures in Solomon Islands (Batalibasi et al., 2019). This sentiment was echoed by Julian Barbara, who was head of the Machinery of Government programme in RASMI from 2010-2012:

> "It [Temporary Special Measures] was a hard issue, and public appetite across the country I don't think was particularly strong and favourable, so it was seen as an elite issue. It certainly wasn't seen as a collective public interest issue at that time. So making a case to secure the number of votes on the floor of parliament to introduce those legislative changes was going to be a big ask." – Julien Barbara, Interview, 2020.

In 2017, the Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare introduced a motion in parliament to inform the drafting of a new bill on electoral provisions. This included the consideration of TSM for more women to be elected into parliament (Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2017). The debate saw a range of views expressed on women's participation in parliament, both for and against, however the majority expressed concerns about TSM, including: that they are a free pass into parliament, that they are anti-men, that they are not in the national interest and that, they could risk the quality of political leadership and democratic representation in the country (Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2017). After the debate TSM were not included in the proposed bill.

In late 2019, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) and Solomon Islands based Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) undertook a large study on the perception of women as leaders and of TSM in the Solomon Islands. Their findings included:

> "That once informed about Temporary Special Measures (76% of respondents hadn't initially heard of them), 92% of respondents said they would support TSM in provincial assemblies and at the national parliament" (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 38).
>
> "However, respondents expressed concerns about implementing such measures, these included: women candidates not being respected, women being unprepared for a political career, the possibility of family discord and making changes to the political system" (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 38).

These findings are similar to responses from the People's Surveys that were run by RAMSI from 2006-2013. The 2013 edition surveyed over 3,400 Solomon Islanders from around the country on a number of topics including women's political participation and found that:

- 89 percent of respondents thought there should be female MPs in National Parliament (The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2013).

- Of those who supported women in Parliament, 80 percent thought there should be reserved seats for women candidates (The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2013).

When questioned on the likelihood of Temporary Special Measures being introduced at the national level in the Solomon Islands, expert interviewee responses were generally sceptical, however, with the right conditions it was considered feasible:

> "I would say that it's never been that close in principle or in practice, even if it has made it to the floor, it is probably the sort of thing that would be difficult to pass. Parliament is dominated by male MPs and they have little electoral incentive to worry about these methods, it's not as if there's a coherent woman's voice in the country that would translate to them losing votes in the next election based on the way they voted in parliament on this issue. So there's not much political incentive for members of parliament to vote for temporary special measures. Having said that, my read of Kerryn's [Dr Kerryn Baker's] work on Samoa is that it just took one person, meaning a strong prime minister and then bang, the law was passed. So you could imagine analogues of that occurring in Solomons. Matthew Wale, who's perennially the leader of the opposition, if he ever got to be prime minister might try. He's associated with Alice Pollard, and has a background in civil society. It's possible that he could be the sort of person who could push through legislation like that. So it couldn't be the sort of thing that could change overnight unexpectedly. But if you're just talking about the general trend, well, you know, the general likelihood of it happening, I'd say it's pretty low." – Terence Wood, Interview 2020.
>
> "It should be noted, people in Solomon Islands, when they vote, rarely vote for policy or party, so it's not like there's even much of an opening for a discussion amongst the community about temporary special measures as a desirable thing because it's not how people engage with

> politics. […] It's a much more visceral and immediate issue about what's in it for your village, for your community, for your family, for your wantoks, and I think that reflects the reality of politics. What's the point of thinking about high level policy, where it's probably not going to make much impact or where the state is largely absent from your lives." – Julien Barbara, Interview 2020.

It was also pointed out that the difficulty in passing legislation through parliament in Solomon Islands is likely to be another factor working against campaigns for TSM legislation:

> "In Solomons, anytime parliament sits and passes legislation, that's always an opportunity for someone in your governing party to cross the floor and bring down your government. Prime Ministers are often loathe to have parliament sit and so parliament is in abeyance a lot of the time for that reason. Any day parliament's sitting is a day that you could be toppled in a vote of no confidence. Generally, legislation is quite slow to get passed and comes with a risk to the party trying to pass it. So you'd imagine that it has to be something that the party was fairly committed to passing. That's another factor pulling against them [the campaigners for TSMs]." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020

4.3.1.3 Political Parties Integrity Act 2014

Despite the absence of reserved seats or quotas, in 2014 legislation was introduced to encourage political parties to endorse women candidates. The act aims to ensure 10 percent of party endorsed candidates are women and provides a financial incentive of SB$10,000 to the party for each woman candidate elected into office. However, there are no sanctions for non-compliance and if a party doesn't have enough women candidates to fulfil the requirements then they are exempt. Independent women candidates don't receive the financial incentive if they are elected (Solomon Islands Government, 2014).

When interviewed on the subject, Wood pointed out that as the public generally don't vote along party lines, endorsement by a party is likely to have limited impact for aspiring women MPs:

> "In Solomons, people don't vote along party lines. So the only way party affiliation might help you as a candidate, is if the party is actually giving you some money behind the scenes. But there was nothing in the legislation that I'm aware of that required the party to give you money behind the scenes[…] The parties generally don't have national infrastructure, so there's going to be some seats where the key politicians in the party are going to be standing and they're going to take an active interest in those seats. But in other seats, if they can pick up a woman candidate from that part of the country and they're not displacing anyone else powerful in the party, they get 10,000 Solomons dollars from the government as a result of it, then they'll do that. But they won't do anything meaningful to help that candidate come to the election itself." – Terence Wood, Interview, 2020.

To date, it seems the Act has not been very successful in incentivising political parties to support women candidates. In the 2014 elections, half of all political parties failed to endorse any woman candidates, and in the 2019 elections six out of 14 parties had woman candidates (Wood, 2019c).

4.3.1.4 Post-conflict institutions

The Townsville Peace Agreement called for a process of "face to face dialogue at community, village, family individual and organization levels" this process was to be carried out by a Peace Monitoring Council mandated by the Solomon Islands Government (Solomon Islands Government, 2000 Part 5, 1A).

In 2003, the Peace Monitoring Council was transformed into a more independent body with external funding and the National Peace Council (NPC) was established (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, & Murdock, 2015). It received support from the Australian

Government and UNDP, and was intended to act in a neutral and independent manner. The NPC operated with teams of peace monitors who helped to resolve community conflicts through mediation and outreach activities. The peace monitoring teams worked to defuse conflicts as they arose, reporting them to the Solomon Islands authorities where necessary but otherwise working with local communities to establish dialogue and restore communal bonds (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, & Murdock, 2015). About 90 peace monitors were engaged by the NPC and deployed in teams around the country. They were chosen for their stature in the community and perceived neutrality during the conflict. Most of the monitors were men but efforts were taken to try and include at least one woman monitor in each post (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, & Murdock, 2015, p. 6). The importance of including women in community reconciliation efforts due to the differing impacts of the conflict on men and women was recognised by the NPC, with one peace monitor noting:

> "Women usually wanted peace while men wanted to win" (Brigg, Chadwick, Griggers, & Murdock, 2015, p. 16).

The NPC's vision to unify Solomon Islands included strengthening civil society and national groups such as business and professional associations, sports associations and youth groups, as well as Church women's groups, Mother's Union and the National Council of Women (National Peace Council, 2004 Appendix 8). The NPC was shut down in 2006.

In 2008, a Truth and Reconciliation Committee was set up by an act of parliament ("The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2008," 2008) after long-term calls from women's groups, church groups and civil society for investigation and reports on human rights abuses committed during the tensions (Amnesty International, 2004; Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a; Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a). The Commission was comprised of five commissioners, a mixture of Solomon Islanders and overseas human rights experts and included two women, one from Solomons and one from Peru (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a). The Commission conducted research, exhumations, hearings and gathered statements from around the country. In an effort to

reflect the diversity of experience of the conflict, the commission sought to integrate women's perspectives into its accounts. It aimed for half of its total statements to be from women (a goal it didn't quite reach at 37 percent), it also included considerations for gender equality in the reconciliation processes into its recommendations (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a). It did ensure that 14 out of the 30 people engaged to record statements of those affected were women and it directly engaged with women's groups and women leaders in villages and via public hearings. The International Centre for Transitional Justice, an international NGO held a series of workshops in the provinces and in Honiara, attended by about 60 women to compile the content of the workshops into a report titled 'Herem Kam: Stori Blong Mifala Olketa Mere' Women's Submission to the Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The report was incorporated into the findings and recommendations of the Committee (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012b; Judith Fangalasuu, 2011).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognised the window of opportunity in the post-conflict period for reforming structures that perpetuate gender inequality, and in particular commended the work of women's groups in changing attitudes towards violence against women (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012b, p. 625). However, the extent to which their recommendations have been implemented in a tangible way have been questioned by women's rights advocates (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017). The limitations of the 'truth telling' model of the Commission for women has also been recognised. The experience of the conflict for a lot of women involved sexual violence, ill-treatment or torture, difficult topics to discuss openly for many people. Solomon Islands K*astom* prevents the disclosure of sensitive or personal topics in many contexts:

> "There is a *kastom* of silence[23] that exists through our local indigenous methods of conflict resolution, so an issue with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the fact that it was broadcast to the whole nation. Everybody got to hear exactly what the victims experienced. When they read out their statements often the news and the papers were there. I attended one at the Catholic Church, and anybody could sit down and attend so it didn't feel like a safe kind of space for people to speak about a lot of things [...] When people went back to the villages, especially the women when they had spoken about sexual assault or violence during the conflict, they were ostracised because people had heard about their stories." – Karlyn Tekulu, Interview 2020.
>
> "For women, sometimes their silence is louder, stronger and safer than anything they say out loud because of the risks involved in telling their stories" (Judith Fangalasuu, 2011, p. 13)

Trials for crimes committed during the tensions began in 2005. There were some complaints filed but no resulting charges or prosecutions for any sexual assaults from the tensions (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a, p. 234). The exclusion of women from the post-conflict institutions becomes particularly stark when considering the resourcing allocated for reconciliation, with SBD 28,500 spent on the women's hearing and SBD 342,000 spent on the hearing for ex-combatants (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012, p. 1232).

[23] A comment on the reference to silence in this quote from Karlyn: "To clarify, when I speak of silence, it is not about covering up of an incident. Here "silence" is a contextual silence, as when a dispute has been addressed or resolved. Silence is part of the ongoing management for conflict which ensures that the resolved dispute is not brought up again. This management is implemented to prevent the creation of re-inciting animosities that might cause an upheaval again on a dispute that has already been resolved.

Similarly, reparations for abuses committed during the tensions have overwhelmingly benefited a small elite, including ex-militants and police, politicians and business people in the urban centres. Widespread corruption, misappropriation and abuse of the reparations scheme was found by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a, p. 299). The majority of victims including displaced and rural people received no compensation and only nine percent of recipients have been women, despite the well-documented and widespread violence and abuses, particularly sexual violence, committed against women (Truth and Reconciliation Commission., 2012a, pp. 281-284, 299).

4.3.2 Bougainville

4.3.2.1 Political institutions in the conflict era

Women had a presence in the political institutions in the conflict era, albeit limited – ensuring women's political participation via reserved women's seats was raised for the first time in 1998 by Agnes Titus (the only woman member of the Transitional Government). She submitted a proposal for 12 women's seats (one for each district of Bougainville) to be included in the next political institution to be formed. Eventually, the submission was approved by a majority, however, the reserved seats for women that would later eventuate in the ABG would total only three (Baker, 2019a, p. 108). Joseph Kabui, who would go on to become the first president of the Autonomous Bougainville Government, was a prominent supporter of Titus's submission (Baker, 2019a).

The Bougainville Constitutional Commission (BCC) was established in 2002 under provisions of the Bougainville Peace Agreement allowing for autonomous political institutions. The Commission was intended to be representative yet small enough to be effective (Autonomous Bougainville Government & the Government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, 2001). Women's groups in Bougainville lobbied for women's representation on the committee, resulting in three women who were nominated by the Bougainville Provincial Council of Women: Francesca Semoso from the northern region, Elizabeth Sawai from the central region, and Bernadine Kiraa from the southern

region (Baker, 2019a, p. 108). These three commissioners were appointed specifically as women's representatives alongside 21 other commissioners who were all male. The women's representatives saw a key element of their position on the committee as ensuring a voice for women in any new political institutions.

> "All the women's groups came together and first thing first, we advocated for three women commissioners [on the] constitutional commission… So we didn't bargain for three reserved seats, we bargained to put three women in the constitutional commission [so that they could] advocate for three seats to be included in the constitution" (Women's advocate, in Baker, 2019a, p. 108).

Ensuring women's participation on the Commission was seen by women's groups as crucial to ensuring women's voices would be included in the constitution and in the subsequent political institutions that would be formed.

> "We were there mainly to fight for the women" (Women's advocate, in Baker, 2019a, p. 108).

The Bougainville Constitution Commission held public consultations where support for provisions in the constitution ensuring inclusive representation was shown, the groups discussed included: youth, church representatives, ex-combatants, Bougainvilleans living outside Bougainville, and traditional chiefs (Baker, 2019a, p. 108). Support for, and concerns over, women's involvement in politics were also raised. One women's representative on the Bougainville Constitution Commission recounted:

> "It was not easy, I mean as a commissioner it was not easy. There was so much fighting because some men still think that the women should be in the kitchen, you know, that same old, same old story" (Women's representative, in Baker, 2019a, p. 109).

Two groups of society ended up with reserved seats: women and ex-combatants. The number of seats to be reserved for women proved contentious. Initially 10 seats were proposed to the Bougainville Constitution Commission, when this was rejected six seats

were suggested. Women's representatives on the Commission reported that as a minority in a male dominated institution they faced difficulty in pushing for more seats:

> "We wanted ten, and then the men thought, what the hell, why on earth would you have ten? Then it came down to six, and the men said it was too many still. And then we came down to three, and even then they said no, let's keep it to one, and I said three, I think that's still not fair, but at least we will have three women on three reserved seats, you know, speaking for women in the three regions" (Women's representative, in Baker, 2019a, p. 111).

In the end, the Constitutional Commission agreed to three reserved seats for women – one for each main region of Bougainville: North, South and Central. These seats became those entrenched in the 2004 Constitution. It was important to the women's groups that any reserved women's seats were elected democratically and not appointed (Baker, 2019a, p. 110; A. B. Government, 2004).

Three main arguments were used by advocates of the reserved seat system to ensure their inclusion in the constitution forming process:

1. As an acknowledgement of the important role women played in establishing narrative and achieving peace;
2. Bougainville's matrilineal cultural traditions; and
3. A pragmatic solution to the difficulties women faced in the past when contesting men for participation in political structures in Bougainville (Baker, 2016, p. 4).

4.3.2.2 The Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville

The Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville was completed in 2004 and the first Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) was inaugurated after elections in 2005 under President Joseph Kabui (A. B. Government, 2004). The Constitution recognises the role of women in bringing peace to Bougainville:

> "s.28 RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BOUGAINVILLE SOCIETY.
> The role and welfare of women in traditional and modern Bougainville society shall be recognized and encouraged and shall be developed to take account of changing circumstances" (A. B. Government, 2004).

It also commits to ensuring the inclusion of women and other marginalised groups in its political institutions:

> "s.19 FAIR REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS.
> There shall be fair representation of women and marginalized groups on all constitutional and other bodies" (A. B. Government, 2004).

Section 55(2)(b)(ii) guarantees the three reserved seats for women:

> "three women members, each representing a constituency for a separate Region (North, Central and South), elected to represent the interests of the women of the Region" (A. B. Government, 2004).

While s.80(1)(c) guarantees that there is always one sitting woman member on the Executive Council:

> "Subject to Section 101 (dismissal of members of the Bougainville Executive Council), a woman member of the House of Representatives appointed by the President, being the woman member nominated by the women members (both those elected to represent the interests of women and any women members for single member constituencies) (A. B. Government, 2004).

The constitution explicitly guarantees the right of office for women, however, this is limited to women representing the 'interests of the women of Bougainville' rather than representing everyone in Bougainville. This view of 'women's issues' as only for women and not central to mainstream governance narratives is problematic as it frames equal participation as a minority issue that is up to women to fix.

4.3.2.3 Women's reserved seats

An often reported issue with the reserved seat system in Bougainville is that it is regularly interpreted to curb women's political participation rather than to develop it – with a well-documented attitude from voters that as the women's seats are for women the open seats are for men (Baker, 2016, p. 5; Kelly, 2010; Kirkham et al., 2018). Many women candidates running for the open seats report complaints from constituents that they are running for the 'men's seats' and should instead be limited to running only for the women's reserved seats (Baker, 2015; International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019).

> "I think the Bougainville experience has shown us that it's not an ideal system, because it's very hard to increase the number because running in an open seat is still such a risk. And so you have these amazing women candidates all running against each other for three seats." – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020

The same issue has been reported regarding the reserved place for a woman MP in the Executive Council:

> "There's some quite progressive provisions of the Constitution, including that you have to have a woman in cabinet, the executive committee, that was really smart, but then it's been interpreted by a lot of people as you have to have only one woman in cabinet." – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020

Other concerns with the reserved seat system are structural. The large geographical area each seat covers means it is difficult to develop meaningful relationships with constituents, which is important in such a localised political culture and makes campaigning expensive due to the amount of travel involved. It is, on average, five times more expensive to campaign in the reserved seats than in the open seats (Baker, 2015; International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019). However, the same level of

discretionary funding is provided for all members. This means that women have relatively less resources to provide services as they have larger constituencies and therefore struggle to demonstrate service delivery to voters (Baker, 2016, p. 5). In the 2010 and 2015 elections there was a 100 percent turnover rate in all of the reserved seats (Baker, 2019a, p. 122). Such a high turnover rate also means women MPs are likely to gain less political experience.

4.4 Local government

4.4.1 Local government systems in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands activist Josephine Teakeni has long argued that women's political participation at the national level won't increase until women have a greater and more formalised role in provincial and local level decision-making (Scales & Teakeni, 2006, p. 77). As at December 2019, four of 172 seats in provincial assemblies (2.3%) were held by women, as was one out of 12 positions on the Honiara City Council (8.3%) (Batalibasi et al., 2019; Mulder, 2019). However, all but two of the nine provincial assemblies have had elected women members at some point (Zubrinich, 2016, p. 8).

Interviewees expressed confidence in current campaigns for TSM at the provincial level, a sentiment that is echoed in recent work from NGOs Women Rights Action Movement (WRAM) and International Women's Development Agency (IWDA).

> "There is a big push for reserved seats in the provincial assemblies. This is getting some traction. There is momentum there, but it's hard, they [WRAM] got all these assemblies on board. But then they had elections and so new people came in, so they had to convince the new people, and then after the last election, they got the Minister for Provincial Government on board. He was really excited and then the Taiwan stuff happened and that position changed, so [...] if the stars align, it could come in really fast or it could just never happen." – Anonymous Interview, 2020

In their December 2019 study on perceptions of women leaders and TSM in Solomon Islands, WRAM and IDWA confirm that at least three provincial assemblies (Malatia, Western and Central) had committed to support reserved seats for women and note that the campaign continues to seek support from newly elected provincial assembly members (Batalibasi et al., 2019, p. 13).

4.4.2 Local government systems in Bougainville

Recent changes to the structure of local governance represent significant progress for women at the local government level in Bougainville. The Community Government Act 2016 replaces the previous Council of Elders system as the level of governance that sits below the Autonomous Bougainville Government ((ABG), 2016). The new Act establishes a system of Community Governments made up of between three and 15 wards. The Act requires each ward to elect one male and one female representative and that the leadership roles for each Community Government (Chair and Deputy Chair) be comprised of one male and one female and that these rotate between male and female representatives each election, meaning if the Chair is male, the Deputy must be female and the next election a female must hold the role of Chair with a male as Deputy ((ABG), 2016).

The Act creates gender parity at the local government level, an impressive feat considering women only made up approximately 15 percent of its predecessor the Council of Elders (Baker, 2016). A review of community level governance structures by the Bougainville Executive Council and the ABG presented an opportunity to entrench women's participation in local political decision-making. Four options for women's inclusion were presented:

1. Retaining the 'interest group' system, with a women's, church and youth; representative each nominated to the government;
2. A set number of reserved seats for women;
3. No dedicated seats for either gender; and

4. A system wherein one man and one woman were elected from each ward (Baker, 2016).

Although it has been difficult to find much information about the genesis of the Act, the fourth option was reportedly included as a 'wild card' with women's advocates at least expecting a fight to justify formalising women's participation in local government:

> "When we put the Community Government Reform Act in the cabinet meeting, there wasn't one minister that went against, not one! Even the president gave a lengthy 30-minute speech on how we value women in Bougainville, true! I was all geared up to fight for it! (laughs) […] The president [did a] 30-minute speech, praising the women, how they worked for the peace process, so we need to give recognition to them" (Women's advocate, quote provided by Busch, 2020)

While some sources have reported tensions caused by the new reforms:

> "Anecdotally, there are reports that some former Council of Elders representatives, reluctant to give up their authority following the first Community Government elections in April 2017, are resisting the system" (George, 2018d).

In her 2016 unpublished review on gender and political settlements in Bougainville, some of the interlocutors interviewed by Kerryn Baker questioned the local ownership of such sweeping reforms to local governance systems, with concerns that the 'top down' imposition of a process of modernisation by higher level political bodies would undermine the traditional influence of clan leaders and could lead to a backlash (Baker, 2016, p. 6). However, Antje Busch conducted field work in Bougainville in 2018 and interviewed around 25 women associated with the new Community Governance system and a similar number with the Council of Elders System. On the issue of backlash she said:

> "I didn't observe any backlashes within the community government, and that might be because it's too early [in the process]. But the other

> thing is, there's nothing substantial to be lost. I can only talk about the parts of the Northern Centre [of Bougainville] but power is not taken away to the community governments. I mean, there is some chief and some big man who were not pleased with it, but they haven't lost any traditional authority, they are still in charge […] It's not like in parliament where there are substantial seats that are not available anymore for men [because they have been taken by women] that's not the case. And since the community government is chronically underfunded […] some of the men might say, well, it's not worth going into it, there's no money to be made." – Antje Busch, Interview, 2020.

The new Community Government model stands out, not just in a Pacific context but globally. Very few systems of government around the world can lay claim to a system of genuine gender parity. It will undoubtedly provide new opportunities for women to participate in political decision-making.

4.5 Political and electoral systems

4.5.1 Political culture in Bougainville and Solomon Islands

Many elements of politics in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands are similar and typical of the Pacific region. These include being intensely local and clientistic in nature, while lacking in strong party systems. The impact of these characteristics on women candidates is widely documented in the literature and covered generally in chapter two and with more specific detail in chapter three.

Elections in both territories have been mainly free of large scale violence since the end of the conflicts[24] with low level corruption in the form of vote buying and political gifting prevalent (Joint International Election Observer Group, 2015; Wiltshire, Batley, Ridolfi, & Rogers, 2019, pp. 1,11). A 2019 report from the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) found that violence against women during election time was a regular occurrence in Bougainville. Much of this was perpetrated by family members and connected to vote-buying behaviour:

> "There is an expectation that voters who pledge support to a certain candidate will receive financial benefits or greater services from the government following that candidate's election to parliament or local government. This culture of kickbacks creates incentive for clans and families to ally their votes and exercise control over each voter's choice to ensure victory for their chosen candidate and the benefits that accompany it. Many interviewees reported that if a husband finds out that his wife voted in a manner differently than he had instructed, there would be violence" (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2019, p. 21).

The barriers to women's participation may be shifting slowly over time and the various post conflict dynamics in Bougainville and Solomon Islands do seem to have impacted differently on the opportunities available to women candidates. This seems particularly salient when considering the narratives women's rights advocates have employed to justify their involvement in post conflict institutions. When discussing the avenues to

[24] The Solomon Islands saw riots in Honiara in April 2006 and again in April 2019 following national elections. Both saw looting and the riots in 2006 specifically saw significant damage to the Chinatown district and looting of Chinese owned businesses.

increasing the participation of women in formal politics, Julien Barbara commented on the importance of local narratives in the reform process:

> "Politics is often seen as a sort of aberration or some sort of external complicating factor, but really it's central to the whole reform process and arguably the reason why [the campaign for women's seats in] Bougainville has been successful. Presumably because the activists, they really engaged with the politics of reform and came up with reform approaches that were attuned to the dynamics on the ground there. And certainly when I was in Solomons, I think the issue [of women's political participation] was divorced partly from politics, and I'm not sure if that was because certainly from a donor perspective that was safe. Demanding elites implement a specific reform was not how RAMSI worked as a regional mission and partnership." – Julien Barbara, Interview, 2020.

A recurring theme from my research and interviews was the impact the Constituency Development Funds are having on political culture in the Solomon Islands. The distribution of the funds at the constituency level is at the discretion of the MP and the level of funding involved has increased dramatically since its introduction in 1992 (United Nations Development Programme, 2018, p. 23).

> "Taiwan came up with the idea back in 1993. They were the primary source of constituency development funds in the early years of the scheme. However, more recently, it has been the government's own revenue that has led to the rise of Constituency Funding. Up until recently, Taiwan was still contributing to the schemes. But I think it was a minor share – less than a quarter. So they're basically now taxpayer money. Sometimes Constituency Funds can be used quite well. They certainly are very popular amongst the MPs because they're a very useful political tool." – Terence Wood, Interview 2020.

One interviewee pointed out the potential wider negative impact of CDFs on the political culture of the Solomon Islands, particularly when considering reforms for equality or other high level policy initiatives:

> "One of the consequences I think about CDFs is that it weakens the overall capacity of the state. In this sense it adds to the weakness of any already weak state system. And so the potential for state led reform initiatives such as Temporary Special Measures is, I think, further complicated by the sort of dynamics created by measures like CDFs. They reaffirm the centrifugal nature of politics and everyone looking at their local constituencies rather than national nation-building projects." – Julien Barbara, Interview 2020.

A number of recent works have also highlighted the 'incumbent effect' of the CDFs, whereby incumbent candidates in recent elections have a much higher rate of being re-elected than was previously the case (see: Baker, 2019b; Barbara, 2019; Wiltshire et al., 2019; Wood, 2019a). The double impact of this for women candidates means that it may be harder for them to break into politics and fewer women are already incumbent.

> "If money wasn't given to MPs through the RCDF [CDFs] everyone would be on a level playing field. ... A lot of money will be spent by MPs, and that is a great obstacle to women candidates" (Women in politics advocate, Honiara in United Nations Development Programme, 2018, p. 24).

Increases to the costs of politics further disadvantages women candidates as they tend to have less access to financial resources to launch competitive campaigns. However, for the few women that do have access to significant resources the shift may act as a leveller, with money making up for previously held attitudes against women's participation:

> "It's kind of an equalizer in some ways. If you're a woman who does have money, maybe you have a better chance to get in now. Culture is less important now, because money is so important. That's bad for

> women because women tend to have less money, but women are disadvantaged under the cultural system as well. So at least this way if you have money, then you can play against the men. But if it's based solely on culture, then you've got no chance regardless." – Kerryn Baker, Interview, 2020.
>
> "Finance is the biggest barrier. Not necessarily culture." (Aspiring candidate and women's leader, Honiara, in United Nations Development Programme, 2018, p. 24).
>
> "People will waive culture and traditions if you have money." (Female candidate, Malaita, multiple elections, in United Nations Development Programme, 2018, p. 24).

While money politics in the form of vote-buying and political gifting is also widespread in Bougainville, the Autonomous Bougainville Government is severely underfunded from the Papua New Guinea Government (Personal Communication, Sue Ingram, August, 2020). It does not seem that constituency development funds are currently causing the same changes to political culture in Bougainville as in Solomon Islands.

> "There's no money in the ABG. The members of the ABG do get some equivalent of a CDF. But the women members find it particularly hard because the areas for their regional seats are much bigger [than the open seats] and they get the same amount of money as everyone else. They always feel like they are judged unfairly because they have to cover so much more than the other members." – Kerryn Baker, Interview 2020.

Neither case study has a culture of strong party politics. In the early days of the ABG there was genuine concern that the overt promotion of party politics could lead to political division and serve to provoke previous conflicts:

> "When the Bougainville Constitutional Commission consulted with the people of Bougainville with regard to political party registration being provided for in the Constitution, there was an overwhelming view of

> opposition to the establishment of political parties. We were further advised that one of the main reasons behind this view was that the Bougainville conflict had already caused much disunity and that people did not want political parties causing further disharmony during the first general election" (Commonwealth-Pacific Islands Forum Expert Team, 2005, p. 9).

However, a registration regime was introduced as per international convention (Kelly, 2010). There are currently five political parties registered for the 2020 elections in Bougainville (Masiu, 2020).

In Solomon Islands the Political Parties Integrity Act (PPIA) was passed in 2014. The act introduced more formalised party registration systems, with a view to encourage stronger party systems. In the 2019 elections there were 13 political parties, 163 candidates ran as independents, while 170 ran aligned with a political party (Freedom House, 2020; Wood, 2019c).

4.5.2 Voting methods in Bougainville and Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands has a unicameral parliament and employs a single member district plurality system (first past the post). There are 50 single member constituencies; each voter casts one vote and the candidate with the most votes wins.

After gaining independence in 1975, Papua New Guinea switched from a first past the post voting system to limited preferential voting; where each voter ranks the candidates according to preference, the system which is currently in use in Bougainville. This system does not seem to have provided gains for women's candidates in the Pacific, with some accounts suggesting it has increased incidences of vote buying (Baker, 2018d; Haley & Zubrinich, 2013).

There is a lot of literature on the participation of women in different electoral systems (Baker, 2018d; Jon Fraenkel, 2007; Kelly, 2010) with a general consensus being that women don't tend to perform well under the first past the post system (Baker, 2018d).

When questioned on whether a move to a preferential system, as was implemented in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, would benefit women candidates in Solomons, Baker was sceptical:

> "First past the post isn't great for women, but limited preferential voting (LPV) would be much worse. You see in Papua New Guinea how much it's increased money politics, and so, if women already can't afford to be competitive in Solomon Islands then introducing LPV is just going to make it much worse." – Kerryn Baker, Interview 2020.

The general consensus from the literature and the experts interviewed was that the best system for women is a proportional system, however this has proved problematic in small parliaments in the Pacific:

> "Sure, in theory a preferential is slightly better than first past the post but the only way to really get women in is a proportional system and we already know in the Pacific, Wallis and Futuna has a proportional system with no parties, and that doesn't work either. So tinkering with the electoral system isn't going to change anything for women." – Kerryn Baker, Interview 2020.

An example where the preferential voting system may have been at least partially responsible for the success of a woman candidate is the election of Josephine Getsi in the Piet seat in the last Bougainville Elections. Her success in this election made her the first woman to win one of the open seats in the ABG. Two male candidates were more popular than Getsi and received more first and second choice votes, however, they had effectively split the vote between them and neither of them had enough to win, Getsi received the most third place votes providing her the majority required (Baker & Oppermann, 2015b, p. 2).

4.6 Analysis and conclusions

This chapter has explored the barriers and opportunities created by the legal and institutional features of each case study. These are the features women candidates must navigate when attempting to participate in formal political decision-making in Solomon Islands and Bougainville.

The previous chapter established the limited roles women's groups were able to play in shaping the formal peace processes despite their extensive grassroots activism. It is perhaps not surprising then that neither peace agreement contained any gender-sensitive provisions. True and Riveros-Morales found that the 'democratisation of the peace process' – the inclusion of civil society was one of the most important factors in whether peace agreements would contain gender sensitive provisions, which in turn was found to influence indicators of gender equality in the post conflict period (2018). This reflects the situation in Solomon Islands where the failure of the Townsville Peace Agreement to provide any lasting peace has been credited with contributing to a culture of impunity about gender-based violence. Despite the focus of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the gendered impacts of the conflict, women were not well served by the institutional arrangements set up in the wake of the conflict. Compensation schemes have largely served political elites, former combatants and have been tarnished by allegations of corruption.

In Bougainville, the establishment of new post conflict institutions provided opportunities for women's advocates to cement political participation rights for women in the Constitution in the form of reserved seats. However, their inclusion in the Constitution is as a special interest group, there to represent the women of Bougainville rather than as equal representatives of all Bougainvilleans. While the reserved seats have been crucial in ensuring women have been continuously represented in the ABG since the end of the conflict, they are not without their problems: the large geographical area covered by each seat makes them expensive to campaign for and difficult for candidates to form deep relationships with constituents. As a result, the turnover rate for the women's seats is very high. Similarly, 15 years after the introduction of the reserved seats, the majority of

women candidates still run for them rather than for the open seats, effectively 'siloing' the majority of talented women candidates into competition with each other.

In contrast, in Solomon Islands no new constitution or governance arrangements were established after the conflict. The reasons for this are explored further in the next chapter. As a result, there were few opportunities available for women to improve the post conflict political structures to better enable their participation. Campaigns for some form of Temporary Special Measures for gender equality have been ongoing since the end of the conflict but have yet to see any success. The Political Parties Integrity Act 2014 was introduced with the intention of encouraging political parties to support women candidates, however, the incentives contained in the Act are weak, it doesn't provide any financial assistance to women candidates and there are no penalties for political parties who fail to comply. Furthermore, party politics is weak in Solomon Islands and party affiliation does not seem to help individual candidates.

In both case studies, local government looks to be the area most conducive to women's participation; in Bougainville the recent Local Government Act ensures gender parity. Women's groups in Solomons are optimistic that Temporary Special Measures will be introduced at the provincial level, although this has yet to be established.

Political culture for women candidates in both case studies is also similar – the absence of strong party politics and proportional representational systems are features that challenge women candidates in both places. The increasing impact of the constituency development funds in Solomon Islands is a feature of note, as one interviewee pointed out their use emphasises the clientistic nature of politics, which in turn disincentivises the consideration of high level policy making and political reform.

Although similar overall, there are nuances of the institutional and legal frameworks distinct to each case study, which have shaped the post conflict political environment for women. These have evolved over time and created different barriers and opportunities to women's political participation today. The next chapter goes on to assess the role of the international community and whether or not their involvement helped or hindered the

goals of local women's groups in seeking gender reforms in each conflict-affected case study.

Chapter five: Approaches to peacekeeping and the role of the international community

5.1 Introduction

In Tripp's case studies on post conflict African countries, she noted that changes in international gender norms coincided with increased international support for local women's organisations (2015). This chapter considers the role of the international community and the impact of international gender norms in conflict-affected Bougainville and Solomon Islands. It starts with a compare and contrast analysis of the two international peacekeeping missions and the dynamics of the conflicts they were responding to. In doing so, it considers how effective these approaches were at engaging with local women's groups and whether they created opportunities for women's rights advocates in Bougainville and Solomon Islands to advance an agenda of increased political participation for women.

The chapter then goes on to assess the impact that international gender norms had on gender equality campaigns at the local level. It explores the extent of the momentum and support generated by the international community on the back of the 1995 UN Women's conference, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Women Peace and Security Agenda assisted in the advancement of the aims and goals of domestic women's groups.

5.2 Contrasting approaches to peacekeeping in Solomon Islands and Bougainville

Much has been written on the different approaches taken by the international peacekeeping interventions in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands (Allen & Dinnen, 2016; Braithwaite, Charlesworth, Reddy, & Dunn, 2010b; Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a; George, 2018b; Regan, 2010). The two interventions are often summarised as a light touch locally-led intervention in the case of Bougainville, contrasted with a top-down state-building intervention focused on restoring law and order in the case of the

Solomon Islands. While, broadly speaking, this summary is correct, there are important nuances of each with relevance to the political environment they created and responded to, especially when considering the opportunities for egalitarian disruptions and changes in political power dynamics for women to occur.

5.2.1 The International Peacekeeping Mission to Bougainville

The conflict in Bougainville caused deep division between the groups aligned with the different warring factions. The conflict had been ongoing for almost 10 years by the time the internationally supported peacekeeping mission began:

> "My sense was that there was a real sense of exhaustion on all sides that, you know, everyone had fought each other to a standstill. They could keep on doing that almost indefinitely if they wanted to, but that wasn't actually going to solve the problem, so you had to think creatively beyond that. You know, because there were certainly still groups in Bougainville that felt that their interests were very closely tied up to staying part of Papua New Guinea." – James Batley, Interview 2020.

The formal peace processes in Bougainville is generally considered to have begun in mid-1997 with a small United Nations observer mission and regional powers (Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) playing a significant role until 2005 when the UN mission left Bougainville (Regan, 2010, p. 28). Dialogue-building initiatives beginning in 1995, which were led by Bougainville leaders and facilitated by the Australian Government, formed the foundations for the formal peace processes (these, in turn, building off earlier local efforts undertaken since 1989). The Bougainville peace process has been deemed 'remarkably successful' given the long and deeply divisive conflict it emerged from (Regan, 2010, p. 1; Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a). The international community's role in Bougainville was 'light touch', ensuring local control and ownership over the process was considered necessary for the intervention to be

sustainable long-term. The UN observer mission and regional powers played a supporting and monitoring role rather than a facilitating role.

> "The UN mission had the lightest of footprints, it was run through the UN Department of Political Affairs. […] Bougainville, of course, is a territory within a sovereign state and that made the nature of engagement complicated. So the UN's role in Bougainville was delicate and it was an arrangement that the government of PNG had to agree to." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

In his 2010 analysis, Regan described the mission as "the archetypal 'light footprint' intervention, which policymakers, practitioners, and students generally acknowledge should be the model perused by all interventions" (Regan, 2010, p. 2). When comparing the missions in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, Allen and Dineen described Bougainville as:

> "An example of a very different approach to international assistance entailing a light intervention that was conducive to an accommodation between local and liberal institutional agenda. This has given rise to a post-conflict settlement that has been widely referenced as a rare example of a successful 'local-liberal hybrid'" (Allen & Dinnen, 2016, p. 7).

The success of the formal peace processes was built on a range of localised reconciliation and dialogue-building efforts beginning before an international mission arrived and continuing throughout (Regan, 2010). The Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) was established in November 1997 as an unarmed regional body to monitor the ceasefire ("Cairns Commitment On Implementation of the Agreement Concerning the Neutral Regional Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) For Bougainville," 1997). The TMG became the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) in early 1998, a United Nations observer mission was established in August 1998, and the Bougainville Reconciliation Government was developed to bring together divided Bougainville factions to reach a political agreement with Papua New Guinea (Regan, 2010, p. 44).

The official mandates of the TMG and PMG included the monitoring of the truce and ceasefire, the investigation and reporting of alleged breaches as well as keeping the community informed about the peace processes (Governments of Australia Papua New Guinea Fiji New Zealand and Vanuatu, 1997). The PMG was led by Australia and operated until mid-2003. At its largest it involved over 300 personnel, men and women, from different institutions from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu.

> "The Group's personnel were drawn from Pacific states. They were a mix of civilians drawn from foreign affairs and aid ministries and military personnel who, importantly, were unarmed while serving in the Group. A number of women took up these monitoring positions."– Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

By contrast the UN office was small, consisting of six UN personnel (only three in monitoring positions) and a handful of locally engaged staff. Its mandate was to monitor the ceasefire and chair the Peace Process Consultative Committee (PPCC). The PPCC was a mechanism for the discussion of the peace processes and included a UN representative, representatives for parties to the conflict and observers from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu (Regan, 2010).

5.2.2 The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI)

The Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) entered the Solomon Islands in 2003 and its last personnel left in 2017. Conceived in the post 9/11 world, RAMSI came to be in a 'state building moment'. Its focus was to restore law and order and strengthen the governance institutions that had been on a steady decline since independence in 1978 but were rendered close to collapse by the end of the conflict (Allen & Dinnen, 2016; Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a).

> "There were two things that Prime Minister Kemakeza sought in requesting assistance for Solomon Islands. One was the restoration of security, physical security and the other was fiscal stabilisation because

> the Treasury had been absolutely bleeding money more or less at gunpoint. There was no revenue and effectively government could not function." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

This security focus led to RAMSI adopting a heavy police and military response to the conflict. Referred to initially as a "muscular law enforcement approach" rather than the Western community policy approach or the *kiap* model, which combined policing with other government functions and have previously been used in Melanesia (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 49).

> "RAMSI was regarded as a police-led operation. The characterisation of the instability in Solomon Islands was that it was criminal conduct they were dealing with, not armed rebels with a political cause. So that affected the way that RAMSI operated." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

After multiple requests by Prime Minister Kemakeza, RAMSI was established by the Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003 and mobilised under the Biketawa Declaration on Mutual Assistance of 2000. Led by Australia in cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum (whose member states also contributed to the mission) RAMSI had a wide mandate organised around three pillars of economic governance, machinery of government and law and justice (Allen & Dinnen, 2016).

> "RAMSI was set up at the request of Prime Minister Kemakeza of Solomon Islands. That was a direct approach to the Australian prime minister. In just a matter of weeks, it was brought under the Pacific Island Forum, using the Biketawa declaration as the framework agreement that would facilitate the intervention in Solomon Islands." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

It is important to note that RAMSI did not see itself as a force to reimagine a new Solomon Islands in the wake of the conflict but to restore and strengthen the existing state (Allen & Dinnen, 2016; Barbara, 2019). As discussed in chapter four, new constitutional arrangements were not established after the conflict. This contrasts the situation in

Bougainville, where an important element for some factions in the conflict was a separatist agenda and new autonomous government institutions and a constitution were developed. This distinction was summarised by interviewee James Batley who served as the head of the RAMSI mission from 2004 to 2006 and as a member of the Bougainville Truce Monitoring Group and Peace Monitoring Group:

> "The two interventions were obviously very different. The Bougainville one was explicitly designed to support a peace process by being present as a neutral external witness. It was a confidence-building exercise. Ultimately, it didn't take sides, it didn't have executive functions and it didn't have a mediator function either. It was just there to provide a presence. Whereas RAMSI had a very different objective, which was a state-building objective; essential services; and law and order. The line that we always took was, 'we're not here to resolve this ethnic tension. We are here to provide an environment in which you can resolve this tension, we don't understand the depths of this conflict and we're not experts in Solomon Islands culture, but what we can help to provide is a functional government and a safe law and order situation" – James Batley, Interview, 2020.

5.2.3 Conflict dynamics and responses of each mission

The interventions responded to distinct dynamics and conflicts that had reached different stages. Interviewees pointed out that while the Bougainville intervention was bought in to monitor and oversee a locally-led peace processes, the peace processes in Solomon Islands that had occurred before RAMSI arrived was at a less robust point in comparison:

> "[In Bougainville] people on both sides saw it in their interests to find a way forward and that wasn't really the case in Solomons. It just hadn't gotten to the same point in Solomon Islands. […] The Townsville agreement was not a robust agreement. Indeed, there were Solomon

> islanders who would say to you 'RAMSI came in too early. We didn't hit rock bottom" – James Batley, Interview, 2020.

The law and order elements of RAMSI have been generally considered a success and, despite some of the criticisms that this and the subsequent chapter will go on to discuss, it is important to note that 90 percent of Solomon Islanders in 2007 and 89 percent in 2008 supported the ongoing presence of RAMSI, which stopped violence and restored order and public safety (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 135). Instigators of the conflict were arrested and tried and from this perspective the continuation of the failed peace process may have become superfluous, those considered to have caused the conflict were no longer in positions of power:

> "The people that were perceived to have caused the problem, or a lot of them, were arrested and tried and some of them ended up in prison. […] There was a sense in which that whole [peace] agenda fell by the wayside. The idea that there was still a peace process to pursue kind of drifted off. Our view was that 'if you want to do it, we can't do it for you.' […] That was their agenda. Our agenda was building the state. If there was a peace process going on, we were happy to have open dialogue and help with facilitation, but not to run it and not to take responsibility for it" – James Batley, Interview 2020.

> "It wasn't in RAMSI's charter to form any kind of political settlement. What RAMSI was tasked to do by the government of Solomon Islands, was just to get the show back on the road by establishing security again, stabilising the fiscal situation and getting the machinery of government working a bit better. None of that involved a political settlement as such. It was a return to normalcy rather than a new accord of any kind. So a very different environment to Bougainville." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

In RAMSI's first year, 3,730 weapons and 300,000 rounds of ammunition were confiscated or surrendered and in the first three years, 6,300 Solomon Islanders were

arrested (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 50; Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2013, p. 14). The effectiveness of this law and approach was widely welcomed by Solomon Islander populations who were exhausted by years of violence. However, in the years since the mission was established, it has been criticised for failing to create an enabling environment for an inclusive political settlement and failing to engage locally-led narratives and identities in re-establishing the post-conflict state (Allen & Dinnen, 2016; Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a; George, 2018c). The 2009 National Peace Council and Parliamentary Inquiry into RAMSI revealed a failure to support grassroots conflict prevention at the village level and that this was the form of justice most highly valued by Solomon Islanders (Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2009). The 2007 and 2008 People's surveys showed 93 percent and 84 percent of respondents favoured dispute resolution processes taking place in their own communities via customary laws and the church over other forms of justice (Parliament of Solomon Islands, 2009; The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2008, 2009).

Local women's civil society groups in Solomon Islands also criticised this state-building approach for not providing them with opportunities to facilitate peace and reconciliation processes within a locally led framework and in ways that meet cultural expectations of communities and adequately deal with trauma (George, 2018c, p. 3).

> "After the war, in 2007, a reconciliation ceremony was organized by the Ministry of National Unity, Peace and Reconciliation at Peochakuri village, South Guadalcanal. I was also at the ceremony, not as an official, but as a citizen of that particular constituency and as a gender advocate. Women were not participating in the event, nor were they recognized in the official program. They had no opportunity to express their emotional feelings to their government, as the prime minister was the guest of honour. Women's participation was confined to delivering traditional garlands to the official guests, and, as they were dressed in their traditional costumes, they did so while half naked. My question at

> the time was: is that the only strength that women have?" (Betty Lina Gigisi, in Gigisi, 2017, p. 294).

RAMSI has also been criticised for not fostering wider civil society engagement (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 146; George, 2018b). Interviewees indicated that this was not necessarily considered RAMSI's mandate:

> "When RAMSI first got there – and this was still going when I arrived a year later – there was a broad consultative committee, chaired by the National Peace Council and it brought in various civil society groups. But it was really dying for lack of interest, to be honest. There didn't seem to be the sort of engagement or urgency on the part of civil society to say, 'right, this is what we need to be doing.' To be fair, it's possible that RAMSI was not particularly inviting here. But I think RAMSI had a very strong sense of being a state-building organisation and its primary relationship was with the Solomon Islands Government and that's what it had to get right." – James Batley, Interview 2020.

RAMSI evolved and adapted to the criticism it received and with time the mission focused heavily on opening up new opportunities for women's involvement in security forces, particularly in the police and in the public sector (Allen & Dinnen, 2016; George, 2018c). As at 2015, the number of female officers RAMSI recruited had doubled since 2003 to reach 16 percent and a new national policy on gender and security was developed (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017; Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2015). In his 2010 book, Braithwaite lists many other instances the RAMSI mission evolved over time in response to local voices (see Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a, p. 157).

While RAMSI adapted to include women into its security-focused narrative, this did not necessarily tap into the customary roles of women in conflict resolution or reshape politics in a way for more inclusive participation in the formal processes (John Roughan, 2006). Two events reoccurred in the literature as examples of the failure of RAMSI to centralise women's roles in the peacekeeping process. The first was during the Chinatown

riots in 2006, where former MP and National Peace Council member Hilda Kari was unable to convince RAMSI personnel to let her address the crowds in an effort to deescalate the situation in accordance with the roles women elders play in customary processes and the reconsolidation of order:

> "She tried in vain to convince RAMSI security force personnel that if she could address the crowd she could take the heat out of the situation. On the grounds that her safety could not be guaranteed, and in line with the 'security first' ethos of the mission, her request was refused." (George, 2018b, p. 1341).

The second is the role of the mediation activities undertaken by nuns drawing on both customary and religious beliefs to deescalate the situation with warlord and peace spoiler Harold Keke. The local nuns convinced Keke that he must 'lead his followers to peace' before he turned himself into the authorities, however, according to George the RAMSI narrative of Keke's arrest overlooks these mediations in favour of the activities and negotiations of the mission (2018b, p. 1339).

The peace processes in Bougainville are generally considered to have been more inclusive of women and civil society voices than those in Solomon Islands. The peacekeeping activities of local women's groups were widely celebrated and women delegates were included at some of the major peace talks held in New Zealand. However, women in Bougainville were still excluded from many of the major formal negotiations. Regan (2010) notes that a major factor preventing women's advocates from being more involved in the later negotiations and formal processes was the contention from the male leadership figures in the Bougainville factions that once the fighting was concluded women could go back to their customary roles, leaving men to resolve the political decision-making (p. 139). Interviewees noted that as the peace processes progressed and became more formal, they also became less inclusive of women.

> "In Bougainville, there was a political settlement and a very developed process to reach that point. That process occurred over years but became progressively less inclusive of women. There were attempts to

> reach a settlement going back as early as 1994. Those early attempts were very much driven by women under the auspices of the church. Women were there as important players and attempting to find a rapprochement between the fighting elements. But as the peace process was progressively formalised through the succession of negotiations, the role of women and civil society became less prominent." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.
>
> "Women were just more marginalised in the Solomon Islands peace process but that's not to say that in Bougainville it was great. Women were still marginalised there and they still had to fight pretty hard to get any kind of say in the peace process. There were a lot of the formal peace processes where women weren't invited at all or they were invited but they weren't expected to actively contribute" – Kerryn Baker, Interview 2020.

5.3 International context and the women peace and security agenda

Investigating the extent to which international actors played a role in the support and development of women's political participation in the post-conflict period has been the most challenging element of research in this thesis. The influence of the international gender norms being championed at the time in the way the international community sought to engage in both states in the conflict and post-conflict period is evident; RAMSI sought to increase the numbers of women in the security services and the intervention in Bougainville sought to recognise local customary authority and the role of women peacekeepers.

Yet the relationship between the international community and the gendered outcomes that eventuated (or failed to eventuate) in both case studies is difficult to ascertain. It is not possible to say whether gender norms weren't enough of a priority at the specific points in time for the international actors involved, and to what degree international agendas complemented or hindered the goals and activities of local women's groups. Similarly, in

some cases local attitudes and customs frustrated women's political participation while in other cases they enabled it (Regan, 2010).

Some accounts claim that women's peacekeeping activities in both contexts (but especially Bougainville) have become idealised because international actors with a liberal perspective sought out that narrative and prioritised it, and this provided local women's groups with an opening and resources to embed it in post-conflict structures:

> "This is going to sound a bit heretical, but I think the role of women in the Bougainville peace process has been mythologised. I don't think it was as prominent and decisive as it's been made out to be. But I think women's groups have been able to build on that mythology to the point of embedding it in political structures in post-conflict Bougainville" – James Batley, Interview, 2020.

Others have claimed that the activities and goals of women's advocates were failed by systems that could not conceive of centring women's experiences and rights (Alice A. Pollard, 2000; George, 2018b).

> "While there is political support for the efforts of women, this has not been translated into practical action to allow for their participation, which partially results from the stereotyping of men and women and the lack of acceptance of all people and their contribution towards peace being equally deserving" (Alice A. Pollard, 2000, p. 45).

> "Women's important historical role in peacebuilding remained unrecognised because it was not enshrined in formal institutions recognised by ethnocentric liberal feminist perspectives adopted by RAMSI. RAMSI activities served to weaken the role of custom practice in peace building, and in doing so, negatively impacted on women's role in peace building activities such as counselling, improving relationships between former enemies, healing, promoting peace

> awareness, praying for peace, and in some cases, mediating between militants." (Rowland, 2016, p. 28).

Either way, the relationship between the international community, local women's movements and the gendered outcomes for women's political participation is difficult to determine within the perimeters of this research.

In trying to understand the relationship between the international and the national, recounting the wider international context is useful. Both missions came about at the end of the 1990s, a decade that saw changes in international gender norms and various milestones for international jurisprudence pertaining to gender equality. The UN Conference on Women in Beijing was held in 1995, then the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women in peacekeeping came about in 2000 – after international actors entered Bougainville but before RAMSI was established in Solomon Islands. The enactment of this resolution reflected, and was responding to, increased awareness in the international community about the importance of involving women in peace and security processes. Despite the proliferation of these international gender norms it is also relevant that RAMSI was conceptualised in a 'post-9/11 terrorism-orientated world'. Indeed, earlier requests for assistance from the Solomon Islands government beginning in 1988 were turned down by Australia (Braithwaite, Dinnen, et al., 2010a). Of RAMSI's origins, Allen and Dinnen (2016) say:

> "The intervention's narrow focus on state building had its genesis in the strategic framing of state failure and the compelling security imperative that emerged in the wake of the events of 9-11, 2001. This larger framing also lies behind the limited interest, at least in the early phases of the mission, in engaging with non-state institutions and alternative forms of institutional development" (p. 7).

While RAMSI's focus did eventually turn to supporting gender equality in post-conflict Solomon Islands, it does not seem to have been a core priority in the original design of the mission. Interviews confirmed that at least for the Machinery of Government pillar of

RAMSI the focus on women in governance developed to become a more central concern around 2006.

> "To me, the position of women in governance in Solomon Islands was absolutely critical. Towards the end of my time in Solomon Islands, I organised a diagnostic on women in governance to build a component of the machinery of government pillar progressively around women in governance." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

The women's rights narratives that were successful in ensuring substantive outcomes for women's participation in the peace processes and in political structures in Bougainville were locally based and drew on customary and matrilineal traditions. They were not centred around international or 'Western' narratives of women's liberation, even if their end goals were the same. Despite the importance of the principles contained in the Beijing platform for action and UNSCR 1325 for the international community at the time, neither peace agreement contained substantive refences for gender quotas or mention of violence against women and girls. Women's active involvement in formal peace negotiations were highly limited (Bougainville) or non-existent (Solomon Islands). From this perspective, it seems as if international gender norms failed to substantively influence the formal peace process in either case study. As one interviewee noted, the more formalised the peace process became in either case study the more women were excluded:

> "In a conflict setting, one of the issues that always arises when a peacebuilding process proceeds a formalised political settlement is that because it's a conflict, there are fighters, and there is a natural tendency for those processes to engage with the fighters. When you have a UN peacekeeping mission or some other mission with a military contingent within it, the people with a military background are going to look for the people with weapons and engage with them. So, women in civil society more broadly, tend to be pushed to the margins in those processes." – Sue Ingram, Interview 2020.

However, the absence of explicit mention of these international gender norms does not mean that the international community was not influential in its support for domestic women's groups. An influx of international aid occurred in both case studies and domestic women's groups benefited from this rise in support and resources (Asian Development Bank, 2017; Kirkham et al., 2018). Women's groups in Bougainville received support from international organisations to attend the Beijing Women's conference, providing an opportunity for some of the women's rights activists to emerge as international leaders on women's peacebuilding and to draw attention to the situation at home (Kirkham et al., 2018).

On local application of the Women Peace and Security Agenda, George notes that women in Bougainville have 'translated' the provisions of the WPS in ways that fit within locally defined parameters to prevent 'gender-restrictive backlash.' She says, "This does not mean that the WPS agenda is emptied of utility. Local women activists describe the WPS agenda, at least in abstract terms as something 'very precious' in their campaigns to challenge the gendered terms of Bougainville's transition to peace" (2019, p. 483). Examples of this include The National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security, which was developed in 2015, although work on it stalled after the responsible Minister failed to regain her seat in the 2015 election. In 2016, a policy on Gender Equality, Peace and Security was released by the Department for Community Development and Women's Affairs. George describes this as providing detailed analysis of where and how women's access to public decision-making, education and economic participation has been disadvantaged (George, 2019, p. 484). However, without adequate resourcing it is likely that the realisation of the WPS agenda in Bougainville will continue to rely on the limited resources of local women's groups and advocates (George, 2019).

In the Solomon Islands, the WPS Agenda was captured explicitly by the Nation Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017). The plan is the first of its kind in the Pacific, and it supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations on gender equality. However, it is not clear how well resourced the plan's implementation has been to date.

Regional bodies in the Pacific continue to support the work of local women's groups in the realisation and implementation of the WPS agenda. The Women Peace and Security Summit for the Pacific, held in Apia in August 2019, sought to conceptualise new Pacific solutions for the WPS agenda. The Summit explicitly recognised the role of traditional village systems and customs in engaging with the community, and that this, in turn, advances the role of women and a WPS agenda (Governments of Samoa and New Zealand, 2019). Enacted in September 2018 by the Pacific Island Forum, the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional Security recognises an expanded definition of security to include human security. This recognises gender-based violence (among other things) as a threat to human security, allowing for increased regional cooperation on gender and security issues (Pacific Islands Forum, 2018).

5.4 Analysis and conclusions

It seems that local women's groups were more easily able to participate in the peace processes when the role of customary structures, civil society and the Church were recognised in the peacebuilding processes, as was the case in Bougainville. However, the level of transformative participation women had in the formal negotiations was still limited and their involvement was largely constrained within feminised parameters, which were dependent on their roles as mothers and carers rather than as political stakeholders in their own right.

A vital distinction between each case study regarding the subsequent opportunities for women's groups is how the conflict came to an end. The emergence of a locally established peace process in Bougainville allowed more opportunities than the absence of one in Solomon Islands. In both case studies, the international community was supportive of improving gender equality, yet the systems implemented were deeply masculine at their core and did not prove to be a transformative space for women's participation. Tripp noted a similar point in her studies on conflicts in African countries, she found that the civil wars that ended in peace agreements had a higher chance of

creating opportunities for women's advocates to subsequently introduce gender reforms, this was higher still if women participated in the peace negotiations (2015, p. 146).

The conclusion of the conflict in the Solomon Islands bears some similarities to Bell and Pospisil's theory of 'formalised political unsettlement' discussed earlier in the literature – where the causes of original conflict are not resolved but 'contained' in legal instruments that form the basis for further negotiation (Bell & Pospisil, 2017). The 'political unsettlement' then prioritises elite inclusion over broader social and societal inclusion, as was the case with the 'Militants Charter' as the Townsville Peace Agreement was known. It was perhaps then not surprising that this agreement quickly fell apart and RAMSI was bought in to stop further violence.

The international mission in Solomon Islands was tasked with restoring order and strengthening the political systems that existed before the conflict, as such, there was little scope or support for women's advocates to introduce wider reforms to women's political participation. This is not to discount the importance of RAMSI's subsequent focus on gender equality; the inclusion of women into the security forces and support for the development of policy and legislation seeking to improve gender equality are important achievements in themselves. Yet neither have given women improved access to political decision-making spaces in post-conflict Solomon Islands.

In Tripp's case studies on post conflict African countries, she noted that changes in international gender norms coincided with increased international support for local women's organisations (2015). The interplay between the women's movements and the international community in both case studies in this thesis has been difficult to ascertain within the methods available. While international gender norms and instruments have been embraced by women's groups at the local level and cited as influential and important at the international level, their substantive impact has been more nuanced.

The final chapter in this thesis sees the analysis of the last three chapters tied together to answer my two research questions.

Chapter six: Discussion and conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This thesis has set out to explore the impact of two Pacific conflicts on the participation of women in formal politics in the post conflict periods. The disproportionate impacts of violence and insecurity on women and girls from wars the world over is well documented. The conflicts in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands have not been different in that regard (Sirivi & Havini, 2004; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012a, 2012b; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012). However, Tripp's analysis found that with certain conditions violent conflict can sometimes provide opportunities to reform gender relations (2015, p. 4). This thesis has sought to explore the conditions created by each conflict to better understand if, and if so to what extent, opportunities for gender reform have arisen out of these civil conflicts in the Pacific.

The last three chapters have explored the extent to which women's advocates have been able to advance reforms to parliamentary and political structures allowing for the increased participation of women. To do this it has considered various elements of each case study identified as important in the literature. This has included; the role of women's groups and women MPs at different phases of the conflicts, the constitutional and governance arrangements and the role of the international community. This chapter sees the analysis from the last three chapters tied together to answer my two research questions:

1. In what ways did each conflict create opportunities for women's groups to expand roles in conflict resolution and peacekeeping and push for reforms to increase the participation of women in political institutions?
2. What enabling and constraining factors have influenced women's participation in formal political institutions in conflict-affected Bougainville and the Solomon Islands?

6.2 Reforms to increase the participation of women

Question One: In what ways did each conflict create opportunities for women's groups to expand roles in conflict resolution and peacekeeping and push for reforms to increase the participation of women in political institutions?

This section considers the research findings and analysis presented in the last three chapters to answer this question. The next section goes on to consider a more granular view of how the various features of the post-conflict environment have developed to enable or constrain women's political participation in formal institutions.

Although the conflicts occurred at a similar time period and on neighbouring islands, they were very different from start to finish. These differences are significant when comparing the opportunities for women's groups to take advantage of disruptions to the status quo and initiate structural reforms for gender equality.

The conflict in the Solomon Islands didn't lead to the same disruptions to the status quo as the conflict in Bougainville. This was due to numerous interlinking issues but can most significantly be attributed to two factors: the lack of an effective internal peace process in the Solomon Islands and the mandate of the international peacekeeping intervention to restore and strengthen the pre-conflict governance arrangements, rather than looking to reform that ex ante status quo. These two factors meant that women's groups were not able to use the peace process as a platform to advance their political participation. Instead, the restoration and strengthening of pre-conflict governance structures led largely to a return to the pre-conflict political environment. This afforded few openings for women's advocates to push for new governance arrangements that could enable the increased participation of women.

In contrast, the conflict in Bougainville was largely resolved through internal peace processes, even though it lasted much longer and. Although international actors did have an important role, the ceasefires and the peace process emerged mainly through local processes. This resulted in the development of a completely new constitution and new

governance institutions, providing women's advocates with opportunities to codify their participation in these new structures.

However, the locally-led peace process in itself wasn't necessarily conducive to women's participation in the case of Bougainville. All accounts of the peace processes show women had to constantly justify their right to be included and were often invited to negotiations or meetings but not expected to contribute or participate in any substantive way (Garasu, 2002; R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2003). This demonstrates that despite their recognition as active participants in ending the conflict, they were not considered central stakeholders in Bougainville's political future by those in power. This reflects consensus in the literature, that peace processes the world over are considered to be the purview of armed men and militants rather than the stakeholders in the conflict – civilian women, girls boys and men (True, 2018, p. 25).

In both contexts, these gendered conceptions surrounding war and peace meant that men were framed as the central figures in the resolution of conflicts, by virtue of their roles as perpetrators and combatants. In contrast, women's peacebuilding actions were considered tangential to formal processes and arising out of their status as mothers and carers rather than as a form of political leadership. The focus then became what women could offer as inherently peaceable actors, rather than on their right to participate equally in the peacekeeping and political settlement processes that would determine their futures.

RAMSI's 'security first' approach has been widely criticised for initially failing to establish culturally appropriate reconciliation processes and ensure that the concerns from women's and civil society groups were embedded into post-conflict reforms. While these criticisms may be justified, they should be considered alongside the wider dynamics of the conflict, particularly that an authentic peace agreement hadn't emerged internally nor had genuine calls to redesign political structures.

It seems fair to summarise that neither peacekeeping approaches provided a transformative space for change to post-conflict gender relations. However, more opportunities arose from the peace process and subsequent interventions in Bougainville than in Solomon Islands. Women's advocates in Bougainville strategically built on these,

creating a chain of reforms extending to the 2016 amendments to the community governance structures. Given the result of the recent (2019 independence) referendum, women's advocates may continue to build on these reforms if Bougainville does achieve independence from Papua New Guinea.

Women's advocates in Bougainville used each new reform opportunity to build on the last. Women's peacebuilding activities during the conflict justified their demands to be included in the formal negotiations. This allowed the appointment of three women's representatives on the Bougainville Constitutional Commission which, in turn, was key to ensuring that women's reserved seats and an executive position would be codified in the Constitution and subsequently included in the Autonomous Bougainville Government (Baker, 2019a). Once this was achieved, women's participation was better embedded in political structures, which was influential when the community governance systems came up for review, resulting in a new structure that requires 50 percent of elected positions in local government to be held by women ((ABG), 2016). However, the presence of women in the formal peace negotiations didn't lead to agreements that prioritised women's concerns beyond the bare minimum of participation. Whilst women were acknowledged explicitly in the Bougainville Peace Agreement and in the Constitution, the language in both prescribes a narrow definition of women as representatives for women as a special interest group, rather than for the citizens of Bougainville more broadly.

Conversely, in Solomon Islands, a similar chain of reforms never got off the ground. Whilst women's informal peacebuilding activities have been widely acknowledged as important in developing dialogue and finding common ground between the parties to the conflict, formal peace processes completely excluded women's advocates or any other civil society groups. The Townsville Peace Agreement failed to create any lasting peace. After RAMSI's arrival, politics returned more or less to the sphere of the pre-conflict political structures, which had never been conducive to women's participation. While a constitutional reform process was eventually started in 2007, significantly after the end of the conflict, 13 years later it is yet to be completed. As such, this constitutional reform process does not look like a realistic avenue of change for increasing women's political

participation. None of the experts interviewed for this thesis were optimistic about a new constitution or federal governance system being enacted. Efforts to introduce Temporary Special Measures for women's participation at the national parliament continue to be ongoing, but 17 years after the end of the conflict they have still not had any success.

Throughout the conflict, Hilda Kari was the only sitting woman MP in the Solomon Islands parliament until she lost her seat in 2001. After Kari, there were no women MPs until 2012. Bougainville, on the other hand, had more women in provincial government positions during the conflict years, this included one woman on the Bougainville Transitional Government from 1995. The Bougainville People's Congress established in 1999 included six women (out of 106) and the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government, established to serve in consultation with the Bougainville People's Congress, had four women. Although Bougainville had more women in government throughout the phase of peace negotiations they never numbered more than a small minority and no woman MP ever represented Bougainville in the PNG National Parliament. However, reports show Agnes Titus first raised the issue of introducing women's reserved seats in 1998 when she was the only woman member of the Transitional Government (Baker, 2019a). A pared-back version of her proposal was eventually included in the 2004 Constitution, demonstrating the impact that even low rates of women's participation in formal political structures was able to achieve.

In both case studies, women's groups existed before the conflicts, but the conflict-era saw the emergence of stronger and more unified women's movements. With them came increased demands for gender-equality. For many women's rights activists, the conflict sparked their activism (Kirkham et al., 2018). In both case studies, women's peacebuilding activities sought to unify across factions, geography and language groups. In many cases, the conflict pushed women into more 'masculine' roles. Women's market activities across the conflict-era blockades often made women the household breadwinners and women took up advocacy activities in public spaces previously dominated by men. It has been argued that the conflict may have played a role in

reigniting connections to traditional matrilineal culture in Bougainville that were devalued somewhat during colonisation (R. V. Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, p. 4).

Women's roles as mothers and wives, matrilineal customs, the strong influence of Christianity and the organising power of the Church have all been cited as sources of strength and influence by women who were instrumental in building peace at the grass-roots level in both case studies. These factors provided women with space to exercise power and leadership and saw their bottom-up organising accepted by the wider community (George, 2016b; R. Saovana-Spriggs, 2003; Sirivi & Havini, 2004). In Bougainville, narratives around the island's matrilineal traditions and the role of women as 'mothers of the land' became a particularly effective vehicle for change. This was one which women's activists used to justify their rights to participate in the formal peace processes and in the governance structures formed in the wake of the conflict. This narrative was able to tap into a national identity of Bougainvilleans as distinct from Papua New Guinea and frame the argument for women's rights to increased political participation as something homegrown and uniquely Bougainvillean. However, as demonstrated in the next section, while this narrative has been empowering for women in Bougainville at one level, it may have constrained their actions at another. Despite their celebrated activism, women in both case studies struggle to be elected in post-conflict politics.

To answer this research question, the disruption created by the conflict in Bougainville provided women's groups opportunities to push for increased participation in post-conflict governance structures. Although they were afforded few opportunities to participate meaningfully in the formal peace processes, they had more success in influencing the post-conflict governance structures to create pathways for women's increased participation in subsequent formal political structures. This has included the Bougainville Constitutional Commission, the Constitution and the three reserved seats in the ABG and more recently gender parity in local governments. However, as discussed in the next question, numerous factors have meant that those pathways have not gone on to increase the numbers of women MPs in the ABG to the extent that many hoped for. In

Solomon Islands, the conflict didn't provide the same opportunities as in Bougainville for women's groups to push for reforms towards the increased participation of women in political institutions. This is largely due to the lack of a genuine and lasting peace process, without which opportunities for an inclusive political settlement didn't arise, as well as an international intervention that explicitly sought to restore the status quo rather than reform governance structures.

6.3 Enabling and constraining factors

Question two: What enabling and constraining factors have influenced women's participation in formal political institutions in conflict-affected Bougainville and the Solomon Islands?

As established in the analysis on the previous question, the dynamics and features of each conflict and the resulting peace processes meant that many of the windows of opportunity for change that occurred in Bougainville did not materialise in Solomon Islands. Therefore, women's rights advocates in the Solomon Islands were not able to introduce the same structural reforms to increase women's political participation. However, the reforms that were achieved in Bougainville have not gone on to bring about transformative change to women's political participation in the Autonomous Bougainville Government (although recent reforms at the local level have been more impressive). 15 years after the first post-conflict elections women still only make up 10 percent of MPs in the Autonomous Bougainville Government compared to six percent of members in the Solomon Islands National Parliament. This section will go on to consider the important features of each post-conflict case study and how they operate to enable or constrain women's political participation in formal politics.

The political environment for women is broadly similar in both case studies. Women candidates in both case studies complain of similar challenges and candidates approach campaigning in similar ways. The introduction of the reserved seats in Bougainville was a major win for women's rights advocates emerging from the post-conflict period. Women's involvement in the post-conflict reforms meant that three elected seats in the

Autonomous Bougainville Government and one executive position are reserved for women. This has ensured that at least three women have been in parliament continuously since the first elections of the Autonomous Bougainville Government in 2005.

While undoubtedly an enabling factor for women's formal political participation in Bougainville, a troubling narrative has emerged where the existence of the reserved seats is commonly used to dissuade women from running for the open seats. Since the introduction of the reserved seats, only one woman has been successful in winning an open seat and the presence of women in the reserved seats in the ABG does not seem to have made women more electable generally. To date, none of the Bougainville seats in the Papua New Guinea parliament have been held by a woman. While having the women's reserved seats is arguably preferable to the alternative of not having any women in parliament, they have not set the stage for women to be elected in larger numbers as many had hoped, and at least for the elections to the Autonomous Bougainville Government they now seem to act as a ceiling rather than a foundation.

In comparison, the lack of constitutional reforms undertaken in the immediate post-conflict period in Solomon Islands has meant that women's groups are still pushing for Temporary Special Measures for women's participation to be passed 17 years after RAMSI's arrival and the end of the conflict. The lack of Temporary Special Measures has no doubt constrained women's participation in the political sphere; there were no women MPs in the national parliament from 2001 to 2012. Nonetheless, there are now three women MPs in the national parliament, making up six percent of total members. The experts interviewed were reluctant to conclude that current representation rates were part of a broader trend and noted that the strategies employed by the current women MPs are not accessible for the average aspiring candidate. Various experts highlighted that the successful women MPs are either very wealthy or are married to a successful male MP and have taken over his seat.

The lack of multi-party politics and absence of proportional electoral systems are features that have become apparent in this thesis as constraining women candidates in both case studies. This is not to suggest that if political parties were more established they would

naturally become gateways for gender equality, but the lack of strong party alliances was found to be challenging to women's broader participation in numerous ways.

Firstly, in Solomons, loose party alliances mean the threat of a vote of no confidence looms any time parliament sits, making the government of the day less confident to pass legislation. This acts as an extra barrier when trying to pass reforms that may not have mass appeal, such as Temporary Special Measures for women's participation.

Secondly, the lack of strong party systems means candidates do not generally campaign on ideological or policy positions. There is, therefore, limited interest or incentive to advance high-level policy reforms such as gender equality. While individual women MPs may campaign on a platform of gender equality, those that fail to support the movement are not likely to lose votes. In systems with strong party politics, however, there is greater pressure on parties to campaign on wider ideological principles and to deliver on those when in office.

The impact of these two features can be further evidenced by the people's survey results in Solomon Islands, which show a high level of support for women candidates in the abstract, but do not manifest in actual votes for women candidates (Batalibasi et al., 2019; The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2013). Initially, the lack of a political party registration system in Bougainville was by design as it was worried that it could be a factor in reigniting conflict. The reality of politics in both case studies is an intensely local environment where constituents vote for those who are likely to be able to support them materially or financially. This trend has been compounded in Solomon Islands by the increasing influence of the Constituency Development Funds. Their use was identified by multiple interviewees and is widely explored in the literature as amplifying clientism and the localism of politics.

Local government in Bougainville has been the site for the most widespread transformation for women's political participation. The passing of the Community Governance Act 2016 saw the requirement for 50 percent of elected positions to be held by women ((ABG), 2016). In contrast, the provincial and local government in Solomon Islands is still a male-dominated sphere, but women's rights advocates are hopeful that

Temporary Special Measures are close to being adopted at the provincial level. While this is promising, there is a real risk that the very limited funding for local government in both states threatens the possibility of successful candidates enacting any real change. This could prove to frustrate any women leaders elected. However, the importance of these recent reforms in Bougainville cannot be overstated in terms of normalising the occurrence of women in elected political positions and granting equal access to public decision-making.

The narratives that emerged around national identity and matriliny in Bougainville served to justify women's involvement in the formal peace process and legitimised their right to a 'seat at the table' in decisions on the governance structures of post-conflict Bougainville. Despite this, it seems these narratives have not been an enabling force in the election of women MPs in the post-conflict period. Women candidates do not poll better in the matrilineal areas of Bougainville than in the patrilineal areas (Baker, 2015).

It is worth considering the degree to which the narratives that served women's rights activists in the conflict period have come to constrain them in the post-conflict political arena. To what extent have narratives of women's peacebuilding been tied to their gendered roles as mothers and wives? Has this hampered their ability to be viewed as savvy political operatives and reduced their actions to feminised virtues? If women have been able to exercise power only on highly gendered terms and insofar as the conflict prevented them from fulfilling their roles as mothers, wives and custodians of the land, then their agency may be conditional upon their continuation of these responsibilities. It is then challenging to transfer this agency to contexts that extend beyond their roles as mothers and carers. In this sense, discourse around women's peaceable characteristics may have depoliticised the activism and organising undertaken by women during the conflict and presented it as an innate feminine virtue rather than the strategic decisions of autonomous political actors (Charlesworth, 2008; George, 2016b). This depoliticising of women's actions may have meant that at one level their agency is emphasised and respected, but this has not formed a foundation from which women have become electable. Further statements that praise the grassroots activism of women's groups may

also legitimise the notion that the non-governmental sphere, rather than the political, is the correct avenue for women's activism (H. Hudson, 2009, p. 259).

However, the impact these narratives have had on the perception of women as capable political actors in Bougainville is likely more complex and sits within the context of the broader political environment. As previously discussed, the dynamic of this political environment is intensely local and transactional. Voting constituents look for material and financial assistance from candidates, which forms a crucial part of local development in the absence of strong service delivery on behalf of the government. As women candidates who have succeeded in open seats serve to demonstrate, the ability to appear well equipped to support local communities likely trumps more abstract notions of equality and representation for the majority of voters.

Both case studies demonstrate that substantive inclusion into political structures is multi-faceted and requires widespread institutional support. Merely integrating small numbers of women into male-centred systems is unlikely to contribute to their transformation.

In conclusion, numerous factors are relevant when considering the post-conflict environment for women's political participation in each case study. For women in Bougainville, ensuring their place on the constitutional commission meant the introduction of reserved seats in parliament and this is likely to have enabled the introduction of the Community Governance Act in 2016. However, these legislative victories have not had the general catalyst effect on women's participation in formal politics that was initially hoped for. In contrast, the Solomon Islands have not introduced similar progressive regulations and women's groups continue to campaign for Temporary Special Measures for women's participation 17 years after the end of the conflict. In both case studies, an intensely local political culture and failure of service delivery on behalf of the government, as well as a lack of party politics, has contributed to a challenging political environment for women candidates, which in Solomon Islands is being exacerbated by the increasing use of the constituency development funds.

6.2 Considerations beyond the scope of my research questions

During the course of this research, the importance of three issues that were not directly addressed by my research questions became apparent. The analysis of these issues did not fit squarely within my conceptual framework but all three are highly relevant to women's political participation in the post-conflict environments in Bougainville and Solomon Islands and should be briefly mentioned here. These are:

- **Legislative and policy developments supporting gender equality in each case study;**
    - In the case of Bougainville and Solomon Islands, individual women and women's groups outside formal politics have also been important drivers for legislative change and policy reform in both case studies
    - Despite the relatively small numbers of women in the legislature in both case studies, there have been numerous policy and legislative developments concerning aspects of gender equality in both Solomon Islands and Bougainville in the post-conflict period.
    - More details and a list of legislative developments is included in Annex 2.
- **The importance of women's leadership in areas beyond elected political positions;**
    - Tripp's findings noted the expansion of women's leadership beyond formal politics as important to post-conflict gender regime change (2015). A similar focus for my case studies was beyond the scope of my research.
    - However, despite the low numbers of women in elected political institutions, it seems there is an increasing number of women obtaining senior leadership positions in the public sector as well as positions as judges and magistrates in many Pacific countries (Huffer, 2006; Liki, 2013).

- This may reflect a sentiment for many qualified women that entering politics in the Pacific is not an effective vehicle for social change. Spark and Corbett's 2018 study noted that many highly qualified women who would fit the profile of a promising candidate for parliament in Melanesia felt that they could achieve more for their communities by pursuing careers in other sectors (Spark & Corbett, 2018).
- The public sector is the largest single employer of women across the Pacific and women are well represented without exception across the region, however, they are underrepresented in senior and leadership positions (Zubrinich, 2016, p. 10).
- More details are included in Annex 3.

- **Gender-based violence;**
  - Gender-based violence (GBV) is a significant barrier to gender equality around the world and particularly in post-conflict contexts.
  - GBV is a prevalent issue in both Bougainville and Solomon Islands. Violence and sexual violence against women and girls was utilised as a strategic weapon of war in both conflicts and continues to be a significant human rights and development issue. In both case studies, perpetrators of GBV during the conflicts were rarely brought to justice (George, 2018a; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012b).
  - High levels of GBV are perpetuated at all levels of society and act as an added barrier to women's political participation (Huffer, 2006).

For more information on each issue including legislative and policy reforms please see annexes 2 – 4.

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Annex 1. Interview questions

Discussion points, Kerryn Baker

1. **The conflict as an opportunity for women's groups to push for reform in Solomon Islands and Bougainville.**

   The peace process in Bougainville meant that women's groups seized an opportunity to push for reforms in women's political representation in the form of reserved seats. *The constitution-making process in Bougainville was a window of opportunity for women's groups and individual women leaders to push for guaranteed representation in new political institutions (Baker, 2019, p. 112).* However, the same opportunity didn't present for women's groups in the Solomon Islands.

   - To what extent do you think that the opportunities for reform that emerged in the post-conflict period have impacted the political context for women today in both territories?
   - Do you think the difference in the peace processes between the Solomon Islands and Bougainville is the main explanation for the difference in the women's representation rates in each territory, or that customs and culture or structural factors are equally at play?
   - Do you know if the ongoing constitutional reform process in the Solomon Islands has provided an opportunity for women's groups to push for temporary special measures or other gender equality reforms? Parliamentary quotas have been proposed under at least two previous government's but have never been introduced.
   - You referred to the reforms in the local government act in Bougainville as an extension of the campaign for the reserved seats, do you see any other opportunities for continuation of this campaign in Bougainville?

2. **Electoral systems and features.**

   - Recent articles (Baker, 2019/18; Wood, 2019) have attributed increased success of incumbent candidates at the last two elections to increased funding levels in the CDF fund in the Solomon Islands. However as fewer women are incumbent, if this trend continues it seems likely to contribute further to the difficulties women face in becoming elected. Do you see this as worrying trend for women's political participation for the future?
   - Do you think that it would be easier for women to be elected in the Solomon Islands if they moved away from a first past the post electoral system? You have written that Papua New Guinea's change to limited preferential voting didn't bring the changes that were hoped for women's representation (Baker, 2018) do you think the same would be true if the Solomon Island's switched to a similar model?

3. **Women MPs and candidates.**

   The 2019 elections saw three women elected to parliament in the Solomon Islands. This brings the total number of women who have ever been elected to parliament to five (with some being been elected more than once). Whilst Bougainville has had three reserved seats since the end of the conflict the last elections were the first time a woman has ever been

elected to an open seat. 10% of candidates in Bougainville in the last elections were women, compared to 6.8% in Solomon Islands, however, the majority of women candidates in Bougainville still run for the reserved seats. There are many reports from Bougainville about the open seats being considered 'men's seats'. Critics of Parliamentary quotas might say that the reserved seats in Bougainville have created a ceiling for women's participation

- Do you think the reserved seats in Bougainville have normalised women's participation in parliament encouraging more women to run, or acted as a ceiling making it more difficult to be elected into the open seats?
- Do you think the increase of women MPs elected at the last election represents the start of an upward trend for women's participation in the Solomon Islands?
- In Bougainville many women candidates have run on a platform of activism and highlighted their role as peace-bringers in the conflict. Hilda Kari was the head of the National Council of Women, but apart from her this doesn't appear to be a strategy that registers in the Solomon Islands. Perhaps this is because women were less publicly involved in the formal peace-keeping process in the Solomon Islands (although very involved informally) or because the matriliny narrative didn't manifest to the same degree? What are your thoughts on this and to your knowledge have male candidates run on a platform based on their activism or involvement in the conflict?
- As someone who has studied elections in both countries extensively – do campaigns by women in both territories look similar?

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Annex 2. Legislative and policy developments supporting gender equality

Legislation and policy reform for gender equality is a generally considered a desired outcome of increasing the numbers of women in formal political institutions. The enactment of such policy and legislation in the post-conflict period may be considered a relevant indicator of a state's progression towards achieving gender parity. In the case of Bougainville and Solomon Islands, individual women and women's groups outside formal politics have also been important drivers for legislative change and policy reform in both case studies:

> "Beyond elected positions in formal politics, there is space for women to promote and drive legislative change. The *Family Protection Act* only came about due to the commitment and persistent work of a coalition of women. A similar coalition was brought together to lobby for the *Child and Family Welfare Bill*. The recent push for reserved seats at the provincial level is another example of effective coalition-building by women outside formal politics" (Mulder, 2019, p. 7).

Despite the relatively small numbers of women in the legislature in both case studies, there have been numerous policy and legislative developments concerning aspects of gender equality in both Solomon Islands and Bougainville in the post-conflict period. A non-exhaustive list that I have complied through my research is set out below:

Bougainville

Policy on Gender Equality, Peace and Security (2016)

The policy has a focus on gender mainstreaming within government institutions. But concerns have been raised about the lack of financial commitments to ensure proper implementation of the policy (George, 2018a).

A strategic plan for women's political leadership in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (2015-2020)

Developed by UN Women, the Department for Community Development and the Bougainville Women's Federation. The plan aims to provide a framework for improving the rates of women's participation in politics in governance.

Solomon Islands

Family protection Act (2014)

Implemented in 2016. Limited resources and inactive local courts have been identified as problems to the act's implementation (George, 2018c).

The Penal Code (Amendment) (Sexual Offences) Act (2016)

Amendment providing for stronger protection on sexual offences including child commercial exploitation. Since the act's implementation, three cases of commercial sexual exploitation have been reported. One has led to conviction and two are before the court (Solomon Islands Government et al., 2019, p. 9).

National Action Plan on Violence Against Women

In 2016, the Ministry for Women Children Youth and Family Affairs established a four year plan for the law and order response to the issue of violence against women (Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs, 2017)

Child and family welfare Act (2017)

This act was implemented to address child labour and exploitation and introduction measures for child protection, although there are reports that the legislation has not been implemented (George, 2018c).

National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (WPS) (2017)

Solomon Islands became the first Pacific Country to develop a national action plan on WPS.

A Pacific-wide analysis of legislative and policy reform for gender equality could provide a wider understanding of how the post-conflict political environment has affected gendered outcomes, beyond just women's formal political participation. The support for and advancement of reforms for gender equality by women outside of the legislature ties into the impact that women have in post-conflict environments outside of the formal political sphere. Aside from women's participation in formal and non-formal politics, a study of other, wider factors that may enable gender parity in post-conflict scenarios would also be useful.

Annex 3. The importance of women's leadership in areas beyond elected political positions, particularly in the public sector.

Tripp's findings noted the expansion of women's leadership beyond formal politics as important to post-conflict gender regime change (2015). A similar focus for my case studies was beyond the scope of my research. However, despite the low numbers of women in elected political institutions, it seems there is an increasing number of women obtaining senior leadership positions in the public sector as well as positions as judges and magistrates in many Pacific countries (Huffer, 2006; Liki, 2013). This may reflect a sentiment for many qualified women that entering politics in the Pacific is not an effective vehicle for social change. Spark and Corbett's 2018 study noted that many highly qualified women who would fit the profile of a promising candidate for parliament in Melanesia felt that they could achieve more for their communities by pursuing careers in other sectors (Spark & Corbett, 2018).

The public sector is the largest single employer of women across the Pacific and women are well represented without exception across the region, however, they are underrepresented in senior and leadership positions (Zubrinich, 2016, p. 10).

Although there is not a lot of published analysis on the number of women in leadership positions outside of politics in the Pacific, Liki's studies indicate an increase in the number of women in mid-level positions in the public service in Solomon Islands, despite the majority of senior positions still held by men (2013, p. 141). In 2013, five of the 24 government ministries were headed by women as was the Office of the National Legislative Assembly. Liki noted that this increase occurred in the 10 years prior to 2013, correlating to the end of the conflict and a trend that also corresponds with a growing number of public servants and young women completing tertiary training overseas (Liki, 2013, p. 141).

The only study available on women's participation in the public sector in Bougainville specifically found a lack of commitment to and knowledge of gender equality in the ABG and reported a 'tendency to assume that women are not as suited to paid work as men'

(Spark, 2017, p. 1). The majority of positions held by women in the ABG are administrative. The study also noted that most women working for the ABG were employed on ‘unattached contracts’ meaning they were short term and did not include provisions for leave and employee benefits (Spark, 2017).

The study did not provide an analysis of the number of women in leadership positions in the ABG over time, however, it did report a lack of women in senior and leadership positions. As well as a belief on behalf of those interviewed for the study that the ABG was resistant to appointing women to senior leadership roles (Spark, 2017, p. 2). The study also noted a perception on behalf of those interviewed that the ABG is not competitive in recruitment and that many women who possess the qualifications and experience to fill senior leadership roles in the ABG are likely to look for opportunities outside of Bougainville (Spark, 2017, p. 32).

In their regional study on women in the Public Sector, Zubrinich and Haley identified a range of abuses experienced by women working in public sectors across the Pacific, including threats of violence and sexual harassment, verbal abuse and harassment from the partners of male colleagues (2016, p. 11). This ties into the final issue covered by this discussion of gender-based violence.

Annex 4. Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a significant barrier to gender equality around the world and particularly in post-conflict contexts. GBV is a prevalent issue in both Bougainville and Solomon Islands. Violence and sexual violence against women and girls was utilised as a strategic weapon of war in both conflicts and continues to be a significant human rights and development issue. In both case studies, perpetrators of GBV during the conflicts were rarely brought to justice (George, 2018a; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012b).

> "Violence in many forms is far more prevalent than before 1988, so much so that there are fears that high levels of violence may be a long-term consequence of the nine-year conflict." (Tonissen, 2000, p. 72)
>
> "Higher levels of violence in the public domain encouraged an increased rate of violence within familial and conjugal environments, and home was no longer a site where women might expect to find respite from the insecurity that prevailed more generally in their communities. An environment of impunity was created by a breakdown in customary and religious systems of authority, which formerly upheld the sanctity of the family unit." (George, 2018c, p. 5)

High levels of GBV became normalised in the post-war environment in both case studies (George, 2018a, 2018c). Today, widespread trauma, the failure of reconciliation processes particularly for survivors of sexual crimes, social taboos against victims and the perception that family violence is a 'private issue' all converge to prevent justice for victims and perpetuate a climate of impunity for abusers.

Despite multiple violence against women campaigns, rates of GBV continue to increase across the region (Governments of Samoa and New Zealand, 2019). In Solomon Islands, reports of family and sexual violence rose to 844 in 2015, from 55 in 2012, although the under reporting of domestic violence remains pervasive (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2015, p. 4).

High levels of GBV are perpetuated at all levels of society and act as an added barrier to women's political participation (Huffer, 2006). Political campaigning in both case studies and across Melanesia is a hostile environment for women and threats of violence act as a strong deterrent to entering politics for many women. (McLeod, 2015).